



# Epidemiology and Population Health Summer Institute at Columbia University



**WEEK 3: JUNE 19-20** 8:30AM - 5:30PM

## Communicating Public Health in the Media

**DESCRIPTION**

This course will provide early and mid-career scientists with a toolkit for engaging non-experts in public health discourse through coverage of their work in mainstream media outlets. As a pragmatic science focused on the health of populations, public health is of inherent relevance to consumers of mass media, and its accurate and engaging portrayal is crucial to informing public conversation about health policy. The course will provide a bridge between the distinct orientations of scientists (who want to know, "what's next?") and the public (which wants to know, "what does this science mean?") by exploring the real-world impact of media coverage of public health on science and society; by examining how journalists and editors determine whether they will cover scientific findings and public health initiatives; and by highlighting typical communication glitches between scientists and non-experts and emphasizing techniques to avoid them in both verbal and written formats. The course will provide a survey of the mainstream media landscape, as well as convey the limitations of health and science coverage in these venues, emphasizing in lectures, discussions and workshops how participants can tap their strength as writers and speakers to bring their work to an interested public.

**INSTRUCTOR**

▪ **Jordan Lite, MPH**

**OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, participants will be able to

- Identify opportunities to bring a public health issue into the news landscape by zeroing in on the "scoop" in their science
- Understand the components of successful translation of science into meaningful and accurate layman's terms
- Dissect and map the anatomy of a mainstream health or science piece, and understand how it differs from a journal article, press release and informational content (such as that found on government websites like MedlinePlus)
- Draft a pitch letter to an editor or reporter
- Use social media to engage the public in scientific discourse

**EARLY DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE UNTIL APRIL 1, 2017**

**REGISTRATION OPEN THROUGH MAY 1, 2017**

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