WeatherWatcher Thematic Community Academic Course
Weather, Climate and Television I
11:670:111, Fall 2023
Tuesday, 12:10 – 1:30 pm
Classroom: ENRS Building, Room 223 (Cook campus)

Instructors

Scott Sincoff – scott.sincoff@rutgers.edu, Office Hours: 11 AM - 12 PM
with
Steven Decker – decker@envsci.rutgers.edu, 848-932-5750

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to provide a theoretical foundation and application of television broadcasting and meteorology to supplement the hands-on television experience gained from the WeatherWatcher Thematic Community. By examining the history and characteristics of television, critical analyses of news and weather-related programming and special topics pertaining to meteorology, students will gain a rounded understanding of the medium and its impact on the fields of meteorology and broadcasting.

Classes will consist of guest lecturers from inside Rutgers University as well as media companies from outside the Banks of the Old Raritan. Discussions of topical and relevant news relating to television production, industries and technologies relating to meteorology and broadcasting will also be included in the weekly classes.

Scott Sincoff has a B.S. in Journalism and Media Studies from Rutgers University and a M.S. in Geosciences and Broadcast Meteorology from Mississippi State University with nearly a decade of experience in the Broadcast Meteorology industry, and will oversee the course. He will work with Meteorology Professor Steven Decker, who will attend each lecture and fully participate in the discussions, giving his perspective based on his experience as a meteorologist. They will also arrange for guest lectures from television weathercasters from the New York/Philadelphia region and will also make presentations in the classes.

Learning Goals

Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:

- Exhibit critical thinking when confronting new information.
- Learn how to tell the weather story and execute a weather forecast.
- Discover the evolution of how meteorology changes within the media

Requirements

Attendance

If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. An online notification of absence is available, using the Student Self-Reporting Absence system (https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/); please use this method to inform the instructor.

Readings and Online Resources

It is the student's responsibility to stay up to date with all class assignments and assigned readings. Readings will consist of selected theoretical and research texts relating to the week's topic and will be available on the course Canvas website under the "Files." There will also be online videos and weather videos online, YouTube, TV station websites, and social media. Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Assignments

Response Papers and Assignments

Students will complete one response paper per week (2 pages double spaced), addressing a topic from the online resources, readings or class discussion. This response paper will not be a summary; instead, you will select one aspect of the videos, online links, readings or class discussion to critically evaluate. In the evaluation, you will compare the strengths, weaknesses, and applicability of the topic and your experiences in broadcasting and meteorology. **Upload the papers to the proper Assignment on Canvas by 11:59 PM the Monday before class.**

Presentations

During the course of the semester - we will be doing a variety of presentations: in-person speeches and presentations, work on social media,weather forecasts in the Perry Hall WW studio, even some fun science experiments! The variety of presentations will help students prepare for their potential role as a broadcaster, social media manager, and station scientist.

Final Speech/Presentation

The Final will be assigned in November. Students will do a two-page paper, create a video, and present their work on the last day of class, December 12th. More details will be given when the assignment is handed out. It is worth 30% of the Final Grade for the course.

Grading

The final grades for the course will be determined by the following:

- Class participation and attendance: 20%
- Weekly response papers/In-class activities: 50%
- Final speech: 30%

The following are the standard grades and criteria:

90-100, A: work fulfills terms of assignment, shows excellence, creativity, original thought
86-89, B+: work fulfills terms of assignment, some excellence, creativity, original thought
80-85, B: work fulfills terms of assignment, less evidence of excellent, creativity, original thought
76-79, C+: work fulfills terms of assignment, shows very limited evidence of original thought
70-75, C: work fulfills terms of assignment
65-69, D: failure to fulfill terms of assignment
0-64, F: failing and incomplete work

There will be no extra-credit assignments.

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

Students are also responsible for adhering to the policies of this course and of Rutgers University, which includes the Code of Student Conduct. Please see http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/docs/UCSC.pdf for more information.

What is expected of you:

- Check your email every day.
- Read every assignment in the text before class and come prepared to discuss it and ask questions about it.
- Participate in class discussions. But be respectful of your listeners and give everyone time to talk.
- Listen attentively and respectfully to whoever is talking in class, be it the professor or a fellow student. (This means no texting or web browsing.)
- Attend every class. Arrive on time. You cannot pass the course if you have an unexcused absence.
- Be curious.
- Be skeptical. Demand evidence before you believe something.
- Enjoy the class, and if you are not, express your concerns and work to change things.
- Work three hours outside of class for every hour in a class.
- Many decisions are based on your values. But be sure to be aware of your values and to state them when appropriate.

Policy on Academic Integrity (including cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism). A detailed explanation of these policies can be found at http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html. Failure to comply with the policies of this course and of the university will result in disciplinary action.

Academic integrity includes:

- Develop and write all your own assignments
- Show in detail where the materials and sources you use in your papers come from
- Do not fabricate information or citations in your work
- Do not facilitate academic dishonesty for other students by allowing your own work to be submitted by others.

Do not plagiarize. Do not copy anything word for word without putting it in quotes and referencing it, including the output of AI systems such as ChatGPT. Do not copy any idea without referencing it. Do not copy anything from the Internet and submit it as your own work. Every sentence or paragraph in your paper will fall into one of three categories: 1) Direct quote from an article you read; 2) Idea from article you read, expressed in your own words; or 3) Your own idea. In the case of 1 or 2, it is necessary to reference the article from which the quote or idea came. If it is a quote (1), it must appear in quotation marks. Try to use your own words to express your ideas. For more information on plagiarism, visit the Rutgers Writing Program at http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism.

If you are doubtful about any issue related to plagiarism or scholastic dishonesty, please discuss it with the instructor.

Class Schedule

This schedule is subject to change at any time. In the event the schedule changes the instructor(s) will try to provide advanced notice. Please pay attention to emails and announcements on Canvas to changes to the schedule.

Date	Topic	What's due?
Sept. 5	Welcome and Intro	N/A
Sept. 12	Communicating the science of weather	**Youtube Video Assignment** **Upload:** Response paper.
Sept. 19	Guest Speaker: Kyle David from FOX Weather	**Upload:** Questions to Prepare for Guest Speaker
Sept. 26	Dr. Decker presents What is Normal?	**Reading:** Arguez and Vose (2012) **Upload:** Response paper.
Oct. 3	Communication Theories and Persuasive Framing Perspectives	**Reading:** Online Video and Readings TBA **Upload:** Response paper.
Oct. 10	Public Speaking for On-Air Talent: Methods of delivery, Voice in Delivery, Body in delivery	**Reading:** Online Video and Readings TBA **Upload:** Response paper
Oct. 17	Dr. Decker presents Forecasting as a Social Science	**Reading:** Fine, "Writing On the Winds" **Upload in:** Response paper
Oct. 24	Newscasters & Weatherpersons	**Reading:** Wilson, "Television Weathercasters As Potentially Prominent Science Communicators." **Upload:** Response paper.
Oct. 31	Journalistic Setting of Weather Broadcasting and being the Station Scientist	**Science Experiment Lab** **Upload and Present:** Video and Lab Report
Nov. 7	Dr. Decker presents What is Probability?	**Reading:** de Elía and Laprise (2005) **Upload:** Response paper.
Nov. 14	Guest Speaker: Lauren Casey from Climate Central	**Upload:** Questions to Prepare for Guest Speaker
Nov. 21	No Class	Happy Thanksgiving!
Nov. 28	New Media and Meteorology: Convergence & Online Communication	**Readings:** Online Video and Readings TBA **Upload:** Response paper.
Dec. 5	Dr. Decker presents Styles of Weathercasting	**Reading:** Chapter 4, "Weather On The Air" **Upload in:** Response paper
Dec. 12	**Final Speech Presentations**	**Final Speech Presentations**