

## LB321: Science and the Public: The Briggs Experience

### Instructor Information

---

Section: 001 + 002

Instructor: Dr. Greg Lusk (he/him/his...they is also fine)

E-mail: [greglusk@msu.edu](mailto:greglusk@msu.edu)

Office hours: Virtually by Appointment (please arrange via email)

Office Location: Holmes 188E (please don't go there during pandemic)

Class Meeting Time: Tues/Thurs 12:40 PM - 2:30 PM [001] + 3 PM – 4:50 [002]

### Text

---

*All of the material for this course will be provided to the student on D2L. No textbook is required.*

### Technology Requirements

---

- Internet connection
- Familiarity with D2L
- Flipgrid Access (signup will occur via D2L upon first use)

### Course Delivery

---

This course will be delivered *online* through the course management system and you will need your MSU NetID to login to the course from the *D2L homepage* (<http://d2l.msu.edu>).

### Technical Assistance

---

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem you can:

Visit the [Distance Learning Services Support Site](#)

Visit the [Desire2Learn Help Site](http://help.d2l.msu.edu/) (<http://help.d2l.msu.edu/>)

Or call Distance Learning Services: (800) 500-1554 or (517) 355-2345

### Course Overview

---

Many of you joined Lyman Briggs College to become scientists, but not just mere scientists, *good scientists*. That is, you wanted to become good doctors, good dentists, good researchers, good environmental scientists, good physicists, good science policy advisors, and good techs. But what does that mean? Often it means that you not only have the knowledge needed to perform your job and the skills to acquire new knowledge (or other skills) when needed, but also *that you know the relevant social consequences of your work*. When faced with decisions, you will know enough about the social context to make good choices, choices that will respect the values and identities of others.

What does LBC need to teach you to make these good choices? Last semester, I asked a class of LBC students who were completing their HPS sequence that question. My hope is that they could identify topics that were not only crucial to becoming a good scientist, but were crucial to

ensuring good scientists knew what the public needed. They designed this course for you. Each of these student researched topics they thought you might be interested in. They designed online course modules for you to take and discuss.

I will be running an experiment: I'm going to compare your reactions to the student designed modules to those that I designed. My theory is that you will like the students' modules better. You will, as part of this class, add to these materials by refining the content. Perhaps even one day this will turn into a textbook that you have helped author. In that way, you might leave a lasting mark on the Briggs community.

## Course Aims

---

### *Outcomes*

By the end of the course, students will:

- gain a deeper understanding of the dynamic interactions between "the public" and the institutions, practices, and ways of thinking associated with science.
- be able to argue for their own position on a controversial topic pertaining to science and the public
- refine course materials to better serve future students.

### *Achieving Outcomes*

To successfully achieve these outcomes, students will:

- Perform the reading required for assigned sessions
- Watch video tutorials and attend occasional zoom lectures
- Complete session assignments
- Post participation questions and videos.

## Policies

---

**Respect: All course policies, and course discussion, must flow from a fundamental commitment to respect one another.** I aim to treat my students with respect, and I expect students to treat me and fellow students with respect. In a discussion-based "classroom," this translates to listening charitably, speaking thoughtfully, and taking responsibility for your actions. The following policies have been crafted with this kind of respect in mind.

**Inclusion: In university, we take on the challenge of examining our core values and beliefs, but in order to do so we must foster an inclusive, safe environment.** All of us, myself included, need to feel safe before exposing or questioning our core values and beliefs. We need not always agree, but we must respect one another, allow one another to make mistakes, and—when appropriate—extend a helping hand. **If you ever feel excluded by me or a classmate, please talk to me or find some way to let me know. I will try to do better.**

**Attendance:** Though this course is online, there may be Zoom meetings. These meetings will be a required aspect of the class.

**Valid Excuses:** Unsurprisingly, the global pandemic has made this moment in history one of significant uncertainty. I will do my best to remain flexible in the face of student needs arising from sickness, family care, mental health, etc. I hope that students also recognize that this is a difficult time for their professors and remain flexible with them as well. I will do everything I can to help you succeed. Please let me know, as soon as you know, when something is prohibiting you from success, so that we can work out a plan together.

**Communication:** Questions and comments should be emailed to the instructor from your MSU.EDU email address. You **MUST put LB321 in the beginning of the subject line** and then describe the issue (I run filters on my email, and this will ensure your email gets seen in the proper way). I endeavor to reply within 2 business days. Grades will be posted on D2L.

## **Class Structure**

---

There are two modes by which class will be conducted.

### **Online Sessions**

You will work through no more than 2 online modules per week at your own pace. Activities and material for each week's modules need to be submitted **every Sunday by 11:59 pm**. There will be checklist available to help remind you of the exercises in each module. Each week's modules will appear no later than the scheduled class time (i.e. Tuesday and Thurs), rather than all being available at the start of the course (so you might not be able to see all the modules quite yet). I will endeavor to have the modules up ahead of time when I can.

You should complete each module in the order presented in D2L. I've broken the course down into pieces in case you only have a short amount of time to work on the module, but the readings, activities, and exercises may build off each other so they should be completed in order. D2L will tell you (and me) when you've clicked on a page. Please work ahead if you would like to and can do so.

At the end of each module there will be a checklist or quiz to ensure that you've completed all the relevant aspects of the module and that you earn a grade for your participation.

### **Zoom Sessions**

There will also be live Zoom Sessions that you are required to attend. These Zoom sessions will give you an opportunity to discuss the topics with your peers, ask the instructor questions, and work with partners on your assignments.

If you have questions about the course, email is the best way to reach me [greglusk@msu.edu](mailto:greglusk@msu.edu). We can set up a phone or zoom appointment as well.

## Assignments

---

Assignment	% of Final Grade	Due Dates
Online Sessions	60%	All relevant material completed each Sunday by 11:59 pm that follows the session.
Analysis Rewrite Assignment	10%	Sunday Feb 21st 11:59 PM
Annotated Bibliography	10%	<b>Tuesday March 30th 11:59 PM*</b>
Topic Inclusion Argument	20%	Sunday April 25 <sup>th</sup> 11:59 PM

**\*only non-Sunday due date**

**Online Sessions** – You are expected to listen to, read, or watch, the content of each session before attempting to do the exercises and activities specified. The exercises will ask you to discuss, debate, role play, or engage the general topic from a variety of perspectives. Each week by Sunday at midnight, you will be asked to submit some of this work and a checklist for a grade. Since this might be the first time you're engaging with these topics, I'm not expecting polished and professional responses (you'll do that in other parts of the course), but I am expecting active engagement with the exercises. I will give you full points each week for satisfactory completion (and will let you know if something is unsatisfactory and needs to be reworked for full points). Each session's checklist will make clear what needs to be submitted, and you are responsible for completing the checklist which will give you a grade.

**More specifics regarding the three assignments will be given on D2L as their due dates approach.**

## Grading

---

The educational literature points to a significant difference between an online course and one that occurs in a brick-and-mortar classroom: in an online course, students shoulder more responsibility to keep themselves on track. In a classroom the professor can control the environment. They end up eliminating distracting phones, quieting talking students, forcing

students to look at the content, and talking with them if they look lost. Online, professors lack this ability; students are in control of the learning environment. Creating a good learning environment can be hard at the best of times, never mind during a pandemic.

The educational literature also points to the consequences of the student-controlled learning environment: students fall behind, and a much higher percentage of students don't finish online courses than drop out of in-person classes.

I've designed this grading scheme to combat these problems. It emphasizes getting the work done and engagement with the content.

**Weekly Sessions:** A majority of the points in this class will be earned through completing the sessions posted each week, that is, engagement with the content and completing of each session. If students work through the entire session and perform all the required activities and exercises, they get full marks for that day. To get the points for these sessions, students will need to complete the checklist at the end of the session.

**Late Assignments:** Once the due date for assignments has passed, *there is a 5% penalty for lateness*; this includes the Sunday deadline for session completion. Assignments can be completed and turned in for the reduced grade *until a week after the due date, or at a different date with the instructor's permission*. After that time has passed, a student can no longer submit their work and will receive no credit on the assignment. If a medical or other situation arises that prohibits work, please contact the instructor to make the appropriate accommodations as soon as you are able.

### **Accommodations**

---

**Accommodation and Special Consideration: I want to make this class as accessible as possible so that no student is disadvantaged. Students needing accommodation or special consideration should contact me as early in the semester as possible.** This includes Students with Disabilities, athletes, or others requesting accommodation. Students with Disabilities requesting accommodation should register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities. RCPD is in 120 Bessey Hall and may be reached at 353-9642.

### **Academic Honesty**

---

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the Philosophy Department adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, *Protection of Scholarship and Grades*; the all-University Policy on *Integrity of Scholarship and Grades*; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide* and/or the MSU Web site: [www.msu.edu](http://www.msu.edu).) Therefore, unless authorized by the instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including a failing grade on

the assignment or in the course. Contact me if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/dishonestyFAQ.html> )

## **Important Dates**

---

Jan 12 and 14 Reading and Reflection Classes

**Jan 19th Zoom Introduction to Class**

Jan 21st First Online Session: All assignments and checklists due by Sunday 11:59 PM following a Session.

Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> **Break Day (No Session or Zoom Meeting)**

Mar 10<sup>th</sup> Middle of Semester

Apr 20<sup>th</sup> ZOOM Farewell: Last Session

May 2<sup>nd</sup> **Last Day to Turn in Eligible Assignments**

**Students should view the calendar in D2L for a more detailed schedule.**

Any changes made to this schedule will be announced ahead of time and due dates will always be moved in the students' favor (i.e. later in time rather than before, unless there is class consensus for some other procedure).

## **COVID-19**

---

In case Dr. Greg Lusk should become ill and be unable to fulfill his duties as instructor, Dr. Stef Shuster will become instructor in Greg's stead.

COVID-19 will impact us all, albeit in different ways. Please contact the instructor if you need accommodation or an exception due to COVID-19 complications.

If you need someone to talk to privately, MSU subscribes to the MySSP app, which connects you with a trained mental health provider 24 hours a day (expect a 15-30 minute wait to locate someone). It's easy, free, and can be done through your smartphone an unlimited amount of times.

Please remember that MSU provides counseling and mental health services to undergraduate students free of charge. More information can be found at [caps.msu.edu](http://caps.msu.edu).