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

Lecturer

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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 4 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 Geneva and online via zoom.

Campus Biotech (CB): Room H8-01-A (please report to the CB reception desk to get a visitor's badge)
Zoom link: https://unige.zoom.us/j/67587460622?pwd=FeliQ9NWsSDTpHAOs9XOKVk0S1bVYT.1
(Passcode 111226)

Course Schedule and Sessions

Date	Title & Format	Main Topics
October 16, 2026 **CB**	Session 1: Introduction to Podcasting and Scientific Storytelling	Introductions, course outline, and the use of AI; podcast elements (concept, timeline, style, host types, examples); why and how scientists podcast (motivations, impact, success criteria). *10 min break in middle*. Submit Assignment 1 before Session 2.
October 23, 2026 **CB**	Session 2: Designing Your Podcast Concept and Outreach Strategy	Podcast concept development and target audience; translating complex science; the multilingual Swiss context; the "simplify to amplify" framework and examples. (Platforms, legal, ethical, and copyright basics provided as handout on Moodle.) *10 min break in middle*.
October 30, 2026 **Zoom**	Session 3: Mastering Being Interviewed	Fundamentals of interviewing and being interviewed as a scientific expert. Workshop: Start writing your interview guide. Practice asking and answering interview questions about your research with your teammate. *10 min break in middle*.
November 6, 2026	**Session 4: No Class Meeting**	Work on Assignment 2 from home. Submit Assignment 2 before Session 5.
November 13, 2026 **Zoom**	Session 5: Persuasion and Its Role in Strategic Communication	Persuasion theory and history; understanding mindset and audience psychology; Strategic Persuasion Framework: How to Turn Complexity into Clarity. *10 min break in middle*.
November 20, 2026 **Zoom**	Session 6: Website Creation Workshop	Why scientists need an online presence and overview of no-code tools (e.g., Wix, Squarespace); Workshop: Start writing your website public-facing bio website and 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*.
November 27, 2026 **Zoom**	Session 7: Storytelling and Why It Matters in Academic Presentations	Guest lecture by Dr Fumi Kurihara, University of Münster, Germany, on how to turn research into an engaging presentation. *10 min break in middle*.
December 4 2026	**Session 8: No Class Meeting**	Work on your final project (Option A or B) and prepare the final oral presentation. Submit final project before 6:00 pm on December 10.
December 11, 2026 **CB**	Session 9: Final Presentations and Course Debrief	Present your final work (timed and 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 the class moodle (https://moodle.unil.ch/course/view.php?id=35435). 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 (December 11):
    - *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 December 10, 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 October 1, 2026, by writing an email to lndscourses@gmail.com (with your supervisor in copy) and stating the course title as subject.