

Course Tag Reflection Exemplar Communication Skills

Jane M. Read, Ph.D.
GEO 215: Global Environmental Change

Identify the course learning objectives in the syllabus that are clearly aligned to Communication Skills and respective assignment(s).

Two CLOSs clearly align to the communication skills competency:

1. Synthesize, in writing, natural and human drivers of global environmental change.
2. Critically read scientific literature on global environmental change.

The first requires that students are able to develop arguments and ideas about drivers of environmental change and communicate those in writing. The second helps students learn how scientists communicate their ideas and research findings in the literature.

Explain the connection between specific assignment(s) and Communication Skills. At least 30% of the course grade must engage students in the selected competency for the course to be tagged.

Two scaffolded writing assignments:

Assignment 1: literature search and annotated bibliography (10%). Students practice searching the scientific literature, research a topic, write a brief topic summary, annotate selected sources.

Assignment 2: final term paper (20%). Students write a final term paper on an environmental topic of their choosing. The paper is primarily based on the peer-reviewed literature. Students are expected to write a compelling argument about their topic.

30% of the course grade relates directly to this competency.

Describe in detail the instructional strategies faculty use to intentionally teach Communication Skills in the course.

This class incorporates frequent and short assignments to practice writing and reading scientific material; guest speaker from library to discuss literature searches; two class sessions dedicated specifically to the scientific literature and writing; discussion sections with TA to discuss assigned readings and discuss appropriate writing topics and strategies.

Describe the feedback tool(s) faculty use to support students' competency development on Communication Skills.

Faculty and TAs provide open-ended written feedback on written assignments. Writing assignments 1 and 2 are graded using rubrics as well as open-ended comments.