

SCIENCE WRITING, MASTER OF ARTS

MA in Science Writing (<https://advanced.jhu.edu/academics/graduate/ma-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 MA in Science Writing program 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 program do not focus on creating scientific research reports, journal articles for peer review, or other scholarly/academic works, nor do they learn 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 news outlets, companies, 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 program requires:

- **Resume**
- **Two Letters of Recommendation**
- **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 writing, 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

Students must complete:

- Three required core courses
- Three customizable core courses
- Three elective courses

Code	Title	Credits
Core Courses - Required:		12
AS.491.658	Techniques of Science and Medical Writing	
AS.491.750	Contemporary Science and Medical Writing: Creative and Professional Forms	
AS.491.802	Thesis and Careers in Science Writing	
Core Courses - Customizable		8
<i>Select two of the following:</i>		
AS.491.673	Science and Medical Writing Workshop	
AS.491.674	Science and Medical Writing Workshop	
AS.491.675	Science and 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	
<i>Select one of the following:</i>		4
AS.491.691	Science Policy, Funding and Politics	
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.491.785	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: 8

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.491.702 The Funny Side of Science

AS.491.703 The Online Science Magazine

AS.491.707 Prizewinners: The Best Writing about Science, Technology, Environment & Health

AS.491.748 Principles of Editing

AS.491.752 Advanced Reporting & Writing in Science

AS.491.807 Independent Study in Science Writing

AS.491.808 Internship in Science Writing

Select one additional course from either the customizable core or the electives 4