Semester: Fall 2017
Course Title: Special Topics / Writing for Professionals
Course Day and Time: Tuesday 1:10
Location: Scott Hall 101
Course Instructor: Thomas P. Davis
Contact Information: thdavis@ejb.rutgers.edu  Text/Phone 973-713-2116
Office Hours and Location: Room 263 Bloustein School Thursday 3 to 5 PM

Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 5th Edition

Additional Materials: Additional readings will be posted Sakai as needed

Course Description:

Learning Goals Students Will:

1. Think critically
2. Effectively communicate information in standard English
3. Develop, apply, and analyze concepts from research methods and basic statistics
4. Develop a research question and write a coherent research paper
5. Utilize information literacy skills
6. Understand the role and importance of professional development
7. Understand and apply professional ethics
Course Overview

Writing is a form of recorded communication that plays a central role in all societies. Academic writing responds to and builds upon a body of knowledge. Professional writing provides a channel of communication among professionals often with a narrow focus and specifically intended outcome. We will examine a representative sample of the concepts and techniques related to different styles and provide an opportunity to develop the skills needed to become proficient writers.

The goal of this course is to develop skill in the formulation of ideas and in professional writing using appropriate, clear, and effective grammar and syntax to express those ideas. We will be encouraged to develop critical thinking and analysis as elements of effective writing through an examination of subject matter, practice writing and speaking. We will build our skills as writers and as critical thinkers and also provide the opportunity to reflect seriously on particular issues and to use creative powers to address fundamental conceptual questions. Writing exercises will build on effective speech, well-reasoned short papers, and the ability to simplify complex topics. Writing and thinking are inseparably related and good thinking requires good writing.

Course materials will be chosen for informative content as well as style and will include at least one brief text and a possible combination of video presentations, press articles, and scholarly articles from the Journal of American Planning Association and other publications. The best way to learn to write well is to read good writing.

A major focus of the course will be on concise and insightful writing on salient issues of the day. The goal of this effort will be to develop the ability to articulate clear positions that need to be communicated within short turnaround times. The course will address this skill by challenging students with several short writing assignments that identify an issue, its components and conclude with a feasible solution.

Class format will include a combination of lectures, class discussion, a possible guest speaker depending on availability and other constraints.
This course will consist of 5 primary goals in addition to achieving basic competency in the weekly subject areas. These goals are:

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.

- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.

- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry

- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insight

### Class Agenda

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 9/5    | Overview, Course Outline, Introductions, Other Housekeeping Issues. | Objective: Making better use of our talents. Readings for Next Week:  
“The Power of Words,” Susan Smalley, PhD –  
Here is the link:  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/susansmalley/the-power-ofwords_b_81918.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/susansmalley/the-power-ofwords_b_81918.html)  
“A New Common Purpose,” Al Gore, in Writing for Change pp 402 – 412 (please familiarize yourselves with the questions at the end.)  
“Writing a Position Paper”  
[https://www.sfu.ca/cmns/130d1/WritingaPositionPaper.htm](https://www.sfu.ca/cmns/130d1/WritingaPositionPaper.htm) |

| Week 2 | The Power of Words | First Essay Assigned - Topic: Describe How the power of words can bring about planned results in a position paper on an assigned issue. (due in week 4/ September 26) Reading Assignment for next week: Writing an argument paper:  
[https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/724/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/724/01/) |
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<th>Week 3 9/19</th>
<th>Developing skill in building an argument; Rhetoric</th>
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**Reading assignment for next week:**


*Professional Writing, “What is Rhetoric?” pp 9-19*

*Kate Turabian, Planning Your Argument (I’ll post it on Sakai)*

*Excerpts from “Book I, Rhetoric” pp 20 to 39 in Professional Writing and Rhetoric.*

*“Education based Community Service at Rutgers University”, Benjamin Barber in Writing for Change pp 182 – 187 (please familiarize yourselves with the questions at the end.) I’ll post this.*
| Week 4 9/26 | Developing skill in building an argument; rhetoric cont’d | Reading assignment for next week:  
Easy Writer Sentence Grammar, pp 7 – 13; pp 60 – 90  
Sentence style, pp 14 - 18; pp 91 - 104; pp 158-161;  
“The Most Common Sentence Structure Problems” (I’ll post this)  
Please review this information very carefully.  
First writing assignment due  
Second paper assigned – position paper on an assigned issue, due Week 6, 2/22 |
|---|---|---|
| Week 5 10/3 | Developing proficiency in proper expression of speech; syntax; how to identify an issue; grammar; sentence structure | Readings for next week:  
Easy Writer: APA Style, pp 255 to 287  
Defining the Problem  
http://www.studygs.net/problem/problemsolvingv1.htm |
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<th>Week 6 10/11</th>
<th>Developing skill in choosing a relevant topic; Relevant issues; Choosing a Topic; Identifying the issues and their audience.</th>
<th>Readings for next week: Assignment/readings: A Guide to Philosophical Writing, Elijah Chudnoff. (This is assigned as a guide for logic and critical thinking in writing.) Second paper due 3rd paper assigned</th>
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| Week 9 | 11/1 | Develop skill in writing a thesis and proposal (Abstract, Justification, Value and Literature Review); review of midterm | Readings: Easy Writer – “Research”, pp 178 - 206  
Inaugural Address, John F. Kennedy  
3rd paper due  
4th Paper assigned based on today’s discussion. I’ll post the instructions. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 10 | 11/8 | Develop skill in business writing; memos; other writing styles | Readings for next week:  
Reading Assignments for next week:  
James E. Porter’s “Framing Postmodern Commitment and Solidarity” in Professional Writing and Rhetoric. |
| Week 11 | 11/15 | Continue to build proficiency in sentence structure; Sentence Structure Revisited  
Developing familiarity with professional documents; The Professional Document - Master Plan, Grant Proposal, Technical Documents; | Paper 4 due  
Paper 5 assigned (Short thesis) |
| Week 12 | 11/29 | In-class presentations | Work on your papers and presentations |
Course Assessments:

- **Think critically and translate it into writing**

  Each student will participate in discussions on various topics, address key essay questions on tests and interpret current research in the course paper. Active class participation is graded.

  SAS Core Curriculum Generic Rubric:

  GOAL u – **Student is able to**... Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

- **Effectively communicate complex information**

  Each student will write a 10 to 12 page research paper that identifies an important issue, and express the reason for its importance.

  SAS Core Curriculum Generic Rubric:

  **GOAL t - Student is able to**... **Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.**

  - **Develop, apply, and analyze concepts from research methods and basic statistics**

  Each student will examine multiple studies for their final research paper.
SAS Core Curriculum Generic Rubric:

**GOAL v** – *Student is able to*... Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

- **Develop a research question and write a coherent research paper**

  *Each student will write a final research paper that effectively addresses the research question.*

SAS Core Curriculum Generic Rubric:

**GOAL u** – *Student is able to*... Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

- **Utilize information literacy skills**

  *Students are required to complete weekly readings and participate in related class discussions.*

SAS Core Curriculum Generic Rubric:

**GOAL s1** – *Student is able to*... Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.

- **Understand the role and importance of professional development**

  *Professional writing and oral communication will be assessed through the research paper and weekly presentations.*

SAS Core Curriculum Generic Rubric:

**GOAL t** - *Student is able to*... Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.

**GOAL s2** – *Student is able to*... Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts
• Understand and apply professional ethics

Students will apply a valid ethics based standard of judgment for various practices and procedures as they apply. Scenarios will be drawn from the text as well as supplementary sources to be posted on SAKAI. This will be covered in weekly discussions and will be applied in the research papers and on the exams.

SAS Core Curriculum Generic Rubric:

GOAL v – Student is able to... Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Course Grading


Work turned in after midnight on the assigned date will be downgraded up to 24 hours later. After 24 hours work will no longer be accepted.

The 5 writing assignments will be weighted at 10% each; the midterm will be 10%; the final exam 20%; Presentation: 5%; Attendance/Class Participation: 15%

The midterm exam and the final exam will both be based on a prompt question to be answered in the form of a short position paper. The university will schedule the final exam’s time and place.

Student effort will play a role in borderline grades as needed.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is vital to the mission of Rutgers, to education at Rutgers and membership in the Rutgers community. It is a core value that supports trust among students, and between students and teachers. It is also a shared value; administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it.

Academic dishonesty is not an individual act that affects only the students involved. It violates communal trust, impacts other members of the community, and is an offense against scholarship. For this reason, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with harshly.

Honesty matters. As a shared value, administration, faculty and students each play a vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it. See the Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at:

http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/
Attendance and Cancellation of Classes

In accordance with Rutgers University regulations, attendance is expected at all regularly scheduled meetings of a course and individual courses may set policies for maximum absences. Please refer to the link below for more specific information:

http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/courses/registration-and-course-policies/attendance-and-cancellation-of-class

Additional Guidelines:

The attainment of each goal will be measured against 4 levels: Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. Each level has its own unique set of criteria that must be met to attain the level. A complete description is on the class SAKAI site.

The overall goal is to attain fluency and knowledge in the development of public health as a discipline as it has been documented in a historical review of the literature and the ability to communicate that information.

We will discuss these milestones in class during our introductory session and throughout the semester as questions and issues arise. An unwritten standard of evaluation in the class will be based on the amount of effort that students apply. Sufficient effort in all of these 4 areas will ensure a satisfactory (or better) grade.

In order to maximize our class time experience, laptops and cell phones are not allowed in class. They must be put away during class period. Great emphasis is placed on class participation. This means that thoughtful contributions to class discussions will be highly valued toward student grades. Violations of the cell phone and laptop policies will affect grades. I will post my PowerPoint slides on SAKAI at the end of each week which form the basis of my lectures, thus minimizing the need for taking notes in class.

Class attendance is required. Absences will affect student grades. Students are expected to be on time. Late arrival risk being marked absent since attendance is taken on time when class is scheduled to begin. Noted absences will add up in terms of fractional absences. All students are expected to come to
class fully prepared after completing the assigned readings regardless of whether responsible for a weekly presentation.

Assigned papers will require a paper copy in class on the assigned date and an online copy on SAKAI on the assigned date and time. Students are urged not to wait until the date of the deadline to submit their papers online. Failure to meet the deadlines will affect grades. Points will be deducted each day the paper is late.