Science Writing for OCN442

Science writing presents information about science and technology for a range of audiences, usually readers who are not experts in the field. In many ways, writing about science is like writing about any other subject- whatever the subject, the writer must be clear, informative, and interesting. Science writing is different from writing a scientific article. The major differences between science writing and scientific writing are appearance, format and purpose. Science writing is designed to entertain and inform an audience of non-experts in the subject; scientific writing articles are designed primarily to inform experts about the subject. Science writing addresses a broader audience.

There are different types of science writing. Writing articles for newspapers is different from writing for magazines, and there are different audiences within the broad "general audiences" category. For our class, we will be targeting an educated audience, particularly readers of magazines such as *Discover, Scientific American, National Geographic* or *Smithsonian*. Science writers for popular media such as this read scientific articles designed for experts to discover information that might be of interest to the general audience. They then take that information (citing the source, of course), add to it information from other experts (especially local experts – your class mates or professors) "translate" the information to their more general audience. In addition to scholarly research and research articles, science writers rely on abstracts, interviews with experts, and newspaper articles. Quotations are often used, and the presentation of the opposing view(s) in the article is often essential to demonstrate objectivity and in order to create tension. To write effective articles about science and technology, you should consider organizing your efforts and manuscript in the following manner:

- Choose an angle on your subject that you think your readers will be interested in
  (build tension within the document)
- Create interest within the article
  (a catchy opening paragraph and visually-stimulating graphics always help)
- Control pace and level of complexity
  (keep it simple and allow it to flow)
- • Use effective strategies
  (use the ‘nut graph’ and other tricks of the trade)

Here is what I am looking for in the drafts and in the final document:

- DRAFT 1: a complete outline of the scope of the article including any information about the theme for the article, the types of graphics you intend to present, and the intended flow of the document. Include as much written text as possible and make sure to note the strategies you plan to employ in order to take your scientific efforts and create an article containing scientific tension and ultimate enlightenment.
- DRAFT 2: a complete working document complete with images and graphics, references etc. Something the class can critique in order to make it better.
- FINAL MANUSCRIPT: something to be proud of…