**Communication for Geoscientists: EARTH 204**

**Course Objectives**:

The primary objective of this course is to demystify the concept of science writing and train students in the art of brief and descriptive writing, typical of professional communication within scientific professions. Key skills that will be developed through the course will include writing, peer review, poster design, and presentation design and delivery.

Prof. Magdalena Osburn

[Maggie@earth.northwestern.edu](mailto:Maggie@earth.northwestern.edu)

Phone: (847) 491-4254

Office: Tech F291

Office Hours: Arranged upon request

**Textbook**: *Elements of Style, Writing Science*

**Prerequisites**: None. Open to all current and prospective EARTH majors

**Topic Schedule**:

Week 1 3/31 Course overview and elements, email etiquette

4/2 Citations, paraphrasing, and plagiarism

Week 2 4/7 Grammar Bootcamp: common mistakes

4/9 The manuscript: types, formats, and approaches

Week 3 4/14 The Introduction

4/16 Intro peer review and revision

Week 4 4/21 Methods

4/23 Methods peer review and revision

Week 5 4/28 Results and discussion

4/30 R&D peer review and revision

Week 6 5/5 The abstract

5/7 Abstract peer review and revision

Week 7 5/12 Visual Media: Posters

5/14 Poster peer review and revision

Week 8 5/19 Speaking to scientists: formal presentation

5/21 So what do you do? Elevator talks

Week 9 5/26 Proposals

5/28 Practice talks

Final project: URG style proposal on a topic of your choosing. Cannot be an old URG proposal! Must be newly written for this course.

**Course Requirements**:

This course will feature active learning techniques, lecture components, and lots of classroom participation. Students are expected to come to class, participate, and have completed rough draft assignments prior to class time to facilitate peer review. No credit will be given for late drafts. I expect students to behave in a professional and respectful manner.

Participation 30 %

Rough draft completion 20 %

Weekly products 30 %

Practice talk 10%

Proposal 10 %

**Collaborations and Academic Ethics**: Science is a generally collaborative enterprise and I expect our classroom interactions to reflect this fact. I encourage you to discuss your work, but the work you turn in must be your own. We will discuss plagiarism in detail and I expect from that point forward proper citation formats will be used. No copying directly from one another or the literature! I take academic integrity very seriously.

**Disability Accommodations**: Any student with a documented disability needing accommodations is requested to speak directly to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) (847-467-5530) and me as early as possible in the quarter. All discussions will remain confidential.