

# ZOO 5890-4: The Art of Science Communication

Autumn 2017 Wednesdays, 9AM-noon  
Conference room 227 (2nd floor lab, Berry Conservation Center)  
Office hours: Immediately after class and by appointment

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## Welcome!

We are excited to embark on this journey of thinking and communication with you! This course is predicated upon a widely held (though not unanimous) interpretation of the social contract scientists have with society - that is, that we as scientists have an obligation to engage with (not just talk at) the public. This won't be your typical academic experience. While you will do research, present ideas, and think carefully about how an audience will respond, you won't write standard academic research papers, and you won't be writing just to your course instructors.

Instead, ZOO 5890-4 will give you first-hand experience communicating inside and outside your discipline. Collaboration and engagement through written, oral, and digital communication is how we learn about, connect with, and inform change in, the world. Whether or not your ultimate goals are to work in an academics, or even research, communicating your ideas to people inside and outside of your field, and listening to people inside and outside of your field, is critical to professional and civic success. And so, in ZOO 5890-4 you will continuously create, interpret, and share your writing, research, and thinking about how your science impacts what we think, what we do, and how we do it. Throughout the course, you will push the boundaries of your creativity and critical thinking; assets for any professional, any citizen.

At the end of the semester, you'll have several major products that will demonstrate your communication skills - audio recording, a radio piece, a series of blog and social media posts, and an interactive multi-media presentation. These will be powerful portfolio pieces you can use to demonstrate to potential employers, collaborators, and funders just how you're able to integrate traditional and 21st-century communication skills to make your research accessible and interesting to a non-specialist audiences.

What we're going to work on together won't make for the easiest class you've been in. But that's okay. We believe that authentic learning requires that we take risks, make mistakes, and learn from our experiences. Learning also requires flexibility, repetition, and exploration on our way to mastering skills and knowledge. For this class, we will all strive to contribute to a positive and comfortable learning environment for one another. This includes respecting and actively engaging with the people, ideas, topics, and issues in our course.

We really can't wait to get started! Thank for collaborating with us as we all together use ZOO 5890-4 to innovative and empower each other to enhance our science communication and engagement skills!

*Bethann* *Brian Barber*

## **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you have a physical, learning, sensory or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let us know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and provide documentation of your disability to University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in SEO, room 330, Knight Hall.

## **WRITING SUPPORT**

University of Wyoming data indicates students who seek additional support for their coursework tend to do better. As instructors, we are here to support your writing efforts. We will be actively engaged in your work throughout the course, in class and in response to assignments. We will meet with you several times during meetings dedicated to discussing your work as you progress throughout the semester. We are also available for additional meetings during office hours or by appointment. We will provide regular feedback on your work, and we will bring in resources, suggest additional readings, etc., as we think you may find them useful. Additionally, the UW Writing Center (in Coe Library room 302) helps writers at any stage of the writing process. With a focus on teaching and learning, the Writing Center is not a "fix-it shop," but they help writers identify, articulate, and implement improvements and corrections to their writing. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this free topnotch writing support. You can drop in to see if a consultant is available and/or schedule an appointment online at <http://www.uwyo.edu/ctl/writing-center/>.

## **THE BASICS**

### **Course Websites:**

- WyoCourses (<https://uwyo.instructure.com/courses/503506>); internal, for submitting assignments, etc.
- Public-facing site for practicing public/popular writing, image curation, etc. (<http://engagelaramiescience.weebly.com/>); see syllabus pages 4 for details.

### **Course Objectives:**

- Learn about and practice essential skills of effective science communication on a range of platforms (social media, professional websites, blogging, general public outreach, interacting with the media, etc.)
- Learn about and practice best practices for how to engage and interact a range of audiences so your research can inspire and educate.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

- Acquire skills and gain confidence in communicating your research to media outlets, public audiences, and potential/existing funders.
- Produce text, audio, and visual portfolios you can use to communicate with diverse audiences.

### **Anticipated Skill Takeaways:**

- Interview/microphone experience
- Radio production experience
- Refining science message/story for specific target audiences
- Relating science message/story to seemingly unrelated topics
- Image curation & ethics of using images for scicomm

- “Branding” yourself and your science
- Social media experience (posting, planning, useful apps, science of scicomm for social media)
- Blog/website management and writing experience

### **Email and Staying in Touch**

We hope you will think of us as willing to help if you’re having any difficulty, so please don’t hesitate to schedule an extended meeting with either or both of us if you have questions, concerns, or difficulties. We check email regularly weekdays from 9AM-5PM, and we are usually pretty quick to respond. Still, there are times when it may take a day or more to reply to your messages, so plan accordingly. Please check your e-mail daily so you can stay abreast of any ZOO 5980-4 course updates. We will use WyoCourses as needed to revise our schedule of activities, as well as to archive supplemental readings and materials. To that end, be sure to check all your settings within WyoCourses, and adjust them to ensure you receive updates (via announcements, assignment postings, etc.) from within the course system. After the first week of classes, all announcements will be distributed via WyoCourses, *not* via emails.

### **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

All course texts will be provided. Most material will be posted on WyoCourses. Make sure to bring a writing utensil and your readings (printed and/or on a device) to class every day, as well as something to take notes on. You are welcome to bring your computer/tablet for class-related work. Always bring a printed current draft of your work-in-progress to class. We will use YOUR work every day for full-class activities, small-group workshops, and individual revision. *Most importantly, bring your enthusiasm, curiosity, and good will to class every day.*

### **COURSEWORK**

Coursework will often build upon previous work, so that you can create final projects and prepare for presentations and other public-facing work. Because thinking and communicating go hand-in-hand, and because revision is an essential aspect of the composition and design process, most assignments will involve a combination of drafts, peer reviews, and instructor feedback. Demonstrated engagement in this process will be a key component of how your work is graded. In this course, you will focus on three projects, one for each third of the semester. You will receive rubrics and explanations of specific expectations, along with numerous brainstorming, research, drafting, and revision assignments, at appropriate stages of each project.

### **On-going Assignment Expectations (see “Major Assignments for more details”)**

- **Readings:** Readings will be provided electronically. No required texts need be purchased, though we will make suggestions for books you may find valuable as future references. Assigned readings will include a mix of peer-reviewed and popular writings, as well as multimedia (videos, podcasts, etc.). The subject matter of the readings will range widely; readings may be op-eds, research articles, examples of exemplary or problematic science communication, theory, tips or techniques, and so on. Files will be posted with the following naming style: YYYYMMDD\_Author\_Year\_Title. Files will be linked to in relevant assignment and project pages for your convenience. These files will be located in three folders on WyoCourses:
  - Assigned Readings: <https://uwo.instructure.com/courses/503506/files/folder/Assigned%20readings>
  - Supplemental Materials:

[https://uwyo.instructure.com/courses/503506/files/folder/Supplemental%20-%20resources%20\(not%20assigned%20required\)](https://uwyo.instructure.com/courses/503506/files/folder/Supplemental%20-%20resources%20(not%20assigned%20required)).

- In-class Materials: <https://uwyo.instructure.com/courses/503506/pages/in-class-materials>
- **Summary/Responses** (complete/incomplete): For most readings, you will write a summary/response mini-essay in reference to the assigned article-, chapter-, or section-length reading. For each you are assigned, write a 100-word summary and 100-word response. Put both in a double-spaced, one-page document that begins with your name, the date, and full bibliographic information for the source in your discipline's standard citation style. Submit this document to WyoCourses by the deadline. Your summary should explain the main argument of the text, perhaps pointing to some of its supporting points. Your summary is *not* about what you thought of the reading and should not include statements of opinion. Your response, however, *should* offer your own reflection on/reaction to the text. You get a “pass” on two—uses your passes strategically.
- **Public-facing course website** (complete/incomplete): one student per week, on a rotating basis will work with Bethann Garramon Merkle to curate and post content from the previous week's assignments. We will establish the schedule the second week of class.
- **Social media or blog** (complete/incomplete): weekly posts, minimum one post per week; we will provide prompts.

## Major Assignments

**1. Participation and Informal Assignments (15% of final grade, divided between Midterm and Final by 10% each):** Every day, you will be responsible for engaging in class discussion as an informed, thoughtful, and respectful classmate. In order to get the most out of class, and to be a valuable addition to your classmates' experiences, please arrive in class having read and engaged with the material assigned. Similarly, because much in-class work will depend upon the writing, revision, research, and other project development work you do outside of class, please come to class with assigned writing, revision, and research work completed and printed. Informal assignments may include, but are not limited to: drafts, emails, designs, reflections, analyses, proposals, peer-feedback, and practice presentations.

## 2. Course Website/Blog and Social Media/Personal Blog (15% of final grade):

These assignments are meant to provide you with real-world experience curating a science-focused social media account and making editorial decisions about the content of a science outreach blog. Both are key aspects of the work of many publicly engaged scientists and professional science communicators.

- **Public-facing course website/blog** <http://engagelaramiescience.weebly.com/>: This website is intended to host regular updates from course activities, including projects in progress, social media posts, reflections, plans, struggles, celebrations, etc. You will always have the option to indicate that you do not want your material (submitted homework) to be shared publicly/published on the blog. Each week, one student in the course will meet with Bethann to curate material for the course blog/website.
- **Social media/personal blog**: You will start and/or post to a social media account (select from Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) or a personal blog at least once per week throughout the semester. Your posts will focus on your work as a scientist, but may certainly reveal other facets of your personality and lifestyle. See #scientistselfie on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#), for

examples of how some scientists approach this balance. You will be shown apps and strategies for planning, scheduling, and strategically using social media as a science engagement mechanism. You will be provided with weekly prompts to help you explore the potential of your chosen platform. All posts in response to prompts will be graded as complete/incomplete. The expectation is that you will produce original content for these posts, meaning writing and images that are your creation. To put it another way, retweets, shares, likes, etc., do not qualify as original content. Of course, we encourage you to be more active than a single post per week, and certainly, sharing others' content is a standard part of how you may do that. But, you will be assessed on your original content.

**3. Science+Public Art Audio Script and Report (20% of final grade):** You will identify a public art piece in Laramie's downtown or campus areas that you can connect to your research. No "low-hanging fruit" - we ask that you push yourself to make a rich and meaningful connection, not merely an obvious one. If you have concerns about how feasible this is, listen to some of the audio pieces hosted on [this website](#), which were created by UW freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in the School of Energy Resources during the Spring 2017 semester.

Following research into the artwork you've chosen, you will create a 1- to 1.5-minute audio piece telling the story of this connection. Your final audio will be shared with the Laramie Public Art Coalition, for inclusion in their audio tours app.

The overarching objectives of this project are: 1) to connect your research to an aspect of Laramie that is deeply meaningful to many locals and visitors; 2) to practice connecting your research to a seemingly-unrelated topic; 3) to ensure you have an authentic public audience for your science communication efforts.

The Audio Script and Report is the first major project of the course. You will first develop a report on a public art piece of your choice (from campus or downtown Laramie). Your report will include a) the background of the piece and b) the way(s) that you have chosen to explore how your science intersects with the piece. To create this report, you will conduct research and work with relevant local artists. This report will then be distilled into a brief (max. 1.5-min.) publicly accessible audio guide which will be hosted by the Laramie Public Art Coalition. The report and audio guide will prepare you to address in-person questions on your chosen art piece during a class visit from Laramie Public Art Coalition director Meg Thompson. This visit will occur before your final drafts are due, so that you can take her comments into account when finalizing your material.

**4. WyoBio Minute Radio Recording (20% of final grade):** For this assignment you will write and record a 50-second radio piece that will be aired to 48 stations across Wyoming. This piece will combine some aspect of your research with Wyoming natural history. You will record the final piece with a producer of the Wyoming Cowboy News Network, after you have practiced with your instructors. Brian Barber will then schedule your piece to be aired in the following weeks. Your WyoBio Minute will also be posted to the Biodiversity Institute's webpage. There you will add additional written, and related images, content that introduces you, your research and why your work matters to Wyomingites.

**5. Interactive Public Presentation (30% of final grade):** For your final assignment of the semester,

you will adapt one of your existing research-based PowerPoint presentations into an interactive presentation appropriate for a specific audience. With a fellow classmate identify, reach out to, and schedule a presentation for, a non-specialist audience in Laramie. Note that you will be arranging back-to-back, individual presentations. A component of your presentation will be to develop an interactive component of this presentation, so that you can tap into the wealth of research that exists regarding active learning strategies being some of the most effective ways of sharing information (vs. one-way communication such as a lecture). Your instructors will attend both of your public presentations, so the two of you will be expected to coordinate with them when scheduling your presentation.

## GRADING

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Attendance, Participation and Informal Assignments (15%)</li> <li>● Course Website/Blog and Social Media/Personal Blog (15% of final grade)</li> <li>● Science+Public Art Audio Script and Report (20% of final grade)</li> <li>● WyoBio Minute Radio Recording (20% of final grade)</li> <li>● Interactive Public Presentation (30% of final grade)</li> </ul>	90-100 = A 80-89 = B 70-79 = C 60-69 = D Under 60 = F
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You are expected to turn in drafts of assignments on the dates they are due. Failure to do so can result in a reduction in your grade on that assignment and/or in your final course grade. In extreme circumstances, failure to turn in assignments can result in failure of the course. If you anticipate needing a deadline extension, please make such arrangements at least one week prior to the due date.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

Some research suggests that writing notes on paper helps you learn and study better. But if you have a need or preference to use a laptop, that's fine. If you do use a device, you might be asked to sit in a particular location in the room that we think is most suitable for the learning environment for other students in the class. Audio or video recording in class is prohibited unless prior authorization is granted. No devices are allowed during assessments unless specified otherwise.

You need consistent access to a working computer and printer for this course. In the event your computer or printer is not functioning, plan ahead so you are prepared to arrange for your own access to university equipment. If you wish to use e-versions of course readings, you may use personal technology in class, but do not allow yourself to be distracted by email or the Web during class time. Students whose excessive in-class use of electronic devices distracts themselves, other students, or the instructors, will receive lower participation grades, be requested to leave the classroom (which will result in an absence), etc., as the situation warrants.

## ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION POLICY

Your participation in class exercises and discussion is critical to the quality of your experience in the course and the success of your fellow students. You should attend each class session prepared to actively participate in class discussions. If you anticipate being absent, please make arrangements with your instructors prior to your absence, in order to turn in assignments due, in-class work which takes

place the day you are absent, etc. Unexcused absences are counted against your participation in the class. Reasons for anticipated absences must be cleared with an instructor before the absence. The University of Wyoming does not accept doctor's notes. Excuses for emergency absences must be reported to an instructor as soon as possible, but not more than one week after returning to class. We will grant excused absences according to the university policy. University-sponsored absences are cleared through the Office of Student Life. See the University Student Absence Policy (6-713) at <http://www.uwyo.edu/generalcounsel/info.asp?p=3077>. We reserve the right to lower your course grade for poor attendance or routinely late work.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

We consider participating regularly in discussions and staying up to date on readings and assignments an important aspect of academic integrity. In addition you must also follow UW's Honesty Code (UW Regulation 6-802), which prohibits acts of plagiarism. For the purposes of this course, we define plagiarism as presenting the writing, images, or other intellectual property of others as one's own without appropriate permission, attribution and/or citation. Just as you cite written sources, you are expected to attribute images with the same diligence. If you have questions about how to credit and/or cite sources and images in your work, please do not hesitate to seek my assistance.

### **PRE-POST SURVEY FOR SCICOMM KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES**

Along with Dr. Kristin Landreville (Communication and journalism) and Dr. Jamie Crait (Dir., Wyoming Research Scholars Program), in the graduate and undergraduate courses we are teaching this academic year, we are tracking students' initial and final attitudes, capabilities, and motivations associated with several modes of public communication about science. To measure prior knowledge and attitudes, and to assess the efficacy of course design and implementation, we are conducting anonymous pre- and post-course surveys. Taking these surveys will be optional and will not affect your grade.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Everything in this schedule is subject to change. ☺ Please be flexible; we will provide as much notice as possible if anything changes. Course readings, assignments, and contents will be adjusted to your needs as we move through this together. Such changes may include guest speakers as relevant and possible.

<b>Week/Day</b>	<b>Homework due via WyoCourses on Mondays at midnight.</b>	<b>In-class</b>
1- 30 Aug  Intro & Welcome!		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writing sample and survey.</li> <li>● Interview a partner.</li> <li>● Draft interview</li> <li>● Syllabus, including course blog and social media expectations</li> <li>● Introduce public art assignment &amp; start planning</li> <li>● Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul>
2 - 6 Sept Science of SciComm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Readings (read in the following order):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ National Academy of Sciences report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Science of SciComm with Dr. Kristen Landreville</li> <li>● SciArt mini-lecture</li> </ul>

<p>&amp; Making Connections: Science + Public Art Audio Guides</p>	<p>re science communication (pages 11-49)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Optional, will be discussed in class: Science communication as political communication (Scheufele 2014); Finding your place on the science – advocacy continuum (Donner 2014)</li> <li>● Written response as detailed on assignment page (see WyoCourses)</li> <li>● 2-3 questions you can bring up in discussion with Dr. Kristen Landreville</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Working with the <a href="#">Laramie Mural Project brochure</a></li> <li>● Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul>
<p>3 - 13 Sept Making Connections: Science + Public Art Audio Guides</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Listen to two of the audio guides on this website: <a href="http://interpretingenergy.weebly.com/listen-now.html">http://interpretingenergy.weebly.com/listen-now.html</a>.</li> <li>● Summary/Response for each + 1 sentence summarizing connection in each.</li> <li>● Select two local public art pieces that you could pursue for this assignment.</li> <li>● Research artwork, including media, artist, contemporary issues, etc.</li> <li>● Draft 1-3 pages integrating your research and the art piece; need to work in at least one visual from your research, and make that relate to the public artwork. Take a picture of the public artwork and include that, too.</li> <li>● Come to class prepared to informally present your ideas; print out the visuals you used (incl. your public artworks).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Peer reviews</li> <li>● Discussion with Meg Thompson re <a href="#">Laramie Public Art Coalition</a></li> <li>● Target audiences etc.</li> <li>● Summarize your art-science connections</li> <li>● Write a personal letter about your project</li> <li>● Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul>
<p>4 - 20 Sept Science of SciComm on Social Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Written and recorded drafts of your audio guide</li> <li>● Readings on social media scicomm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Science of scicomm on social media with Dr. Paige Jarreau</li> <li>● Social media experiences, ideas, and concerns</li> <li>● Planning social media</li> <li>● Introduction to HootSuite</li> <li>● Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul>
<p>5 - 27 Sept</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Listen to your classmates' audios.</li> <li>● <i>Then, only after listening</i>, print your</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Critique session with Erin Jones (host of <a href="#">HumaNature</a>)</li> </ul>

<p>Making Connections: Science + Public Art Audio Guides</p>	<p>classmates' written scripts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the bottom of the scripts, type in your Summary/Response (for each classmate). Bring print-outs to class <i>and</i> submit online.</li> <li>Readings on "how to write for radio"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise audio guides</li> <li>Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul> <p><b>**SOMETIME BEFORE NEXT WEEK'S CLASS, SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH BETHANN AND BRIAN TO DO A FINAL RECORDING OF YOUR PIECE. PLAN ON AT LEAST 30 MINUTES FOR THIS.**</b></p>
<p>6 - 4 Oct WyoBio Minute</p>	<p><b>Bring headphones to class today.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to a "science" podcast.</li> <li>Summary/Response</li> <li>Identify who you think the target audience is/was.</li> <li>Then, write ~100-250 words about the ways in which the podcast was/wasn't successful in effectively communicating science to that audience.</li> <li>Provide a link to this podcast and your summary to Wyo Courses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to WyoBioMinute</li> <li>List of ten aspects of Wyoming natural history that connects to your research</li> <li>Peer review</li> <li>Listen to <i>WyoBio Minute</i></li> <li>Write and record first draft</li> <li>Peer review:</li> <li>Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul>
<p>7 - 11 Oct WyoBio Minute &amp; Visualizing SciComm: Image selection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record on phone or computer and submit to WyoCourses along with copy transcript</li> <li>Submit three images and a caption for each that captures the point of your <i>Minute</i></li> <li>Listen to all of your peer's <i>minutes</i> and critique each one using the peer evaluations on Wyo Courses</li> <li>Peers vote, via Wyo Courses on the best image for each <i>Minute</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop-style critique session with WY Public Radio's Erin Jones</li> <li>Revise <i>Minute</i></li> <li>Image selection discussion</li> <li>Use of images for science communication</li> <li>Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul> <p><b>**SOMETIME BEFORE NEXT WEEK'S CLASS, SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH BETHANN AND BRIAN TO DO A FINAL PRACTICE RECORDING OF YOUR PIECE. PLAN ON AT LEAST 30 MINUTES FOR THIS.**</b></p>
<p>8 - 18 Oct Scientists and the Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Readings on interacting with the media</li> <li>Summary/Response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TENTATIVE: Panel on interacting with the media.</li> <li>Research local and regional reporters who might be interested in your research.</li> <li>Draft pitch to one of these reporters</li> <li>Homework &amp; prep for next week</li> </ul>

<p>9 - 25 Oct</p> <p>Science Storytelling: Interactive Public Presentations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings on visual science communication</li> <li>• Worksheet re “shot list” for communicating your research</li> <li>• Research/bring to class 3+ examples of public communication (in your field) that is tailored to distinct audiences (children, adults, special interest/demographic group). Be prepared to talk about how the communication is tailored for each group and to critique it (+s &amp; -s)</li> </ul>	<p>INFORMAL ASSIGNMENTS, WORKFLOW, AND GUEST SPEAKERS FOR THIS SECTION WILL BE DETERMINED BASED ON YOUR NEEDS AND INTERESTS FOR THIS PROJECT. THUS, THIS SECTION OF THE SYLLABUS IS TO BE DETERMINED, WITH YOUR INPUT.</p>
<p>10 - 1 Nov</p> <p>Science Storytelling: Interactive Public Presentations</p>	<p>TBA</p>	<p>TBA</p>
<p>11 - 8 Nov</p> <p>Science Storytelling: Interactive Public Presentations</p>	<p>TBA</p>	<p>TBA</p>
<p>12 -15 Nov</p> <p>Science Storytelling: Interactive Public Presentations</p>	<p>TBA</p>	<p>TBA</p>
<p>13 -22 Nov</p> <p>Science Storytelling: Interactive Public Presentations</p>	<p>TBA</p>	<p>Thanksgiving Break - no class Use this time to work on _____.</p>

14 - 29 Nov Science Storytelling: Interactive Public Presentations	TBA	TBA
15 - 6 Dec Wrap-up	TBA	Post-course survey Provide your contact info for 6-month survey
16 - 13 Dec	May or may not have class during finals week. Depends on how schedule, and your work, develops over the course of the semester.	