SCIENCE WRITING, MASTER OF ARTS

MA in Science Writing

Science writing explores and explains how our world works. The best science writing inspires a deeper understanding, a sense of wonder, or a need to act. The online/low-residency Science Writing program at Johns Hopkins strives to guide the next generation of writers and editors who will help the public comprehend the increasingly complex issues of science, medicine, and technology that affect their lives. Students in the Science Writing program do not focus on creating scientific research reports, journal articles for peer review, or other scholarly/academic works, nor do we teach technical writing for instruction manuals or regulatory documents. Instead, our students develop the craft of translating complicated information about science, medicine, and technology into clear, perceptive prose for a broad audience.

The program recognizes that contemporary science writing involves journalism, communication, multimedia, and the literary arts. Our typical student hones journalistic and creative writing techniques to craft enticing, understandable prose for digital or print venues, from magazines and books to social media and websites, for companies, associations, research agencies, and universities. Along the way, students acquire communication skills to promote viewpoints and develop expertise to thrive in the digital universe. Our writers and editors are also challenged to monitor science itself, to disclose how research can falter or be misused.

A brief residency course, required for the degree, provides intensive face-to-face study to complement the group and personal interaction of online courses. During residencies, students have visited a field research site on a Maine island, control rooms at NASA, environmental monitoring projects on the Irish coast, and world-famous genetics and biotech labs in Washington and Baltimore. They have observed surgeons in the operating room, sailed with biologists on the Chesapeake Bay, heard from Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, and met with science writers from The Washington Post, The New York Times, National Public Radio, National Geographic, Discover, Science, Nature, and other journalism outlets. From space and the oceans to nanotechnology and climate change, from artificial intelligence and robotics to fitness and genetics, the ever-changing topics chosen by our science writers are essential to an enlightened citizenry of the 21st century.

Admissions Criteria for all Advanced Academic Programs (https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/advanced-academic-programs/enrollment-services/admission/)

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the materials and credentials required for all programs, the Master of Arts in Science Writing requires:

- Statement of Purpose - The statement should be one to three typewritten pages, single- or double-spaced, and describe the applicant’s education, experience, and interest in writing about science, medicine or technology. Statements of Purpose are reviewed for creativity, content, and the level of interest in the field, so we appreciate originality and professional or personal reflection. The statement should also describe the applicant’s recent reading (books, periodicals, digital sites, or other works).
- Writing samples - The samples should total 10 to 20 typewritten, double-spaced pages (about 2,500 to 5,000 words), and should include some pieces about science, medicine, or technology. A combination of several shorter pieces rather than a single, lengthy piece is recommended. Any factual form is permitted, including news or feature article, commentary/blog, memoir, travel, essay, review, profile, book chapter, and creative nonfiction. Applicants may submit published or unpublished works. Digital writing samples should be submitted in their entirety, not as links. The majority of an applicant’s samples should be no more than five years old. Academic papers, peer-reviewed research reports, technical writing, or government documents are not recommended as writing samples; the samples should be journalism, communication writing, creative writing, blogging, etc.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS.491.658</td>
<td>Techniques of Science-Medical Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS.491.750</td>
<td>Contemporary Science-Medical Writing: Creative and Professional Forms</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS.491.802</td>
<td>Thesis and Careers in Science Writing</td>
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Core Courses - Customizable

Select two of the following:

- AS.491.673 Science-Medical Writing Workshop
- AS.491.674 Science-Medical Writing Workshop
- AS.491.675 Science-Medical Writing Workshop
- AS.491.680 Writing the Tech Story Workshop
- AS.491.754 Science Narratives Workshop
- AS.491.755 Science Personal Essay and Memoir Workshop
- AS.491.757 Science Profiles Workshop: Writing About People

Select one of the following:

- AS.491.691 Science Policy, Funding and Politics
- AS.491.708 Medicine in Action
- AS.491.709 Science in Action
- AS.491.710 In the Field: Science Writing in the Woods, Coasts, & Labs of Mt. Desert Island
- AS.491.711 Public Health in Action
- AS.491.751 Marine Science & Science Writing on the Emerald Isle
- AS.491.785 In the Wild: Science Writers Explore Montana's Wilderness and Wildlife Biology
- AS.491.787 In the Field: Writing about How Science Can Save Our Wild Lands

Electives

Select two of the following:

- AS.491.696 The Nature of Nature
- AS.491.697 The Literature of Science
- AS.491.700 Subatomic Writing
- AS.491.701 Communicating Climate Change
- AS.491.707 Prizewinners: The Best Writing about Science, Technology, Environment & Health
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<tr>
<td>AS.491.719</td>
<td>Technology Tools, Multimedia and Digital Publications for Science Writers</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS.491.748</td>
<td>Principles of Editing</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS.491.752</td>
<td>Advanced Reporting &amp; Writing in Science</td>
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<td>AS.491.758</td>
<td>Current Issues in Science Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS.491.807</td>
<td>Independent Study in Science Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>AS.491.808</td>
<td>Internship in Science Writing</td>
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Select one additional course from either the customizable core or the electives

Total Credits 36