Assignment 4: Final assignment and reflection

Throughout this course, we are focusing on your production of a piece of science writing (research paper or public-focused scientific essay) and your reflections on the process of writing and reviewing this paper/essay. This final assignment brings all this work together in two parts, detailed below:

Part 1: Completed paper/essay

Option 1 Research paper

Your completed assignment should be a paper that you will submit to a scientific journal as first (or sole) author. It should conform to the length requirements of the journal. Please include an appendix that provides:

1. Details about the journal and why it is an appropriate journal for this paper.
2. A list of who your co-authors are (if appropriate), and the role each co-author has played.
3. A copy of the feedback provided by your peer reviewers with a paragraph response to each review.

Option 2 Science essay

Your completed assignment should be a paper that you will submit to a newspaper, collection of science essays, or online portal – or a substantial persuasive essay for a high-profile science blog. Please include an appendix that provides:

1. Details of the publication venue and why it is appropriate for your essay.
2. A copy of the feedback provided by your peer reviewers with a paragraph response to each review.

This section of the assignment is worth 60% of the grade for this assignment.

Part 2: Reflection

Throughout the process of writing this paper/essay, you must keep a journal or blog in which you reflect at least ONCE per week on the decisions you are making and the process you are engaged with. The completed reflection is to be included in this final submission (if you choose to do this as a blog, please provide your marker with the URL). Here are a series of possible topics for reflection: you must choose at least FIVE of these topics for your weekly blogging/journalling:

- Choosing a focus for my writing (why it matters)
- Who are my audience (what do I know about them? How do I want to change them?)?
- What is my central idea/question?
- The mystery story
- My search for information
- Providing a platform for my main idea
- One difficult paragraph
- Where I'm going wrong
- Deductive or inductive?: that is the question
• Why I have chosen this publication venue
• Using sources
• A source I disagree with
• A meeting in the ballroom
• Getting the final paragraph right
• Engaging my audience (lessons in revision)
• What I have learned about writing for this audience
• My most common grammar/punctuation/style problem
• Working with co-authors
• Why hate my reviewers
• Why I love my reviewers
• A frustration
• How I write
• A central metaphor
• A stylistic trope that worked
• Crafting a story
• A paper that influenced my writing
• The main thing I have learned about writing
• The main thing I have learned about my discipline

In addition to the five topics you choose from this list, feel free to choose new topics that seem appropriate to your writing or which arise from our classes. But remember, you must write at least ONCE per week.

Journal/blog entries should be at least 200 words long. I haven’t specified a maximum length, but remember that we’re looking for clear, concise writing which is appropriately geared to a public/general audience, so edit carefully: it’s fine to write a long post/entry as long as it meets those criteria.

This section of the assignment is worth 40% of the grade for this assignment. We will be looking for evidence of thoughtful reflection on process and sources as well as engagement with course materials and classes.