

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2019-2020

Writing for the Profession

MINT147-1 - Autumn - 3 ECTS

11 & 12 October 2019

Friday from 12:15 Rooms S1, S3
Saturday from 10:00 Rooms S3, S4

Course Description

This two-day, hands-on workshop will prepare students for careers in international affairs with a focus on developing the advanced analytical and practical skills needed for producing clear and concise written policy communications. The multitude of actors engaged in international affairs today produces a cacophony of voices, positions, demands, and priorities. Students will gain a sound understanding of the international policy context. They will learn how to produce clear policy documents that will cut through the noise, enabling them to reach their policy objectives. They will also learn how to identify and sift out relevant information from the noise, and feed it back into their own policy and communication strategies.

> PROFESSOR

[Cecilia Cannon](#)

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Office hours: Before and after the workshop, or by appointment

Syllabus

This hands-on workshop will be divided into four parts. Each part will commence with a short lecture to introduce the topics and to explain the tools students will use. Each short introductory lecture will be followed by a practical exercise that will enable students to sharpen their skills by putting what they learn into practice.

Part one: Understanding the international policy context

- Identify the structural/institutional opportunities for formal input into international policy processes
- Establish clear objectives for your written policy communications
- Identify and understand your target audience

Part two: Learning how to write clearly and concisely / preparing a policy brief

- Learn about writing substance, form and style
- Become familiar with message framing techniques

- Learn how to structure and write a policy brief

Part three: Preparing and submitting statements in *policy-making* processes

- Review statements submitted to actual international policy-making processes to identify those that are effective, and those that are not (and why)
- Learn how to structure a three-minute oral and written statement in the context of international policy processes

Part four: Writing reports that policy practitioners will read in *follow up and review* processes

- Review reports submitted to international follow up and review processes to identify those that are effective, and those that are not (and why)
- Learn how to structure reports submitted in the context of follow up and review processes for various international agreements

Required readings

Students will be given excerpts from the following texts, and are encouraged to read them in their entirety.

Classic texts on writing style and structure

- Orwell, George 1946 "Politics and the English Language."
- Strunk, Oliver 1935 *The Elements of Style* fourth edition revised by William Strunk Jr. and Edward A. Tenney 2000.

Texts on policy writing

- Smith, Catherine 2018 *Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Making Process* Fifth Edition Oxford University Press
- Joachim, Jutta. 2007. "NGOs and UN Agenda-Setting: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Strategies." Chp. 1 in *Agenda Setting, The UN, and NGOs*. Georgetown University Press. Washington D.C.

Policy documents, briefs, reports and statements

As part of the practical exercises, students will review policy documents, briefs, reports and statements from current / recent international policy processes related to their MINT specialisation tracks: the environment, health, migration, security and conflict, and finance. A full list of, and links to these documents will be made available prior to the start of the Spring semester. They will include statements from the process that led to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development review process; human rights Universal Periodic Review process and the Treaty Bodies committee sessions; the UNFCCC COP sessions; the Global Compact for Migration negotiations; among others to be confirmed.

Evaluation

Students will be evaluated for the 3 ECTS based on participation, including demonstration that they have read and thought about the required readings; and delivery and quality of the three practical writing exercises completed during the workshop.

- Active participation and contribution to the course 20%
- Delivery and quality of the policy brief 40%

- Delivery and quality of the two-minute statement 40%