

Matinées « Les Changements climatiques » at ULiège **An Innovative Combination of Public Outreach and Geoscience Teaching**

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The « Matinées Changements Climatiques »

- **Evaluation of the “Climate Change and Impacts” course**
 - Master in Space Sciences
 - Master in Geography, Global Change
 - Master in Geology
- **Carrying out a personal project**
 - *Public* presentation of 15 to 20 minutes
in front of 5th and 6th year secondary school classes
- **Public outreach exercise on a climate-related subject**



History

- **Precursor (season 0): 2008–2009**

Approach inspired by the IPCC

- Extended scientific report
- “Summary for policy makers”
- Presentation of both in class

- **Season 1, single episode**

- 11th May 2009 at the
Salle Académique of the University of Liège

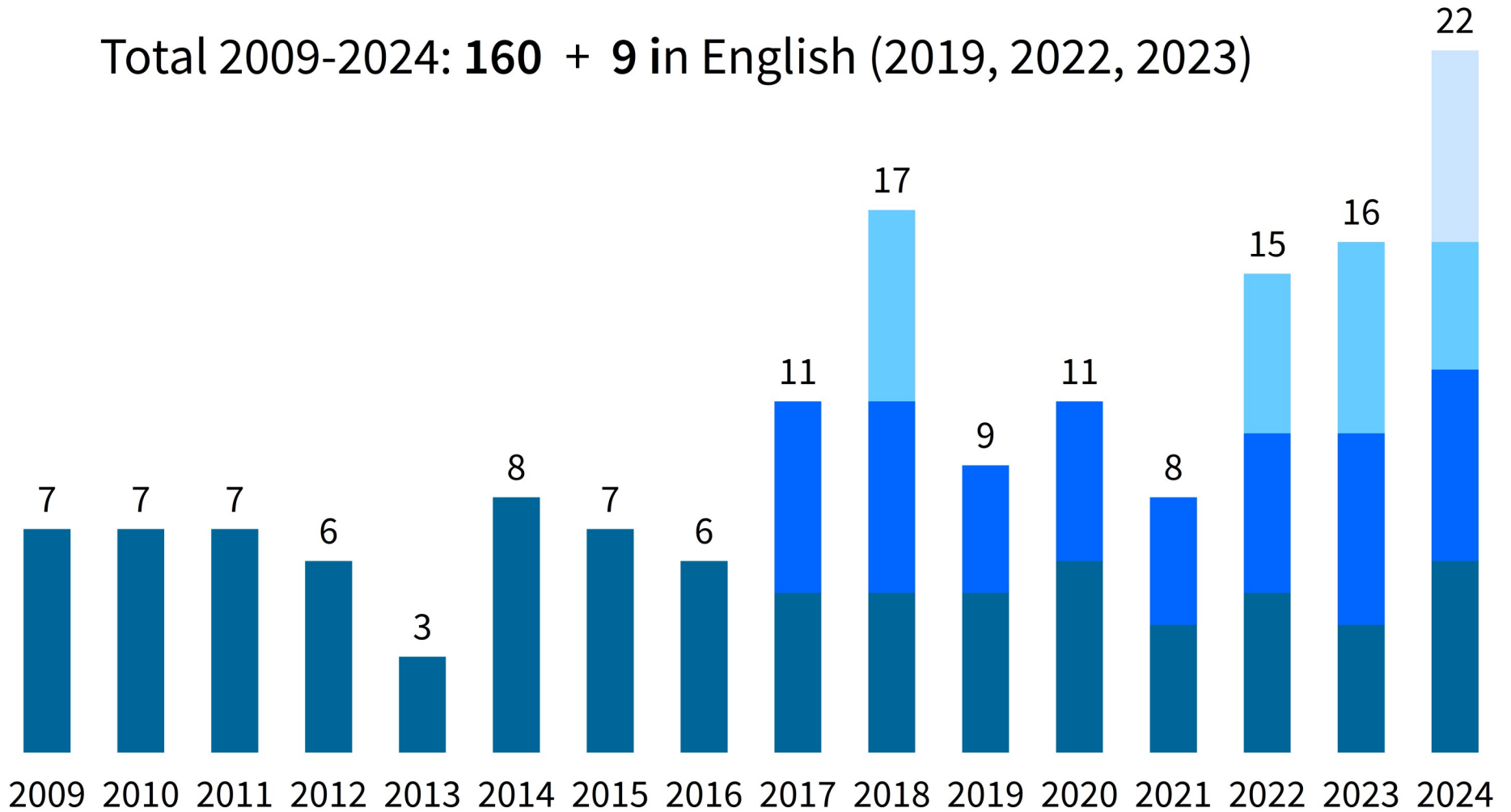


Photo: [ULiège](#)



Sixteen Seasons Since 2008-2009...

Total 2009-2024: **160** + **9** in English (2019, 2022, 2023)



Scientific Communication for the General Public

- **Subject of the student's choice**
 - climate system
 - climate change
- **Possible aspects**
 - scientific foundations of the climate system
 - past, present, future
 - policy
 - societal impacts
 - economic impacts
 - ...



Students' Agenda

- **September–October** : selection and coordination of topics
- **End of November**
 - final title and 4–5 line lead paragraph (*chapô, accroche*)
 - ⇒ used for announcements
- **At the beginning of February**
 - summary report for classes (*educational kit*)
 - two compulsory rehearsals
- **End of February or March** : public presentations



Challenges: Subject

Select, define and delimit a subject

- Understanding the audience (“*Know thy audience*”)
- Specify the questions to be addressed
- Evaluate the quality of source materials



Challenges: Educational Kit

- **Special style**
 - a newspaper article
 - without references to scientific literature...
 - ... while being based on scientific literature
 - mandatory final section “*To find out more...*”
- **Reduced length of 3 – 4 pages**
- **Level adapted to the target audience**



Challenges: Visual Supports

- Respect the duration (15 – 20 minutes)
- Structure and readability
- Level adapted to the target audience
- Language quality
- Sources of graphics material



Challenges: Guidelines and Practical Details

- Popularize without caricature
- Simplify, with rigour
- Inform, without exaggeration or dramatization
- Language care
 - precision
 - pitfalls to avoid (jargon, words with multiple meanings, etc.)



Supervisors' Agenda

- **September – October:** supervision of subject preparation
- **November – December**
 - compiling the program
 - room reservation
- **At the beginning of February**
 - rehearsals (~2h/student)
 - correction, copy-editing and layout of summary reports
 - preparation for moderation
- **End of February – March:** presentations



Logistics Support and Partnerships

- **University Student Services**

- first edition (2009: *Salle Académique*, main building)

- **Réjouissances**



- From 2015 – 2018:
printing of programs and educational kits
- since 2018: promotion and management of registrations
- 2021 season (Covid): production and online posting of video clips



Venues

- Salle académique (1st edition, 2009)
- Grands amphithéâtres (2010, 2011, 2012, 2014)
- Amphithéâtres de l'Europe (2013, 2015)
- Exèdre Dick Annegarn – Univ. Theater Hall (2016, 2017, 2024)
- Auditorios en Faculté de Droit (2018, 2023)
- Auditoire de Zoologie (2019, 2020, 2021)
- Auditoire de l'Ancien Institut d'Anatomie (2022, 2023)
- Various Secondary Schools (2024)



Key Moments

- **Since 2017: two to three matinées per season, four in 2024**
- **From 2018 – 2019**
 - non-French speaking students in the Master in Space Sciences
 - sessions in English for science bachelors' classes
 - in collaboration with Prof. Clara Brereton
- **2018 – 2019: year of the youth climate marches and strikes**
 - 700+ registrations for two matinées
 - support of the communications office (press coverage)
 - provocative comments from the room
 - complaint for plagiarism (unfounded)



In Summary

- **« Matinées Changements Climatiques »**
 - for 16 years
 - scientific public outreach exercise
- **Communication learning exercise**
 - full-scale, real life
 - different from classic personal work
 - demanding preparation
- **Format still evolving**



To find out more ...

UMCCB → Enseignement → Journée Changements Climatiques



http://www.umccb.ulg.ac.be/Edu/JCC/index_f.php



A Few Personal Thoughts...

- **Matinées: purely scientific communication**
- **Climate change: controversial subject**
 - Artificially maintained controversy
 - Implications at odds with some public's beliefs
 - Distrust of scientists and science
- **Science: neutral? devoid of values?**

« If you accept it's a problem, then you have to do something about it. »

Veerabhadran Ramanathan
Scripps Inst. Oceanogr., UCSD

