

Robin Ann Smith, Ph.D.

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EDUCATION

DUKE UNIVERSITY

Durham, NC

Doctorate degree Biology

UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTPELLIER II

Montpellier, France

Master's degree Ecology and Evolution

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Nashville, TN

Bachelor's degree Biology, French

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Languages: French (proficient reading, listening, speaking)

Software: Adobe Creative Suite, Drupal, WordPress, Cision, Muck Rack, Monday

Other: AP Style

CAREER OBJECTIVE

I have spent 15 years communicating the value of academic research and am looking to apply my scientific training and storytelling skills to new areas and beats.

EXPERIENCE

SCIENCE WRITER / COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Michigan State University / Oct 2025 – present

- Promote the research of the Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Program, spanning 12 departments and five colleges

FREELANCE SCIENCE WRITER

Robin Smith Communications, LLC / Jul 2025 – present

- Produce public relations and fundraising materials (press releases, researcher profiles, impact stories and other digital and print content) for research institutions. Current clients: Princeton Neuroscience Institute, North Carolina Plant Sciences Initiative

SENIOR SCIENCE WRITER

Duke University Communications, Durham, NC / Jul 2014 - 2025

- Responsible for lay-friendly coverage of more than 240 federally funded research labs in Duke's departments of biology, chemistry, statistics, physics, computer science, math and evolutionary anthropology
- Pitched stories to select journalists; secured hundreds of placements in outlets such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, BBC News and National Public Radio
- Published 40-50 stories/year (news, features and profiles) for Duke's online channels, on topics ranging from sleep to Alzheimer's
- Developed and led workshops and mini-courses for faculty and graduate students on communications-related topics, including storytelling for scientists, making numbers more intuitive and acing your media interview
- Interviewed researchers to identify and develop potential story ideas; worked with them to fact-check stories.
- Ensured our stories struck a balance among disciplines, genders, career stages; seized opportunities to tailor stories to breaking news or annual events
- Partnered with a team of video producers, web developers, photojournalists and social media strategists on multimedia storytelling
- Produced videos and animated GIFs using Adobe Premiere Pro, Adobe Photoshop

SCIENCE WRITER

Duke Lemur Center, Durham, NC / Jan 2013 - Jul 2014

- Proposed and implemented a strategy to increase media coverage of the center's non-invasive primate research by threefold over previous years

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

National Evolutionary Synthesis Center (NESCent), Durham, NC / May 2009 - Jul 2014

- Oversaw communications for a \$40M NSF-funded science center dedicated to cross-disciplinary research in paleontology, population biology, genetics and other aspects of evolutionary biology
- Wrote and distributed news releases highlighting published findings on topics ranging from evolutionary medicine to how noise pollution impacts wildlife
- Worked with graphic designers to produce quarterly newsletters and annual reports for the center.
- Managed the center's journalist-in-residence program, annual blog contest
- Coordinated a redesign of the center's website, over nine months and within budget

CORRESPONDENT

The News & Observer, Raleigh, NC / Apr 2010 - Jan 2014

- Worked as a freelance contributor to the newspaper's weekly SciTech pages, covering topics ranging from the genetics of caffeine addiction to the safety of soy infant formula.

TEACHING FELLOW

Thompson Writing Program, Duke University, Durham, NC / Aug 2005 - May 2009

- Independently designed and taught semester-long writing courses for first-year undergraduates, on topics ranging from the evolution debate to the Human Genome Project
- Developed syllabi, writing assignments and lesson plans
- Conducted weekly writing workshops; provided regular feedback and comments on student drafts