Welcome to Science Communication

Instructor: Dina Navon
Mondays at 1:25
French Hall 209, unless otherwise specified
Introduce Yourself!

• Pick a partner and get to know them a little better!
Ask:
  o Who are you?
  o What program/department do you hail from?
  o Why are you interested in science communication?
  o What do you like to do for fun?
  o …?

• Be ready to share with the class everything you learned about your partner

• You have 5 minutes
Who am I?
Who am I?
Pre-Survey

What do you know already and what do you want to learn?
Course Goals
Course Website
What is “science communication” anyways? Give me some examples.
Let’s define science communication…

...as telling stories about your science!
Who is your favorite storyteller?
How To Develop an Elevator Pitch

• What is an elevator pitch?
  o If you got on an elevator, met someone, and only had the time between getting on and getting off…this pitch is what you’d say to them.
  o Short summary of your work

• What’s the point of it?
  o Engage!
  o Inform!
  o Start a conversation

• When would we need an elevator pitch?
  o Meeting a new friend outside of UMass/academia
  o Talking to a journalist
  o Meeting a faculty member
  o Having lunch or dinner with a seminar speaker
  o Going home for the holidays and talking with family or old friends
  o ...
Are they one size fits all?
How to Develop an Elevator Pitch

What makes a bad pitch?

- Too long
  - We know a lot about our research
  - We want to share that knowledge, which is good!
  - But make sure that you keep it relatively short
- Jargon heavy
  - We sometimes assume that everyone speaks our language
  - Always explain your jargon!
- Ignore the applications
  - We get caught up in the technical details because we have to know them
  - Try to incorporate your “broader impacts”
- Non-verbal cues matter!
  - Posture
  - Eye contact
  - Handshake
  - Facial Expressions
How To Develop an Elevator Pitch

• What makes a good pitch?
  o Consider your **audience** and **objective** and rework your **message** to fit your needs
  o Practice
    • In front of the mirror
    • Record yourself
    • With different types of audiences and objectives
  o Plan your **message** by answering the following questions:
    • **Who am I?**
    • **What do I do?**
    • Why should my audience care?
      o What’s the problem I’m trying to solve?
      o Why does it matter?
      o What are the potential solutions?
      o What are the benefits of fixing it?
My name is Dina Navon and I’m a fifth year PhD candidate in Organismic & Evolutionary Biology here at UMass. I work with Dr. Craig Albertson, and together we are looking at the genetic and environmental factors that underlie ecologically significant variation in fin shape in a group of fish called African cichlids. We hope to better understand the interplay between genes and the environment over the course of development because many diseases have their roots in this intricate process.
What could I have done better?
What did I do well?
Your Turn…

• For your first homework, plan out your “baseline” elevator pitch and practice it once or twice
  o Objective: Start a conversation with someone
  o Audience: broad, non-technical

• Next week, you will give your pitches to some special guests who will stand in as different types of audiences – you will need to adapt your pitch to each of them