



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

National Catholic School of Social Service
Washington, DC 20064

SSS 981
Seminar in Scholarly Writing for Social Work
(1 credit)
Instructor: Martha Yeide, PhD
Fall 2009

I. COURSE PURPOSE

This seminar is designed to familiarize beginning doctoral students with the demands of scholarly writing. We will discuss the differing parameters of writing assignments, common writing errors, and structural and editing strategies. Writing assignments for this course will be tied to other course work (e.g., Philosophical Issues in Social Work Knowledge Development).

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Understand the importance of rhetorical contexts for professional writing
- Gain familiarity with the APA Manual
- Edit for better clarity by effectively aligning content with syntactic structure

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required text:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Becker, Howard S. (1986). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book or article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

B. Recommended texts:

Buzan, Tony & Buzan, Barry. (1994). *The mind map book: How to use radiant thinking to maximize your brain's untapped potential*. New York: Penguin Group.

Flemons, Douglas. (2001). *Writing between the lines: How to compose social science manuscripts*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

C. Other texts:

Emig, Janet. (2002). Writing as a mode of learning. In C. R. McDonald & R.L. McDonald (Eds.), *Teaching writing: Landmarks and Horizons* (pp. 42-54). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Gopen, George D. & Swan, Judith A. (1990). The science of scientific writing. *American Scientist* 78. Retrieved August 11, 2009 from <http://trc.ucdavis.edu/bajafee/nem150/Course%20Content/gopen.htm>.

Gregory, Martin W. (1992, November 5). The infectiousness of pompous prose. *Nature*, 360, 11-12. Retrieved August 11, 2009 from <http://trc.ucdavis.edu/bajafee/nem150/Course%20Content/gregory.htm>.

Gusfield, Joseph R. (1981). *Drinking-driving and the symbolic order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hopps, Michael. (2000, February). Through an editor's eye: Clarity, brevity ensure reports will be read. *USAID Performance Monitoring and Evaluation News*.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. (1993, October 31). Dancing with professors: The trouble with academic prose. *New York Times Book Review*. Retrieved August 11, 2009, from <http://trc.ucdavis.edu/bajafee/nem150/Course%20Content/dancing.htm>.

Orwell, George, (1946). Politics and the English language. Retrieved August 13, 2007, from www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm

Sommers, Nancy. (2002). Responding to student writing. In C. R. McDonald & R.L. McDonald (Eds.), *Teaching writing: Landmarks and Horizons* (pp. 79-91). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Spurgin, Sally De Witt. (1994) *The power to persuade: A rhetoric and reader for argumentative writing*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Study finds jack shit. (2003, June 4). *The Onion*. Retrieved August 13, 2007, from <http://www.theonion.com/content/node/28756>.

Troubled teens mock social worker's car. (2003, June 11). *The Onion*. Retrieved August 13, 2007, from <http://www.theonion.com/content/node/38879>.

Williams, Joseph M. (1990). A very short history of bad writing. In *Style, toward clarity and grace*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Retrieved August 11, 2009 from <http://trc.ucdavis.edu/bajafee/nem150/Course%20Content/Short%20Hist%20Bad%20Writing.htm>

A. Course Assignments and Grading Policy: A grade of Pass or Fail will be assigned for this course. A passing grade will be assigned if the following requirements are met:

- Regular attendance (minimum of 5 classes)
- Active participation which demonstrates a passing knowledge of the readings
- Completion of 3 quizzes turned in on time
- Submission of writing pieces (e.g., problem statement) for editing by student, peers and/or instructor.

B. Course and Instructor Evaluation: An evaluation form will be provided for students at the end of the semester. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and attempts will be made to respond to requests.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

A. Scholastic Expectations

Please refer to *NCSSS Announcements*, or appropriate Program Handbook (available on the NCSSS web page) for Academic Requirements, including scholastic and behavioral requirements. All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Academic Honesty

Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy and appropriate Program Handbooks.

C. Accommodations

Students with physical, learning, psychological or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

Class Schedule

Class 1 (Sept 1): Rhetorical Context and “Good” Writing I

Reading:

- Gregory, Infectiousness of Pompous Prose
- Hopps, Clarity, Brevity
- Limerick, Dancing With Professors
- Williams, Very Short History

Class 2 (Sept 8): Rhetorical Context and “Good” Writing II

Reading:

- Spurgeon, chapters 1 and 2
- Orwell, Politics and the English Language
- Gusfield, chapter 4
- APA Manual, chapter 1
- Study finds jack shit, Troubled teens mock social worker's car

Class 3 (Sept 15): The Stages of Writing and Common Errors

Reading:

- Becker, chapter 1
- Sommers
- APA, chapters 2 and 3
- Models of Problem Statements
- Recommended: Flemons, chapters 3 and 4

Quiz: APA editorial guidelines

Class 4 (Sept. 22): Organizing Your Research, Argument, and Paper

Reading:

- Buzan, chapters 9 and 10
- Emig
- Flemons, chapter 2

Please bring colored pencils or pens (minimum of 3 colors)

Quiz: APA editorial guidelines

****Due: Assignment 1, Class 940**

Class 5 (Oct. 6): Editing for Clarity

Reading:

- Becker, chapter 3
- APA, chapter 2

“Editing made easy” packet (I will email this to you).

Quiz: APA editorial guidelines

****Due: Assignment 1, Class 930**

Class 6 (Oct. 20): Professional Prose

Reading:

- Gopen and Swan, Scientific Writing
- Becker, chapters 6 and 8

Bring examples of difficult paragraph to class

****Due: Assignment 2, Class 940**

Class 7 (Nov. 3): The Finishing Details