

Informal Learning for Children

Enrollment: 76 Responses: 54

STUDENT LEARNING

1. What are the most valuable things you have gained from this course? (Possibilities may range from acquisition of very concrete skills or knowledge to changes in perspective or ways of thinking.)

This course has been great to expose us to many facets of campaigns focused on informal learning. Other than concrete knowledge on our semester topic area, we learned about the general process from the perspectives of the best in the business.

Solid understanding and working ability to design outreach initiatives. Especially useful was the behind closed doors look into Sesame _____ [illegible] model!

(no comments)

Working on a project with real-world application. Deepened knowledge of informal children's learning by examining efforts undertaken by The Sesame Workshop.

As a student of public health, I found it great to combine my health communication skills with an educational perspective.

I gained an amazing amount of inside information on the research and development methods of The Sesame Workshop. An introduction to health literature on childhood obesity. Practice in developing a concrete media idea, from research all the way to a pitch.

I gained new knowledge about health and nutrition media campaigns.

Sesame Workshop Model. A lot about Sesame Street!

Different perspective of the process of learning. How media products with educational goals are developed.

I learned how to use research and support my decisions for an educational media project. I also learned valuable skills about collaborating in a group from my group members.

The value of research-based material and media. Overview of the backend work.

Process of turning educational content into creative ideas. How to use research to inform product creation.

I learned about the educational training that goes into designing educational media.

The chance to hear/learn from/look inside the Sesame Workshop's executives and leaders in public health, pediatrics, research, and fundraising agendas. This was definitely a once in a lifetime course.

Learned the process of creating educational media.

I gained a great deal of knowledge about children's health and the need for education around this subject. I also gained an understanding of how Sesame Workshop creates new media initiatives that balance education and entertainment. It was a good introduction to educational media.

The conflict between research/education and entertainment/"selling" a media intervention. The Sesame model. Realizing that there are far more elements to the process than I had considered.

I learned how to make a multi-media pitch to Sesame Street executives.

Importance of investing time in group process dynamics. Grounding ideas in formative _____ [illegible] evaluation.

Getting to meet the writers from Sesame Workshop and seeing how they balance the creative process with the realities of who Sesame's audience is – kids and adults.

Group work and collaboration.

Insight into the inner workings of a major media company – access to the experts at Sesame Street and health professionals.

Oh my goodness! I have gained so much experience, made so many networking connections, and a proposed intervention to take and further develop. The exposure to the Sesame Workshop Model for creating media interventions is priceless.

Getting to look "under the hood" at the Sesame process; creating an awesome show idea with my team.

(no comments)

Exposure to Sesame Street experts → you saw how a successful health media campaign works. How to propose a project campaign with all the different components.

Exposure to experts from Sesame Street – Judith Palfrey was particularly enjoyable. I liked the integration of mixed media into presentation. Sesame Street executives were energetic. Thanks to Joe for coordinating all of our guests.

Working in a group is a big challenge for me. I've had to learn to swallow my ego and take a step back. I've learned a lot about research, in particular, and how to do studies (not that I'm an expert). Listening to experts talk about the process is amazing.

Knowledge of ways through which to communicate media messages to diverse audiences. The Sesame Workshop model for creating a media intervention. Various approaches to designing and implementing new media campaigns/products.

How to create a media intervention and see it through: from the conception of the idea to the realization and implementation of its goals.

Process of constructing a media proposal. Challenges of group work.

A lot from Sesame Workshop. Lectures and Group Work.

Work experience.

Many of the guest lecturers were very interesting. It was an honor to have many of them give their days to come speak to us. The opportunity to design a real pitch for Sesame Street is very rare and a great learning opportunity.

How to work in a group effectively, how to pitch to different groups, meaning, educational/production/creative. You have to focus on different things depending on who your audience is.

I really learned practical knowledge about how Sesame Workshop/media organizations conceptualize, plan, and implement program campaigns, including formative and summative research and outreach components.

Knowledge and skills of how to apply research to creative products. Inside look at the way a non-profit children's media organization is run.

Insight into Sesame Workshop. How to develop a project from start to finish. Working in a team. Healthy eating – I've cut down on sometime foods!

Team work! How to work effectively in team work! How to design a proposal for educational media. How to create outreach initiatives that pair up with media products. How to carry out formative and summative evaluation of a program. How to be fit, and help younger ones be fit.

The practical nature of the course in which we actually followed the Sesame Workshop Model from start to finish.

Lots of health information/awareness. More about media education. Specific knowledge about Sesame Workshop works.

Perspectives of those in the industry.

I really enjoyed the opportunity to work on a large scale project. I learned about how organizations like Sesame work.

The process needed for project development including all possible elements. I learned about project components I had never considered: outreach, evaluations (summative and formative).

How to pitch an idea to Sesame. What makes the Sesame Workshop so great.

Working with a group that wasn't randomly assigned, but created based on individual strengths was great. The pitch feedback was great.

A great perspective into Sesame and the workshop.

How to develop an idea through to the pitch level.

Sesame Street Workshop format. How to Pitch.

A very interesting overview of the creation, development, and implementation of media interventions.

Insight into informal learning. About how to create an idea using the Sesame Model and bringing it to fruition.

It was interesting to see how Sesame Street works – I really feel like I gained knowledge of all of the distinct parts of what makes a series like this work.

This course was great. We really learned and got inside the process that people go through when designing an educational intervention.

Getting a “behind-the-scenes” view of Sesame Workshop. I loved it!

COURSE ACTIVITIES

2. What specific course activities and materials did you find most valuable? (Consider lectures, section discussions, case studies, guest speakers, readings, field activities, written assignments, feedback from the instructor(s), etc.) How did these activities or materials help you to learn?

Actual production of our proposal and various elements along the process – applying what we were learning.

Joe's facilitation and the many speakers' focused talks and, of course, the hands-on project as it was guided step by step.

Great variety of guest speakers who were informative and helpful with the creation of our proposal.

Most valuable were the presentation by Sesame Workshop members. Course readings were interesting (if a little too simple) and gave a good overview of the topic.

Seeing the behind the scenes workings of the Sesame Workshop in an invaluable experience.

Guest speakers made this course what it was. Amazing access to professionals in the field. Readings were well chosen and helpful, drawn from a variety of sources.

All of the guest speakers were very interesting and entertaining. They provided a good mixture of research, entertainment, and practical marketing. They provided good real-life examples.

Group pitch – personal contact with professionals! Professor Willett was amazing! He really helped us understand how to approach the research.

The group project.

It was most helpful to see actual examples of media – clips of Sesame Street, video games, etc. that modeled what successful products might look like.

Activities given by presenters in class.

Guest speakers that UNDERSTOOD what the class was about. The final project.

Great exposure to obesity crisis. Amazing opportunity to engage with Sesame.

Weekly lectures from experts in the field. Special media/materials previewed (video clips in advance, especially international, documents from Sesame Workshop).

The lectures came from people carrying all the different production perspectives.

Professor Willett was so helpful in focusing our efforts and in tackling summative evaluation. The Sesame presentations were engaging and we did get to know many (\$\$??) “behind the scenes” information.

Working with my group was great! John Willett was a great presenter. Joe read our proposal. I loved the Maibach reading.

I really liked how we worked together in groups for this class. The group interaction made the experience great. Also the interaction with Sesame was a once in a lifetime experience.

The group proposal writing process – group work was a fantastic experience. Loved the talk on products by Jane Pork and Jordana. Willett – so helpful in helping us drill down.

The lectures and sections that involved doing Sesame led activities in class.

Donna Chandler's talk!

Fabulous PowerPoints. I enjoyed the video clips.

The guest speakers were great. The variety of content was immeasurable. It was also interesting to address the project proposal with the various lenses provided by the Sesame Workshop. Having access to actual proposals, outreach activities, and television shows was great! Everything was enforced by actual application.

Pitch presentation; lectures from visiting Sesame folks; assignments where we watched episodes of the show; the session with the writer, producer, researcher was AWESOME!

The presentations from Sesame Street experts were awesome – unparalleled in terms of information and real world knowledge/sharing.

The guest speakers from Sesame Street were mostly fabulous → broadened perspective on educational multi-media. Feedback from instructor was helpful.

Guest speakers were helpful. Readings were fine, but we did not get to debrief about them enough.

The guest speakers from the Sesame Workshop. I would have liked more time to design, and a little less research. I was hoping for a portfolio piece.

Some guests were extremely informative (e.g. John Willett, Judy Palfrey, Healthy Habits Project Manager). Some of the first articles were most helpful to get us “on the same page.”

Lectures – Provided us background and concrete examples from Sesame Street. Section – The few that we had. Readings – Interesting and relevant. Videos from Sesame Street – A great learning tool! Pitch – A rare opportunity to present to and get feedback from Sesame Street executives. Proposal – A consideration of our ideas and course concepts.

Some of the speakers were engaging and relevant. It was nice to have the connection and guidance to Sesame Workshop. Maibach reading on behavioral change – very good.

Lectures? Activities with Sesame. The group work was challenging but a great learning experience.

All the speakers were awesome!

Lectures and TA meetings were helpful.

The brief time with group members was valuable. The first set of guest speakers were fascinating. The guests who actually wrote the scripts and their debate with the educational people was (sic) [were] great!

The speakers from Sesame Workshop were especially valuable because they gave practical perspectives. It was fun to hear them and speak with them.

The guest speakers every week were amazing. Writing a media project proposal with a real audience (Sesame Workshop) in mind enabled me to feel like I could do this on my own in another professional situation.

While the lectures were helpful, the actual video clips were most interesting and helpful. Especially interesting were the clips of the children in formative evaluation exercises. The clips and video footage brought the lecture information to life. Would love to view more archive material and see how Sesame Street has approached its directives through the years.

The guest speakers were great! The in-class exercises! The readings were very helpful; I could tell they had been carefully chosen.

Our group work was extremely valuable, as was the final pitch process.

Various lectures from Sesame. Public health information re obesity crisis.

Group work time and TF feedback were powerful in exploring the process.

I really enjoyed listening to the writers talk to the class. I also enjoyed the woman from the Harvard Med. School.

The class lectures were great! The guest speakers covered a variety of topics and well planned. _____ [illegible].

Guest lectures. Ability to look at materials from Sesame like scripts in progress or clips in progress.

Pitch. Great group dynamic.

Guest lecturers were excellent! I can't believe they were able to get so many executives! That was very exciting. Getting a first glimpse at some of the plot material was interesting.

Guest speakers were interesting.

Guest lectures. Working as a group.

Section times were very helpful, and I wish we could have met more often. Course layout with different guest speakers/experts each week was a great structure in showing us the total picture.

Information from Sesame executives. When Sesame executives used their example to support ideas. Palfrey lecture.

Guest lectures were very helpful (especially the ones directly from Sesame Workshop). Videos shown in class were helpful, too. Speakers gave real-life examples of working at Sesame.

The pitch presentation with executives.

Lectures! By Sesame Workshop employees and other amazing speakers.

2b. In what ways does this course introduce and encourage consideration of diversity and/or diverse perspectives? (Consider content and process.)

Sesame is very diversity sensitive.

Great consideration of global issues and local interventions.

Diverse ways to tackle common health problems using different media and strategies.

This course touched on diverse efforts by Sesame Workshop to address healthy habits in U.S. and around the world.

I think that our group was very diverse both with regard to skills and backgrounds.

What is taught is a model for making a complete medium. Students given room to use original ideas to implement using the model.

By having the variety of presenters as well as international content.

Sesame is focused on diversity and talked about international topics.

In a way that we approached the educational and the learning process from a different perspective – informal perspective.

This course is taught primarily from the perspective of Sesame Workshop and limited to the conflicting ideas of its executives.

The diversity of presenters.

This all Sesame's perspective.

Brings in speakers outside of Sesame Workshop.

By focusing on both the domestic and international aspects – and all of the contingencies
_____ [illegible] related – this course definitely considered diverse perspectives.

(no comments)

We learned about international outreach, and many of the health topics covered multiple
populations.

International topics.

They wanted us to design a multimedia project that works for all groups.

International topics. Outreach bridging and extending effect of intervention.

Very well.

(no comments)

Very encouraging to think differently.

Diversity is key in this class, overall. For instance, we had to look at the many
dimensions/perspectives of characters, statements and politics behind media
interventions.

Looking at needs of kids from multi backgrounds, also nice focus on international.

The focus on a specific real world problem being responded to via media requires total
awareness of demographics and issues of diversity – it was built in.

Each speaker presented on a different aspect of multi-media and children.

There was good consideration of diversity with regard to media. We were asked to think
about the different perspectives of our audience.

We talked about Sesame Street around the world.

Media interventions presented were geared toward a wide variety of racial groups; and were
also focused on international media campaign. Sesame designs their products for a
diverse audience.

We were given creative license when constructing our project proposals – having different and innovative ideas was encouraged.

Group work.

The course considers ways to create a proposal that appeals to diverse audiences and international co-productions.

I had fun.

Attending to the needs of underserved populations.

In every way. Sesame Street is the epitome of cultural diversity or action, mainstream, and international.

The whole notion of the Sesame Workshop Model emphasizes the collaboration of diverse perspectives in organizing and implementing a campaign.

Students were encouraged to develop international components for proposals and emphasis was placed on making products applicable to minority audiences and various ethnicities.

Diversity is obviously a priority for Sesame Street, so they consider it at all levels.

We heard a lot from different guests of different parts of Sesame Workshop, with diverse areas of expertise. We saw productions and outreach _____ [illegible] made in other countries.

In terms of who Sesame's target audience is, it does a good job. We also looked at a lot of international programming. You can focus as much as you want on diversity in your proposal. We made it a priority.

Not really. It examined a bit during the health crisis, but only through ethnicities in the US.

I'm not convinced that it does. Explicitly anyway.

We were given enormous latitude in designing our project.

In many ways – all sides of the project plan were included – focusing on all perspectives.

Sesame is all about diversity.

(no comments)

I loved that we got an international perspective of the kind of diversity projects Sesame is working on.

(no comments)

You can reach little kids through TV and teach them.

It really encouraged us to think of new and different ways to reach and positively impact kids through media.

(no comments)

Very much so – the health epidemic was considered from many angles – SES, ethnicity, culturally, etc.

When designing education media, you have to consider all the different needs that might make up your audience.

By presenting Sesame Street co-productions at/in other countries, we got a sense of how to make certain content apply to other situations and types of people.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

3a. In what ways was the instructor most effective and why?

Structured the course in an effective way to show proposal evolution. Good feedback.

Managed time, speakers, and always asked the questions of guests that we were dying to ask!
He's incredible.

Blatt brilliantly connects speakers from a variety of prestigious institutions. Also, he is very informative, encouraging, and helpful.

The instructor was most effective in coordinating efforts to bring Sesame Workshop presenters to HGSE.

He organized fabulous speakers and did a good job tying them together.

Joe Blatt is expert at managing the flow of the course, designing curriculum and adapting as the semester progresses. He did not lecture, but chose well in guest speakers.

The instructor served to ground the diverse lectures in the context of the course, and is very knowledgeable about media and kids.

Really passionate about the topic. Great source of help outside of classroom.

He did a good job in constructing the course.

Joe established a strong relationship with Sesame Workshop that gained us access to many of their executives.

Coordinating presenters.

Brings things together well. Asks good questions to presenters. Give good advice/feedback in projects.

Detailed assignment sheets.

By masterminding the logistics, readings, and every little detail that went into the planning and successful execution of this course. Good communication to students via weekly emails. Very helpful and supportive to our learning/staying on track.

A good facilitator during the classes.

Joe scheduled many speakers to address each topic of the class. This kept things interesting. He also was able to wrap-up and summarize things as they related to our project.

He secured the participation of Sesame. That was huge, clearly.

Joe facilitated class discussion very well.

Introduced us to great perspectives. Fabulous speakers.

Professor Blatt is an excellent instructor and he is very caring. This shines through in his feedback to us as individuals and a group.

Stepping back and letting the course teach itself.

Ultra kind and super smart.

Blatt truly modeled the class after the Sesame Model. I think that came in very handy in understanding the success of Sesame Street and other Sesame Workshop interventions and initiatives.

Bringing in guest lecturers.

Joe organized a smorgasbord of awesome presentations – majority good planning and condensation. He wasn't very available one-on-one, though.

Enthusiasm was great. Organized class.

The class was well organized and coordinated. Applause to Joe for this organization and unbridled enthusiasm.

Joe is an amazing facilitator, and made great use of his resources.

Preparation memos gave us a clear indication of what was coming up and what had to be done.

Joe helped to coordinate with and organize the guest lecturers, but he himself did not teach. He guided and scaffolded us through the process.

Enthusiasm for subject.

He was great at coordinating lectures with Sesame.

He had good comments.

Facilitating _____ [illegible] between the guest lecturers. Managing the lectures based around the guests' busy schedules.

When he spoke, he was engaging and interesting. I wish he would have talked more himself.

He was a wonderful liaison between the class and Sesame Workshop as well as other speakers like medical researchers and doctors.

Professor Blatt is incredibly diplomatic and gracious in his public conversation with students and guests from Sesame. He did an excellent job at summarizing and synthesizing information from speakers and organizing the course topics in a logical flow.

Professor Blatt is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He was obviously well prepared to undertake this course and provided a good bridge between us and the guest lecturers.

By picking out excellent guest speakers. By giving clear explanations of the assignments. By encouraging participation and inquiries.

Joe did a great job of bringing a great group of experts to our class.

Facilitator; introducing and compiling speakers to explain various aspects of a pitch and media education.

Feedback on proposals.

Joe is incredibly positive and receptive to feedback.

He provided good feedback on the assignments and perceptive of student needs.

Joe is very professional and cool.

Good facilitator and very encouraging.

Very enthusiastic and encouraging. Joe's outlook and positive perspective is contagious!

Very enthusiastic.

Facilitating the guest speakers. Linking course objectives to Big Picture.

Provided helpful feedback. Very enthusiastic. Obviously dedicated to this course.

Energy. Brought interesting people/topics. Knowledgeable.

Joe was enthusiastic – this enthusiasm really kept the class moving along. I thought he was terrific!

Joe is just wonderful! He's always so prepared, supportive, and open to student ideas.

He is friendly and down-to-earth, but always positive, encouraging, and motivational.

INSTRUCTOR(S) continued

3b. What recommendations would you make to the instructor to strengthen his or her teaching and/or make the course more valuable? (Consider content, materials, activities, assignments that should be dropped or added, grading procedures, amount and kind of feedback, utilization of TFs, as well as changes in instructor behavior.)

Would have liked to have heard more from his perspective – distillation of ideas, etc. – perhaps having visitors share but then having separate instructor time to lead discussion, pull out salient points, etc.

Remind students to display their name tents _____ [illegible] to help at Questions and Answers. If the final presentation emphasizes creativity, set those expectations earlier (and provide support!).

More help in developing the “creatives” of our project. We needed more direction and ideas on using the variety of media available.

Coordinating this class must have been a monumental undertaking. Still, more time could have been reserved for directed activity and section.

We spent a lot of time out of class meeting with our group. It would be valuable to have more class time to meet.

Topics felt disjointed at times in transition from health content, to Sesame's model, to other outside experts. Difficult at times to know where group's project should be, what

expectations were. Formative evaluation project and lectures need to be better thought out. Seemed cursory.

I wish Joe had framed the course more by providing some more lessons and lectures without guest speakers.

Make sure there's time for group and teacher/TF interaction. If the group project is the sole assignment, there needs to be more time spent focused on the project.

Drop the individual proposal assignment. Drop some of the readings. Put more emphasis on the learning process itself and a little bit less on the production process.

Clarify your expectations, assign readings that directly relate to creating projects (not to learning about Sesame's prowess), and model what you expect from the students. There was no modeling of the process, no set of protocols to follow, and no modeling of what a professional pitch would look like. This partnership between HGSE and Sesame poses an interesting dilemma – is the focus of this course on understanding the research base of educational media or the marketing skills needed to successfully pitch it? Sesame's lectures were pompous and boring. Require participants to know about media or scaffold instructions for beginners. Too focused on media – there are lots of other opportunities for informal learning. We need to participate more in practice activities that teach the skills we need to be successful. Limit this class to 30.

Missing components: Marketing piece, pitch preparation; More pedagogy by instructor; Project helpful to develop idea but not linked exactly with what happens in class. The project was extremely time-consuming.

Teach more, less some classes. Teach us about informal learning. Make sure the presenters understand the class, and that we are interested in education. Barr Foundation was useless. Jeannette Betancourt was not helpful at all. Focus more on education. This class tries to cover too much. We don't care about marketing and production. The final project has too broad of a scope. Don't limit it to technological media – there're so many other forms of informal learning. Obesity was difficult because we are talking about changing behaviors. Have a cognitive learning focus.

There should have been a lecture from a creative director – to demonstrate a pitch! Also, there was little discussion of marketing and production through the class. Make sure Sesame Workshop is on the same page as you regarding expectations for our assignments. You should talk more, maybe for the whole first class. Pitch was not constructive in the feedback.

Wished that we could have heard more from Professor Blatt on a regular basis. If he spoke for 20-30 minutes at the end of each lecture, after the guest speakers leave, to reflect and discuss – that would be great.

None.

This course focuses heavily on how Sesame Workshop creates informal/media intervention for kids. This made it difficult to re-frame how you would create an intervention outside of Sesame. It may be helpful to consolidate the topics – try and cover less ground. It was a lot to take in and incorporate into final project.

There are materials about how “Blue’s Clues” went from research to marketing ... it’s almost as if Sesame doesn’t have to worry about getting their concept sold because they’ve been on for so long.

I would spend less time on the budget and business aspects of this class. This seemed out of place at an education school and was presented in a way that made it hard for students to relate.

Group work provided most valuable learning. Lectures were not unified – if we could go in-depth on a fewer topics rather than in breadth.

Since it’s the first semester it was taught, the only recommendation I have is to make the contract available for prospective students to see during shopping period.

I think produce the contract sooner.

Integrate visiting talks with the readings and synthesis _____ [illegible] course conclusions.

I think that the pool of resources for the class, literature in particular, could have been centrally located. There were books, course packets, links on the internet, and new readings uploaded weekly. It was quite a task trying to locate assigned readings.

It would be great if Joe could actually meet once before the pitch we each group. Also, the TFs didn’t seem to really know the subject area very well, or seem to know what Joe was looking for or wanted. It would be helpful to have a better sense for the scope of what’s expected – next year offer some of this year’s projects as a sample. Finally, I wish there was a way we could see (even if it’s optional, or recorded _____ [illegible], or whatever) other people’s pitches.

I think that for a new course it went amazingly well and can only get better as assignments and format take shape. Joe was at times a bit abrupt in redirecting the guest speakers – (when they strayed) – made me uncomfortable. Confusing assignment descriptions. Way too much – but also good to have the resources to sort through.

More guidance in writing the proposal. The order of the presentations should be rearranged to flow with the components of the proposal. Some lecturers were very boring (although most were good) and some topics seemed irrelevant for our purposes of

writing a proposal. The order of the assignments could be improved: one page abstract first, then 3 page proposal? Also, these assignments seemed redundant.

The course needs more parameters. I like that we were encouraged to think outside of the box, but after a while it felt as if we were simply tacking components on. Section should have been more regular. There should have been more in-person feedback.

Some conversation and lecture on design, the process of deciding the aesthetics of a television show. Talk about ways music and visuals affect people.

Professor Blatt made no effort to meet with our groups or learn any of our names. I do recognize that the course was quite large, but he could have at least offered to sit down with each group to see how we were coming along. Sadly, oftentimes I got the impression that he was more interested in accommodating his Sesame guests than his students.

Have more regular sections and use that time to work on the group projects. Have groups share ideas to critique one another and create best practices. Devote less lecture time to the guest lecturers and spend more time building the bridge between that content and the group projects.

The assignments (readings and written) were confusing because they were not all in one place. Sending page-long emails each week describing the variety of locations of course readings and changes was not helpful because it made everything seem scattered. Some of the speakers did not talk about aspects of proposal writing that were relevant for us – or it was not clear if they were! Groups were TOO BIG. It was VERY challenging to coordinate 5 different schedules and opinions. This was a MAJOR challenge of the course and we received no guidance on how to handle these types of problems. It would have been helpful – and saved us lots of time – to have group objectives for each week so we knew exactly what we should be working on in the many weeks between the initial proposal and the final pitch. We had no opportunity for feedback in between. And we should have time at the end of each class to meet. It seemed like this was supposed to happen, but hardly ever did.

More sharing and critiquing between groups. Allow groups to look into each others' projects.

He should push the idea of a group leader.

Class is too long! Project support was confusing. The objective wasn't totally clear, nor was the scaffolding.

First off, there were too many lecturers. Joe is a great speaker, much more engaging than the majority of the Sesame people. The first group of guest speakers were great. As well as the script writers. However, having guests every single week was just a bit too much "lecture-style" class structure. One solution would be to have the guest

speakers move away from PowerPoint, and show ore videos/examples of Sesame Street productions. Then, discussion can stem from the clips. BUT, overall, I felt robbed of Joe's charisma as a teacher. I took this class because I knew Joe was the professor, and I love his teaching style. I started to dread coming to class because I never knew if I was going to have to endure another boring/uninspiring lecture. Also, maybe you could have an opportunity for students to actually sign-up to assist Sesame Workshop researchers in "real research" for kids' media. I heard that some people from HT-500 get to work with Sesame researchers ... so why is that same opportunity NOT offered in a Sesame Street course??

It was great! Maybe make a separate time for section so groups will have more time to meet.

Possibly plan a separate section or keep section time enforced.

A guest lecturer every other week would have been better. Need more time to work with team and develop project ideas. More direct interaction with Sesame – fewer lectures. Maybe more breakout groups with guests. Can we visit Sesame? Or help with actual research? More of a give-and-take process. Less focus on jobs of Sesame individuals, and more interaction for us with Sesame content.

I would like to have more time for sections.

Understandably, this was the course's first run and had some glitches. The main issue is that the assignment outline were given out very late. Earlier distribution of these parameters would provide students with a clearer sense of course objectives and expectations. Also, these assignments could be explained more clearly.

Provide more tie-in to readings → time to discuss and have feedback on readings in relation to lectures. Please do not provide last minute (Saturday evening/Sunday) emails prior to class, every difficult if anyone is planning ahead. Please provide all assignments, grading rubrics, and schedule ahead of time.

I think a better idea for this class would be to look at one or two case studies in depth and use the HBS model a little more.

I wish that there had been fewer lectures and more opportunities for discussion. Give students more time during class to work together. Less lectures. Joe should learn the name of all his students.

(no comments)

N/A.

Having Sesame come to lecture was a once in a lifetime opportunity, but it was getting a bit repetitive (in terms of format). Sections should be at a different time.

Don't have a guest lecturer for every class. We never discussed readings, and group meetings were too sparse.

Readings were not discussed and seemed almost extraneous. 3-hour lectures were too long – have a section on another day? Like guest lectures better to course. Sometimes, I had to wonder what the point of the guest was.

2-hour class. And make the discussion **not** after class; have it at another time or require groups to meet once a week.

3 hours with no section breakout is really long. I wish that assignment parameters had been more clearly articulated up front. The idea of continually working on and developing our final project was good and could be made even better and less overwhelming at the end of the semester if bigger chunks were due earlier. I am very frustrated by the fact that after the Pitch and final paper, we also have a reflection paper. It seems egregious, especially at this point in the semester.

I understand that this is a new course, but there was too much work at the end. How will we be graded? Timing of topics. Be more organized with work in regard to time line. Have time to discuss ideas. Actually talk about the readings. Have more section time. Too many topics were covered last minute and then we were asked – did you think about adding that to your pitch. Assignment guidelines were weak and needed more information. Give examples of what you want a Pitch to look like. Reflection paper is pointless.

Required readings should be minimal with suggested readings more lengthy. Since most of the reading for this class needs to be project-specific by its nature, I wound up not doing most of the weekly readings and instead using them as more of a reference. Do away with the reflection papers. It's enough that we have the pitch and proposal to do – that's a lot. Let us know from the beginning exactly what we are meant to do. Most people were confused about whether we were supposed to make a Sesame Street product or something else. Also, summative evaluation was too big a piece to include right near the end if we were supposed to incorporate it into our final proposals.

Teach integral components of the pitch (i.e. summative evaluation) earlier in the semester.

I loved this course, so ... nothing. Maybe less reading.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS

4. To help prospective students choose wisely, what advice would you give to students who are thinking of taking this course (about its level, the amount of work required, any prior training needed, ways to get the most out of the course, etc.)?

Great for anyone interested in how Sesame works or proposal process.

This is one of the reasons you came to Harvard's Ed School. Where else can you get inside scoop into The Sesame Workshop taught by an incredible teacher. The rotation experts guides you masterfully through your own project.

Choose to work with a variety of people with different talents. You will spend a lot of time with them. So make sure you all get along!

If you want experience working collaboratively on a semester-long project that stimulates a real-world environment, take this class!

This class requires you to work closely in groups. It is a fabulous hands-on experience in creating a media intervention.

One of the best and most fun courses I've taken at any university!

Very entertaining.

It's a fun class and you will learn a lot about Sesame but it's difficult to apply the course to the real world. Expect a lot of time working with your group! Sesame Street rules.

Not a lot of work, but it is very time-consuming because of the group work.

This course is still in its formative stages, so there are rough spots and aspects yet to be clarified. The readings were not very helpful, and I found it most helpful to do readings that supported my project directly. There is almost no modeling of what is expected, yet the feedback is overwhelmingly praise. There is also no protocol to follow to develop a product. Take this course if you are interested in an have a talent for producing educational media, but not for any other goals. It was not a course that was appropriate for me to take, and I left with limited takeaways.

Lots of work required on project. Good overview of media production.

It's a fun class, but it's confusing at times. Joe is very much still refining the class.

The project is tremendous!!!

I put my heart into this class, but it's what you want to put into it. Definitely the class of a lifetime.

The class is a lot of fun. The workload is manageable. The material is very applicable to your project.

It is a fun class, but it may not be as helpful in understanding how to create a successful media project in the "real world" or outside of Sesame. This class requires a good amount of time working on a group project.

You may not learn much during the lectures because each presenter gives far too many basics. If we saw how THEY developed a current show while they were doing it and allowed us to see more of their agonizing decisions ... that would help. It was more like a speaker series.

TAKE THE CLASS!!

I barely did the readings and learned the most from working in my group. Fun enrichment exercise, more of a speaker series. I skipped a bunch of classes and wasn't hurt in any way.

Get your ideas together early so you can really focus on the creative aspect. This is what Sesame Workshop really cares about. But, also remember you are going to sign a contract.

Be ready to work hard.

Take the course! It's a fabulous chance.

This was the best class ever!!! If this was the only class I had all year, it would have been worth it. There is a lot of reading and group work, but if you have a good group, that should not be a problem.

This class is a tremendous amount of fun and an amazing opportunity to look under the hood at Sesame. If you are self-motivated and creative and are excited to work hard, you should take it. If you're looking for an easy class with a lot of structure, this isn't it.

Just take it – great stuff to learn from experts – from research, design, outreach, proposal development, etc.

There is reading, and some of it is helpful, but some seemed irrelevant for the proposal. The lecturers from Sesame were great – great exposure. The course is not difficult; gain perspective. Need to be able to work in a group/team effectively – this can be difficult.

This is not a course in which you will use “creative” skills related to art, creative writing, etc. Rather, it is a course to conceptualize a show that could be creative in nature.

No training needed. Workload is medium.

Take the course if you're interested in learning how to develop informal ways to encourage children's learning. Since it's still in its infancy, it's important to be flexible.

It's a fantastic opportunity to work in conjunction with Sesame Street. I learned a lot and had a great time! •

This is a "course in progress." The premise is great, but it is a little scattered and the group work makes it very time-consuming.

A lot of time is needed for the group work but you learn a lot.

This was a blast.

A lot of work, but worth it in the end.

It gives you perspective on the inner workings of Sesame Street and all the research/planning/production that goes into it. HOWEVER, there is a LOT of lecture with few interactions. So, bring snacks to class, and hope to get videos/clips to mix-up the didactic speeches.

TAKE THIS CLASS! It is such a unique opportunity that is so helpful with whatever else you might be interested in.

This was my favorite course at the Ed School – vibrant, exciting, practical, rigorous, and fun! If you can, choose your group. A great team makes all the difference!

Pick a cool group to work with – it makes all the difference.

There is a lot of readings, but it's quite manageable. It is great to learn with the Sesame Street team! The skills that you learn here about how to make a media proposal or a campaign about health can be transferred to other topics or areas.

The course depends a lot on your group. Have a positive attitude and work out group dynamics from the beginning.

I feel the course is going to change. Lot of work at time of projects, interesting, entertaining. Hopefully more direction and better layout next time.

Not sure. If you're not into the age group this class addresses, you might not like this class at all.

Unless you are very interested in informal learning for children, you should consider not taking this class. It needs a year or two to work out the kinks.

Take this course! An amazing opportunity!

Take the course! Take the course! Lots of work but it's worth it.

If you want to learn about Sesame or gain a close to real life group work experience, this is the class for you.

Fun course to learn about Sesame workshop, but can be a long class to sit through sometimes.

Do not take this class if you want to apply for a job with Sesame – that is not the point of this class.

Be entrepreneurial. 3 hours is a long time for lectures.

There is a fair amount of work that is required towards the end of the term. No prior training needed, reading not terrible because you really don't have to do it all.

Lots of work in the last month. Most readings after the first few and the ones that specifically pertain to the executives presenting are pointless!

This class is a unique opportunity – take it if you can!

This is a great class, but requires a huge amount of group work.

You have to be able to work well in groups. And, it's a lot of reading.