



STORYTELLING IN STEM:

HOW PROFESSIONALS IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS NARRATE THEIR WORK

Course Meetings: Hyflex, Tuesdays 2:00–3:15 Haley 3332

Instructor: Dr. Amy Cicchino (she, her, hers), amycicchino@auburn.edu, office hours by appointment

Storytelling is not just for creative writers. In reality, all professionals tell stories to communicate what they do and who they are. For STEM professionals, in particular, stories can communicate research goals and ideas, data, and actionable conclusions. In this reading group, we will investigate how STEM professionals communicate their work and its findings through storytelling. Through readings and discussion, participants will learn strategies for communicating their professional identities and research to various audiences (other professionals in their fields, professional nonexperts, and public audiences).

Questions Guiding the Course

- How does one tell an effective story focused around research and data?
- How does audience, context, and purpose guide storytelling in STEM?
- How can we apply storytelling strategies to help us forward our own professional goals?

Book Club Course Components

Weekly: Each week will have two components: a reading and application activity. The readings center around the topic, how STEM professionals tell stories. The accompanying application activities give you an opportunity to think about how the reading applies to your world. Sometimes, these application activities will be part of a larger class discussion; other times, they will be turned into Canvas where you will get instructor feedback. These tasks will take up about 2-hours of your time each week.

Final Project: Tell your story. As we will be learning about storytelling in STEM, it's important that you consider how these concepts apply to your life. In the final weeks of the course, we will each tell our own story through the creation of a professional artifact. This artifact must communicate some part of your identity and can take up your research, professional aspirations, honors thesis topic, etc. It can take any form as long as it is fitting for your imagined audience, purpose, and context.¹

Purpose: What is this artifact meant to accomplish?

Context: Where and when would you create and distribute this? Would it be shared with professionals in your discipline at an academic conference or to the community?

Audience: Who do you imagine reading this text? I want you to think about an audience outside of this course. How have you designed the text to be effective for that audience?

Some options:

- Create an infographic that visually summarizes your research (honors thesis topic, field of research, a particular project you're working on)
- Deliver a short presentation in the style of a [PechaKucha](#), [Ignite Session](#), or [3-Min Thesis](#)
- Create a scientific poster

¹ These considerations—purpose, context, audience—should affect the format you choose to communicate in, the language you use, the visual design, and other strategies to telling your story.

- Create a flyer for extension offices to use to inform others
- Draft a cover letter and CV/resume for an internship or graduate program
- Start an [ePortfolio](#), to use on the job or graduate school market. You don't need to have a complete ePortfolio by the end of the course, but build the shell, about me section, and one example artifact
- Already working on something for another class? Why not use what you learn here to refine the draft and get feedback on it? Just be sure to coordinate due dates

What's a Hyflex Course?

This class will be hyflex, which means it will take place on Tuesdays from 2-3:15 in Haley 3106. However, **you can choose to attend this course online or in person.** This choice will not affect your ability to succeed in the course.

If you attend the course in person, you must wear a mask at all times that covers your nose and your mouth and have a green pass from the Auburn health tracking app (i.e., not have a fever or other COVID symptoms). I realize wearing a mask for a full class meeting may be uncomfortable for some of you—especially if you have health issues that make wearing a mask for a prolonged period of time difficult. **If this is the case, attend the course online in an environment where you can safely attend without a mask.** If you attend class without a mask or fail to keep your mask on during class, you'll be asked to leave and join the course online. This requirement helps us all stay safe and not act as carriers when we return home to our loved ones, who may have pre-existing conditions.

To accommodate all course participants, any student meetings will be held over Zoom and can be made by appointment by emailing me, amycicchino@auburn.edu.

Learning in the Time of COVID

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, public health measures have been implemented across Auburn's campus. Students should stay current with these practices and expectations through the campus reentry plan, [A Healthier U](#). The sections below provide expectations and conduct related to COVID-19 issues. The following statements are items that faculty can consider including in your syllabi.

Health and Participation in Class

You are expected to complete your Healthcheck screener daily.

Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you must follow the instructions on the Healthcheck app. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others.

Please do the following in the event of an illness or COVID-related absence:

- Notify me in advance of your absence, if possible
- Provide me with medical documentation, if possible
- Keep up with coursework as much as possible
- Participate in class activities and submit assignments remotely as much as possible
- Notify me if you require a modification to the deadline of an assignment or exam
- Finally, if remaining in a class and fulfilling the necessary requirements becomes impossible due to illness or other COVID-related issues, please let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss your options.

Students with questions about COVID-related illnesses should reach out to the COVID Resource Center at (334) 844-6000 or at ahealthieru@auburn.edu.

Health and Well-Being Resources

These are difficult times, and academic and personal stress is a natural result. Everyone is encouraged to take care of themselves and their peers. If you need additional support, there are several resources on campus to assist you:

- COVID Response Team (www.ahealthieru.edu)
- Student Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://wp.auburn.edu/scs/>)
- AU Medical Clinic (<https://cws.auburn.edu/aumc/>)
- If you or someone you know are experiencing food, housing or financial insecurity, please visit the Auburn Cares Office (<http://aucares.auburn.edu/>)

A Healthier U Campus Community Expectations

We are all responsible for protecting ourselves and our community. Please read about student expectations for fall semester, including completing the daily GuideSafe™ Healthcheck (<https://ahealthieru.auburn.edu/>).

You are expected to (1) take your temperature daily and (2) complete your Healthcheck screener to receive your A Healthier U pass. **You may be asked at any time during class to show your pass.**

Course Expectations Related to COVID-19:

- **Face Coverings:** As a member of the Auburn University academic community you are required to follow all university guidelines for personal safety with face coverings, physical distancing, and sanitation. Face coverings are required in this class and in all campus buildings. Note that face coverings must meet safety specifications, be worn correctly, and be socially appropriate.

You are required to wear your face coverings at all times. If you remove your face covering or are non-compliant with the university's [policy on face coverings](#), you will be instructed to leave the classroom and will be held to the protocols outlined in the [Auburn University Policy on Classroom Behavior](#). Any student who willfully refuses to wear a face covering and does not have a noted accommodation may be subject to disciplinary action.

- **Physical Distancing:** Students should observe appropriate physical distancing and follow all classroom signage/avoid congregating around doorways before or after class. If the instructional space has designated entrance and exit doors, you should use them. **Students should exit the instructional space immediately after the end of instruction to help ensure social distancing and allow for the persons attending the next scheduled class session to enter.**
- **Course Attendance:** If you are quarantined or otherwise need to miss class because you have been advised that you may have been exposed to COVID-19, you will be expected to develop a plan to keep up with your coursework during any such absences.
- **Course Meeting Schedule:** This course might not have a traditional meeting schedule in Fall 2020. Be sure to pay attention to any updates to the course schedule as the information in this syllabus may have changed. Please discuss any questions you have with me.

- **Technology Requirements:** This course may require particular technologies to complete coursework. If you need access to additional technological support, please contact the AU Bookstore at aubookstore@auburn.edu.

Disruptive or concerning classroom behavior involving the failure to wear a face covering, as directed by Auburn University, represents a potential Code of Student Conduct violation and may be reported as a non-academic violation. Please consult the [Classroom Behavior Policy](#).

Course Delivery Changes Related to COVID-19

Please be aware that the situation regarding COVID-19 is frequently changing, and the delivery mode of this course may adjust accordingly. In the event that the delivery method is altered, please be assured that the learning goals and outcomes of the course will not change; however, some aspects of the course will change in terms of the mode of delivery, participation, and testing methods. Those details will be shared via Canvas as soon as possible. Please be prepared for this contingency by ensuring that you have access to a computer and reliable Internet.