

EEES 6810/8810
Writing for the Environmental Sciences
Fall 2005

Day and time: Tuesday, 3:00 – 5:30
Room: The Eitel Room (Bowman-Oddy 3020)
Instructor: Von Sigler, Assistant Professor of Microbial Ecology, Department of Earth, Ecological, and Environmental Sciences
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Office hours: By appointment
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor

Required text: There is no assigned text. Necessary readings will be provided via the course website located on Dr. Sigler's departmental web page:

<http://www.eeescience.utoledo.edu/Faculty/Sigler/COURSES/Scientific%20Writing/Writing%20cover.htm>

The objectives of this course are to help you:

1. efficiently handle the technicalities involved with producing a quality scientific manuscript or proposal.
2. develop a better understanding of your own data through writing exercises, draft corrections, and eventual submission of the work to a peer-reviewed journal, thesis committee, or grant funding agency.

Tentative course set-up/schedule: Our main focus throughout the semester will be to systematically discuss the general structure of scientific papers. We will also cover topics such as data analysis, outlines, note taking, tables and figures, ethics and manuscript reviews. We will cover these concepts in a "lecture"-type setting, however true learning in this course will stem from group discussions. You will be expected to participate in writing-intensive exercises focusing on basic manuscript formatting and improvement. You are encouraged to utilize your own data throughout this course in order to further your own research effort and to generate a manuscript for in-class presentation and eventual publication. In addition to the assigned writings, you will complete several in-class exercises designed to increase your writing proficiency. Much of the assigned material will concern the writing of a major manuscript. Furthermore, I feel that writing in a comfortable environment is much more productive than writing in class. Therefore, class periods might be abbreviated to account for this significant out-of-class time expenditure.

WEEK	TOPIC	DUE	ASSIGNMENT
1 (08/22)	Introduction, types of writing, preparing a draft.	None	1. Choose "model" papers (due week 2)
2 (08/29)	Introduction, title, keywords, outlines.	1. Copy of "model" papers	1. Practice outline (in-class) 2. Outline of introduction (due week 3)
3 (09/05)	Reading and note taking, peer reviews	1. Outline of introduction	1. Paragraph summary (in-class)
4 (09/12)	Figures, tables, data analysis		1. 1 st introduction draft with peer review (due week 6) 2. Figures and tables (due week 5) 3. Table and figure examples (in-class)
5 (09/19)	Methods and results.	1. Figures and tables	1. 1 st draft of methods and results with peer review (due week 7)
6 (09/26)	Statistics	1. 1 st introduction draft including peer review	
7 (10/03)	Workshop 1	1. 1 st draft of methods and results including peer review	1. Final introduction draft (due week 8)
8 (10/10)	Discussion and citation	1. Final introduction	1. Final draft of methods and results (due week 11) 2. Discussion outline (due week 10) 3. Prioritizing your results (in class)
9 (10/17)	FALL BREAK		
10 (10/24)	Ethics in writing	1. Discussion outline	1. First discussion/citation draft with peer review (due week 12)
11 (10/31)	Abstracts	1. Final draft of methods and results	1. Abstract exercise (in class) 2. 1 st draft of abstract (due week 13)
12 (11/07)	Manuscript submission	1. First discussion/citation draft including peer review	
13 (11/14)	Workshop 2	1. 1 st draft of abstract	1. Final discussion/citation draft (due week 14)
14 (11/21)	Workshop 3	1. Final discussion/citation draft	1. Final draft of abstract (due week 15)
15 (11/28)	Paper presentations	1. Final draft of abstract 2. Paper presentations	
16 (12/05)	Paper presentations	1. Paper presentations	

Grading: Grades will be assigned based on a straight scale (90% and above, A; 80 – 89%, B, etc.) according to the following point schedule:

Exercise	Week Due	Points
Attendance		30
Model papers	2	10
Outline of introduction	3	20
Figures and tables	5	20
1 st introduction draft	6	15
peer review	6	20
1 st methods and results draft	7	20
peer review	7	20
Final introduction	8	15
Final methods and results	11	20
Discussion outline	10	20
1 st discussion/citation draft	12	20
peer review	12	20
1 st abstract draft	13	20
Final discussion/citation	14	20
Final abstract	15	10
Paper presentations	15, 16	20
Total points		320

The breakdown of how points will be assigned will be explained throughout the semester as assignments are discussed.

Notice that a peer review is required for three “first-drafts”. It is your responsibility to get the draft to the “reviewer” (an assigned classmate) at a reasonable time so that the review can be completed by the due date.

Course policies.

Writing for the Environmental Sciences is not a general language course. Participating students are expected to have a good command of written and spoken English. Although there will be some language-oriented exercises, the focus is mainly on genre formats, communication strategies and the development of scientific and critical thinking.

All assignments must be typed unless other arrangements are made.

Attendance and participation are important to this course, and are part of the grade. Participation includes reasonable effort and attention to in class exercises.

Plagiarism. "To borrow another writer's language or ideas without proper acknowledgment is a form of dishonesty known as plagiarism" (1997. A Pocket Style Manual, 2nd Edition. Bedford Books, Boston, p. 91). The University of Toledo regards plagiarism as a grave academic offense, which will not be tolerated. You are guilty of plagiarism if you use, without proper acknowledgment, paragraphs, single sentences, clauses, or ideas of others, regardless of the source (scientific publications, books, pamphlets, newspapers or newsletters, commercial "term paper" services, electronic media [such as information on the Internet, CD-ROM's, etc.], papers previous students have submitted for this or other courses, and the like). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, be sure to inquire before submitting your papers. If you are found to have plagiarized a source, you will receive a zero for that assignment.

Note: I will not accept assignments that are submitted late, electronically, or outside of the assigned page limits. Please provide hard copies of all assignments.