

Writing for Professionals
Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy
Rutgers University
Spring 2017

Instructor: Sheila B. Lalwani
Term: Spring 2017
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 8-10 p.m. and By Appointments
Class Meeting: Online

Course Readings: All course readings – chapters, cases and videos – are provided. All readings are required unless noted otherwise.

Deadlines: Twice a week on posted days. Assignments will be due on Mondays and Thursdays both at 11:59 p.m.

[Note: Important Rutgers policies are appended to this syllabus. They include policies relating to discrimination and harassment, disabilities, et. al. Please read these policies]

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. Expository writing is a specialized form of academic writing. It emphasizes analysis, the development of ideas and the structuring of arguments. It then communicates those ideas to readers in clear, effective prose. 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 these 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 expository and 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 essays, 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. Class format will include a combination of lectures, class discussion, a possible guest speaker depending on availability and other constraints.

Our Learning Goals Are To:

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

In addition, students should expect to communicate complex ideas effectively; 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 and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insight.

Evaluation: Method of Evaluation: All grading will be done on a points system with total being worth up to 100 points.

Short papers: 50 (10*5 points)

Essays: 30 (4*7.5 points)

Final Paper: 20 points

Optional Extra Credit: 3 points

1. Short papers: There will be ten short papers in the course. Each short papers will count for 5 points of your semester grade. Each report must be typewritten and no more than 500 words maximum. In preparing this project, you should think critically of the problem outlined in the readings and cite in the text.

2. Essays: Each class member will have essays to analyze. The must be typewritten and no more than 750 words maximum. In preparing these essays, you should think critically of the problem outlined in your case(s). This will be an exercise in experiential learning that requires you to apply concepts at the intersection of theory and practice. Each essay will have distinct instructions.

3. Final Paper: Each student will write a research paper (maximum 2,000 words) that will be due during the final week of class.

Late Policy: It is strongly recommended that students submit their assignments on time. Failure to do so will lead for a .33 grade loss for each day late. This means that even if an assignment is submitted 10 minutes after the due time, a full .33 letter grade would still be deducted. So, try to submit your work on time.

Course Grading A=90-100; B+=87-89; B=80-86; C+=77-79; C=70-76; D=60-69; F=59 and lower

Effort will weight 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-andcancellation-of-class>

Schedule:

January 17: Introduction to Writing Concepts

Overview, Course Outline, Introductions, Other Housekeeping Issues.
Objective: Making better use of our talents. Course Background and summary
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.htm
Short paper: Student Introductions, Reading Summary.

January 23: The Power of Words
Short Paper Due

First Essay Assigned - Topic: Describe How the power of words can bring about planned results (due in week 4)

January 30: Developing an understanding of language as a system of communication; Linguistics
Short Paper Due
Readings to be provided

February 6: Developing skill in building an argument; Rhetoric
Readings to be provided
1st Essay Due

February 13: Developing proficiency in proper expression of speech; Syntax
Short Paper: Practicing with APA Link:<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>
Students take a previously written document and place it into APA style.

February 20: Developing skill in choosing a relevant topic; Relevant issues; Choosing a Topic;
Identifying the issues and their audience.
Short Paper: A Guide to Philosophical Writing, Elijah Chudnoff A Guide to Writing a Senior Thesis in
Sociology Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University.
Second Essay Due

February 27: Tutorial with the Professor
Essay #3 assigned

March 6: Develop skill in academic writing; The Academic Paper; Academic Writing: Writing a
Thesis
Short Paper: Short paper on the readings and video.

March 13: Enjoy the break

March 20: Develop skill in writing a thesis and proposal (Abstract, Justification, Value and
Literature Review)
Short Paper: Practice with writing an abstract

March 27: Develop skill in academic, scientific, business and op-ed writing; Writing Styles Continue
to build proficiency in sentence structure; Sentence Structure Revisited
Short Paper: Writing an opinion piece.

April 3: Developing familiarity with professional documents; The Professional Document - Master
Plan, Grant Proposal, Technical Documents; Develop proficiency in telling a (postmodern) story; The
Power of Story Telling
Short Paper: Creating a story around public policy

April 10: Essay Due

April 17: Review with the professor

Short Paper Due

April 24: Extra Credit

Extra Credit: Video and article summation

May 1: Final Project Due