UCL Faculté des sciences économiques, sociales et politiques

ESPO

COMU2138	Scientific popularisation: theory and case study

[30h] 3 credits

Teacher(s):   Philippe Verhaegen
Language: french
Level: 2nd cycle course

Aims

By the end of the course, students will:
know the main theories relating to scientific popularisation and writers on the subject;
be able to evaluate a communication or scientific popularisation device, and design the
necessary adaptations;
be able to design and construct a small popularisation device (including, at least, a
text and an image) aimed at the reformulation of an area of scientific knowledge.

Main themes

The course offers discussion on the relationships between popularisation and scientific
discourse.
To this end, it analyses the three stages involved in a popularisation device:
- the production of a popularising discourse: the psycho social and scientific role of the
mediator, or 'third man', and the constraints of a didactic discourse;
the reformulation of a source discourse within a second discourse (e.g. paraphrase,
transcoding, translation, narrative and metaphorisation);
recognition by the public of a popularised message.(e.g. deciphering and appropriation
of scientific information, and the attitudes of a reader of scientific popularisation).

Content and teaching methods

Content
This course is based on the idea that, like science, popularisation may be seen as 'a
kind of discourse' (J F Lyotard)
that possesses forms of expression and its own social functions. Unlike scientific
discourse limited to written expression, popularisation documents use numerous language combinations, such as texts, images,
sounds and animation. The course reviews these forms of language, and identifies the specific features of a discourse of
scientific reformulation. They include:
- the vocabulary and organisation of concepts (e.g. map, concept, and super-ordered series);
- reformulation (e.g. paraphrasing and meta language), narration and setting the scene for
communication;
- imagery and visualisation procedures (including metaphorical measures);
- humour.
Methodology
Lecture, case study and applied exercise.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Pre-requirement: A good knowledge of the theories and methods of semio pragmatic analysis
of audio-scripto-visual messages.
Assessment will consist of a discussion of the theoretical framework presented, and
completion of some scientific popularisation work.
Supervision: Assistance from a member of the scientific staff in monitoring and supervision of students' work.
Classroom with video recorder, video data projector, computer and Internet connection.
Students will be able to use a multi media IT suite.

Other credits in programs

BIR22/0A	Deuxième année du programme conduisant au grade de bio-ingénieur: Sciences agronomiques (Technologies et gestion de l'information)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
BIR22/0E	Deuxième année du programme conduisant au grade de bio-ingénieur: Sciences et technologies de l'environnement (Technologies et gestion de l'information)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
COMU21/AM	Première licence en information et communication (Analyse des médias)	(3 credits)	
COMU21/MS	Première licence en information et communication (Médiation des savoirs)	(3 credits)	
COMU22/AM	Deuxième licence en information et communication (Analyse des médias)	(3 credits)	
COMU22/J	Deuxième licence en information et communication (Journalisme)	(3 credits)	
COMU22/MS	Deuxième licence en information et communication (Médiation des savoirs)	(3 credits)	
COMU22/RP	Deuxième licence en information et communication (Relations publiques et communication d'organisation)	(3 credits)	
COMU2M1/MS	Master en information et communication (médiation des savoirs)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
COMU2M1/RP	Master en information et communication (relations publiques et communication d'organisation)	(3 credits)	