

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



COMU2138 Scientific popularisation: theory and case study

[30h] 3 credits

Teacher(s): Philippe Verhaegen
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

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.

Programmes in which this activity is taught

AGRO3DA	Diplôme d'études approfondies en sciences agronomiques et ingénierie biologique
BIR2	Bio-ingénieur
COMU2M1	Master en information et communication
SC3DA	Diplôme d'études approfondies en sciences

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)	
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)	
BIR23/0C	Troisième année du programme conduisant au grade de bio-ingénieur: chimie et bio-industries (Technologies et gestion de l'information)	(3 credits)	
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 (option médiation des savoirs)	(3 credits)	Mandatory
COMU2M1/RP	Master en information et communication (option relations publiques et communication d'organisation)	(3 credits)	