



PhD Program in Science & Policy: Communicating Science

Lecturers: Jacopo Pasotti

Location: ETH Center

Dates: November 25 and December 9, 2024

Credit Points: 2 ECTS

Course Objectives

Scientists in all fields are more and more often expected to perform public outreach on matters ranging from research funding to assisting policymakers in taking decisions. In doing this, they face challenges. Challenges range from being clear, convincing, accurate, and, at the same time, engaging. Academic researchers play an essential role in allowing policymakers to develop and properly assess science policy options, speaking to the media, and contributing to the improvement of public's critical thinking. If advised and coached appropriately they can engage in a true dialogue that enhances mutual understanding between academia and the public.

Course Program

In this course, students will learn basics on how to communicate science in an effective way to the media, policymakers and a wider public. They will be introduced to different communication tools and best-practice examples.

Students will:

- Learn to identify and communicate aspects of their research that are relevant to policymakers and different stakeholder groups.
- Practice writing techniques to effectively reach a non-specialist audience.
- Learn basics of message framing and storytelling.
- Know and understand different communication tools such as short texts and press releases.
- Practice speaking techniques to react to interviews and non-specialist audiences.

Although the course is geared to practical issues, it is also grounded in the latest theory and practice of science communication. The course is embedded in our course series on 'Science and Policy'.

Prior Knowledge: enrolled students will be provided with preparatory literature; apart from this, no prior knowledge is required.

Number of Participants: A maximum of 20 students will be able to enrol in this course.

Individual Performance and Assessment:

Please note: Attendance and active participation during the two course days (16 hours). In the weeks between the two workshop days, you should plan for available time for group work and individual work of min. 30-40 hours.

Trainer: Jacopo Pasotti is a science communicator and freelance journalist. He runs a media agency and has presented science communication skill workshop in Switzerland, Italy, Germany and Australia. As a journalist, his reports have been published in Science, GEO, Die Zeit and National Geographic.

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