Course Title: Scientific and Technical Presentations That Tell a Clear and Compelling Story
Course Code: COM 54
Instructor: David Rubenson

Course Summary:
COM 54 will help scientists, engineers, and other technical professionals articulate a compelling narrative and convert that narrative into a concise and compelling slide presentation. Common strategies and points of departure for addressing diverse audiences, ranging from scientific specialists to donors, will be discussed.

Students should have a presentation or an idea for a presentation they would like to create or improve and rudimentary knowledge of presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint). Please bring laptops and a memory stick to class.

Please see course page for full description and additional details.

Grade Options and Requirements:
• No Grade Requested (NGR)
  o This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
• Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  o Credit will be given for students attending 4/7 sessions and being an active participant.
• Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  o Will be based on attendance, class participation, and delivery of a short presentation to the class.

Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.
Tentative Weekly Outline:

Week 1
- Small group activity: What are the attributes of an effective (or ineffective, if you prefer) presentation?
- Introducing yourselves: an exercise in being concise and relevant
- Discussion of article: “Communication Crisis in Research”
- Short instructor presentation: strategy for scientific presentations and how to construct the story

Week 2
- Group discussion: Did PowerPoint crash the space shuttle (excerpt of an article by Edward Tufte)?
- Two-minute individual story presentations without slides
- Small group activity: journal article vs. slide presentation
- Short instructor presentation: fixing bad slides

Week 3
- Two-minute individual story presentations (continued)
- Group discussion: Nobadslides handout
- Individual presentation of “set up” and “outline” slides

Week 4
- Small group activity: rescuing an unreadable slide
- Small group activity: the 40-word rule
- Individual presentation of “set up” and “outline” slides (continued)

Week 5
- Individual “section” presentations in groups
- Data visualization activity

Week 6
- Class presentations with critique

Week 7
- Class presentations with critique