Beyond the Lab: Podcasting, Interviewing and Communicating Research to Diverse Audiences (Spring 2026)

Lecturer

Dr. Sorina Matthey de l'Endroit (bio; email: crisan.sorina@gmail.com)

ECTS

1.5 ECTS

Summary

Today's neuroscience researchers are increasingly expected to communicate their work beyond academic circles, through interviews, podcasts, public speaking, and digital platforms. However, many researchers are not trained in these formats or the persuasive techniques needed to adapt complex content to different audiences.

This hands-on course allows doctoral students to enhance their competencies in podcasting, interviewing, and persuasive communication, with the goal of making their research clear and engaging for diverse audiences. Combining podcast design, interviewing skills, and persuasion theory, students will learn to adapt complex ideas for journalists, funding bodies, the general public or fellow academics. They will also build a basic online presence to support their professional visibility.

Throughout the course, students will work in fixed pairs to plan, conduct, and edit a peer interview or to create a professional website, applying the tools covered in each session. Fixed pairs will be formed in Session 2 based on complementary research topics/interests. The course includes 14 hours of in-class sessions plus individual and collaborative work outside class. Students may adjust the time spent outside the classroom reading course materials and refining their peer interview, website, or audio-visual elements according to their own goals, while meeting the overall expectations for a 1.5 ECTS course. Virtual office hours to be shared on Moodle. Active in-person participation is mandatory for the seven on-campus sessions; the two remote sessions (Session 3 and Session 8) are completed independently. Absences from in-person sessions should be justified in advance via email and may affect the participation grade.

By the end of the course, students will have:

- A foundational understanding of podcast creation, interviewing techniques, and strategic research communication
- Persuasive, simple, clear written summaries of their own research tailored to two target audiences
- Final project:

  - *Option A*: A 3–5 min recorded peer interview segment in audio-visual (video) format with interview guide and analytical description of their choices
  - *Option B*: A one-page website to support professional online research visibility with a 2-min long self-recorded description of own research (audio-visual/video content) embedded in the website, plus analytical description of their choices.

Course Location

Lectures and workshops take place Friday mornings, 9:30am – 11:30am, at Campus Biotech, Building H8, Room H8-01-A (Chem. des Mines 9, 1202 Genève).

Course Schedule and Sessions

Date	Title & Format	Main Topics
April 17, 2026	Session 1: Introduction to Podcasting and Scientific Storytelling: Why & How Scientists Podcast	Introductions, course outline, using AI; podcast elements (concept, timeline, style, host types, examples); why scientists podcast (motivations, impact, success criteria). *10 min break in middle.*
April 24, 2026	Session 2: Designing Your Podcast Concept + Outreach Strategy	Podcast concept development & target audience; translating complex science; multilingual Swiss context; 'simplify to amplify' framework & examples. (Platforms, legal, ethical & copyright basics provided as handout on Moodle.) *10 min break in middle.*
May 1, 2026 (Holiday)	Session 3: Persuasion & Interviewing Basics (watch 3 videos before the next session)	One video or article on persuasion vs manipulation. One podcast episode (TBD). One interview (TBD). Goal: Reflect on concepts studied in session 1 & 2 and learn basics for session 4 & 5. **No class meeting.**
May 8, 2026	Session 4: Persuasion & Communication: Tools for Scientists	Recap & discussion of videos; persuasion theory & history; understanding mindset and audience psychology; 'Turn Complexity into Clarity: Strategic Persuasion Framework.' *10 min break in middle.*
May 15, 2026	Session 5: Master Being Interviewed	Fundamentals of interviewing & being interviewed as a scientific expert. <u>Workshop:</u> Start writing your interview guide. Practice asking and answering interview questions about your research, with your team-mate. *10 min break in middle.*
May 22, 2026	Session 6: Start Crafting Your Professional Online Identity: Draft Your Research Description for Non-Experts	Why scientists need an online presence and overview of no-code tools (e.g., Wix, Squarespace, etc.); <u>Workshop:</u> Start writing your website public-facing bio + research summary, using key frameworks presented earlier in the course (ex: Monroe's Motivated Sequence, Aristotle's Ethos/Logos/Pathos, System 1/2 Thinking, & Psychological Distance). *10 min break in middle.*
May 29, 2026	Session 7: Hands-on Website Creation Workshop	Presentation by a guest speaker (TBC). <u>Workshop:</u> Build one-page website (use the bio and research summary drafted in session 6); learn how to create a compelling and simple video for your final audio file. *10 min break in middle.*
June 5, 2026	Session 8: Work on Your Final Project **(work from home)**	Edit interview/audio segment and finalize website + audio-visual (final video); prepare for the final presentations which are taking place next week. **No class meeting.**
June 12, 2026	Session 9: Final Presentations + Course Debrief	Present your final work (timed & supported by visual aids); group debrief and discussion on next steps for public communication. *10 min break in middle.*

Course Materials

All course resources (including readings, toolkits, templates, guides, and handout on platforms/legal/ethical basics) will be made available on Moodle before or after each session. All announcements, dates for virtual office hours, resources, submissions, and updates will be on Moodle. Please check regularly. Students are encouraged to explore additional resources based on their project focus.

Evaluation

Evaluation will focus on the completion of key course activities and active participation throughout the semester. Deliverables include:

- 20% = Regular in-class engagement and workshop participation
- 30% = 2 short assignments to help students build their work toward the final project:
  - 1. Short written analysis & brief oral presentation of one favorite podcast (in or outside own research field)
  - 2. Description of final class project concept pitch (choose: podcast interview or professional website): students choose final option (A or B) based on this assignment
  - 3. *Optional* (for those interested): Pitch own work in an email to be an interviewee on a favorite podcast (write an email + create a short audio recording describing own research and podcast fit)
- 50% = Final presentation (June 12):
  - *Option A*: 3–5 min peer interview segment in audio-visual format + interview guide + analytical description of student choices + oral presentation of final work
  - *Option B*: minimum one-page website +website has an embedded 2-min self-recorded research description (audio-visual) + analytical description of student choices linked to website design/content + oral presentation of final work
  - Final presentation materials must be uploaded to Moodle by June 11, 2026, at 6:00 pm

Exact evaluation expectations may be adjusted depending on the final number of students.

Registration

The course is limited to 10 students. Register before April 7th, 2026, by writing an email to lndscourses@gmail.com (with your supervisor in copy) and stating the course title as subject.