

Course evaluation MNKOM9010 Communicating Science, Spring 2021

This document summarizes the teaching, results and evaluations the PhD course MNKOM9010 Communicating Science at the MN-faculty at UiO. Report submitted February 2021.

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Administration: Administrative manager at IBV, My Hanh Tu (m-h-tu@ibv.uio.no)

Numbers: Applicants: 27. Admitted: 20.

Overall: One participant wrote: "I had a really good time during this 2 weeks and it totally filled even more than my expectations of the course!"

About the course: Two weeks of intensive teaching (18-29. Jan) on Zoom from 9-11 and 12-14 each day, followed by two weeks of individual work with the home exam. Submission deadline: 12. Feb.

The teaching consisted of conversations, reading, writing, video and audio material, discussions and peer feedback sessions, managed on Canvas and implemented through Zoom.

Learning outcomes: After completing the course, PhD-candidates should be able to:

- outline the main traditions in science communication
- analyze, compare and evaluate genres in science communication
- communicate science to a specific audience by choosing an appropriate genre and style
- reflect on the value of science communication as a PhD-candidate and in a future career

Changes from 2020: The evaluation from 2020 was extremely positive (score 5.9). For the spring semester I adjusted the sessions according to my notes and students suggestions, for example by revising the Miro sessions for visual science communication and adjusting the layout of the final two days of the course to better support participants to write their monologue. I did my best to keep the style, tone and good atmosphere the same.

Results from 2021: 18 of the 20 PhD-candidates submitted home exams, with an impressive range and quality of work: opinion articles, science blogs, videos, infographics, news articles, interviews and a Wikipedia article. All 18 passed the home exam (pass/fail).

Course evaluation by participants: 11 responses to an anonymous web form with five open questions and a score (1-6). Representative quotes presented below:

Overall score: 5.6

1. Most important learning outcome:

"This course gave us an overview of the means of science communication and its importance. We learned so much and had a load of fun. We spoke in groups that it should become mandatory PhD course, to at least coupled with Ethics course."

"How to think about asking for and giving feedback on work: not on the final product, but on the

"Storytelling component that can be applied to a lot of different [situations] (outreach but as well scientific stuff) and to have a clear structure."

2. KEEP:

"Peer review and feedback sessions. Those were of utmost value"

"Afternoon homework was helpful to practice what we had learned in the morning class. I think they

3. DEVELOP:

4. DROP:

5. Other comments:

Evaluation by course responsible:

Teaching MNKOM9010 is fun, challenging and a lot of work, but a wonderful way to get to know and support the PhD-candidates at the Faculty. Thanks to My Hanh Tu at IBV for excellent administration!

Although the course this fall was a success, my impression is that the student group was less enthusiastic and positive compared to previous semesters. My own energy level was also reduced, and some of the exercises felt mechanical instead of naturally developing together with the group. Together, this made the course more strenuous compared to previous semesters. I did not include teaching assistants, as there was not enough time to plan and prepare for this.

One participant provided a moderately negative feedback, and had hoped for a more in-depth learning experience. It is possible that the participant did not make use of online resources and additional reading material suggested, and I will make sure to highlight opportunities for more in-depth learning in future iterations of the course.

As part of the MN Faculty's participation in the Discovery Learning research project (EU-funded), I kept a teaching diary during the course to document reflections and ideas relevant to teaching open science and innovation. The diary, together with conversations with project members, was very valuable and provided an important birds-eye view on the course, my teaching, and the situation for the PhD-candidates at MN.

Future development:

MNKOM9010 will run again during the fall. I will keep developing the content and teaching methods concerning visual science communication, as prompted by the participants' feedback. The next iteration will hopefully also include some input and ideas from the Discovery Learning project. I am not yet sure how this will develop, but I am excited to see how the project unfolds. Again, I will try to make plans for including assistant teachers in the course to build a community of science communication teachers.