GHENT UNIVERSITY

Course Specifications

Valid as from the academic year 2024-2025

Scientific Communication (C003334)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)	English	Gent	lecture
			independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Haelewaters, Danny	WE11	lecturer-in-charge
Batsleer, Femke	WE11	co-lecturer
Mitchell, Lucy	WE11	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026	**crdts**	**offering**
Master of Science in Teaching in Science and Technology(main subject Biology)	5	A
International Master of Science in Agro- and Environmental Nematology	5	A
Master of Science in Biology	5	A

Teaching languages

English, Dutch

Keywords

Scientific communication, scientific reporting, media training, scientific debating, applying for jobs, science after studying.

Position of the course

This course continues on what is given under “Academic Grant Writing” (Master 1 in Biology), with the focus in the 2nd master course going to: (1) scientific communication in a broad sense and under a broad range of formats, (2) putting into practice scientific communication under the form of a discussion panel debate, dealing with societally relevant topics; (3) communicating towards the press (press text); and (4) preparing oneself towards the job market.
For the course in the Dutch master program (6 credits course), an additional focus is put onto communicating towards a pupil audience in a school framework.

Contents

The lectures focus on: (1) different formats of scientific communication; (2) overview and preparation towards the job market for biologists (a.o. with an overview of funding sources for PhD research grants, how to write a cover letter and CV); and (3) scientific communication towards the press and the laymen in practice (lecture given by a guest lecturer).
The practical exercises comprise: (1) active participation in a discussion panel debate dealing with societally relevant topics linked to biology (and other scientific displines), with preparatory work towards specific subtopics; (2) writing of a press release (max. 60 words) and a tweet dealing with the topic of the master thesis; and (3) writing of a cover letter and curriculum vitae based on an existing job vacancy.
The teaching activities are followed by an info session on "Biologists on the job market", where alumni of the Biology program are invited to talk to and discuss with students their experience with job hunting and working.
Students that follow the Dutch Master in Biology and Dutch Master in Biochemistry and Biotechnology take up this course with 6 instead of 5 credits. The extra credit involves an additional assignment, targeting particular skills in communication in Dutch towards specific target groups (e.g. young students), and this linked to

particular professional communication skills that match up with the minor Economy and Business Management, and the minor Education.

Initial competences

Learning outcomes achieved as part of the bachelor degree.

Final competences

1 Students have a good overview of the different funding sources that are available for continuing scientific research (e.g. PhD grants), as well as the possibilities for biologists on the job market.
2 Students are informed about job opportunities and aspects related to the job market for biologists.
3 Students know and have experience in writing a cover letter and a CV, and know how to match those with a particular job vacancy.
4 Students can communicate orally (with written preparation) personal statements in a scientific manner and defend them during a debate.
5 Students can frame a biological topic within a broader scientific, but also societal and socio-economic context, using literature from the different domains.
6 Students know what communication format to use to address a broader audience, and are aware of different communication formats (their strengths and weaknesses).
7 Students can communicate scientific research to a broader audience by means of a press release (of their master thesis topic).

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

This course comprises lectures (4 in total), as well as integrative seminars (panel discussion in debate format) and autonomous assignments (writing a press text, a CV and a cover letter).

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Lecture slides
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Available on Ufora : Yes

References

Linkedin network for UGent Biology alumni: https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=7493369&trk=anet_ug_hm

Course content-related study coaching

Personal support (electronic or after making an appointment).

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is not possible

Extra information on the examination methods

The evaluation involves a non-periodic evaluation (the debate), and a periodic evaluation (press text, CV and cover letter).

Calculation of the examination mark

De final score will have the following distribution:

- written statement (debate): 5/20
- oral statement (debate): 5/20
- participation to discussion (debate): 2/20
- press release, titels, tweet: 3/20
- cover letter and CV: 3/20

Students who are legitimately absent on their integration seminar (debate) need to make up the relevant exercises at a different time. Unjustified absence gives rise to a total maximum score (theory + practical exercises) of 9/20, irrespective of the score for the theoretical part.