

**HSC 5956 Writing for Professional Publication**  
Department of Health Education and Behavior

Instructor: Megan A. McVay, Ph.D.  
Office: Florida Gym (FLG) Room 23  
Phone: 352-294-7029  
Email: [megan.mcvay@ufl.edu](mailto:megan.mcvay@ufl.edu)  
Department Chair: Jalie Tucker, PhD, FLG-5C

**Course Logistics**

- A. Class meeting times: Thursdays, 1:55-4:55
- B. Location: FLG room 200-conference room
- C. Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30-2:00. Other dates and times available by appointment.
- D. Course Texts (mandatory): Writing in the Biological Sciences; Angelika Hoffman, 2018, Oxford University Press
  - a. Optional text: Silvia, P. J. (2007). How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing. American Psychological Association.
  - b. Optional text: Graff, G., Birkenstein, C., & Durst, R. (2018). They say, I say. The Moves That Matters in Academic Writing. 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Course Description.** This course will cover procedures and practices in scholarly writing for health-related professional publications including topic selection, literature searches, manuscript preparation, and legal and ethical considerations.

**Course Objectives.** At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- A. Use information about academic journal review process, publishing business models, and indicators of journal quality to navigate interactions with journal from submission to publication.
- B. Conduct a well-informed and useful peer review of a research manuscript. Provide useful informal feedback to colleagues on manuscripts.
- C. Understand how recent movements in science practice towards “open science” (e.g., pre-registration of studies, open data) might impact the publication process.
- D. Develop confidence in ability to select a research topic and conduct effective literature searches.
- E. Evaluate the value of and barriers to communicating science to a public audience. Understand the strengths and weakness of available channels for communication.
- F. Recognize personal areas of weakness in writing (from sentence structure to mental barriers) and develop skills to overcome these weaknesses.
- G. Understand ethical and legal considerations relevant to the academic publication process.

### Course activities and evaluation

1. **Manuscript Development:** You will complete a series of assignments culminating in a ready-for-submission manuscript. This manuscript can be in the format of an empirical report describing results of either primary or secondary data analyses or a registered report (<https://cos.io/rr/>). The assignments that build up to the final manuscript are listed here and described in more detail in class. Combined, these projects make up 60% of your final grade.
  - a. Description of article topic and rationale for targeted journal - 5%
  - b. Outline of manuscript -5%
  - c. Annotated bibliography of relevant literature - 5%
  - d. Partial first draft (introduction and methods only) - 10%
  - e. Partial second draft (introduction and methods only) and documentation of self-editing -10%
  - f. Full draft (includes results and discussion section, or equivalent) - 10%
  - g. Final manuscript - 15%
  
2. **Peer review of writing.** There will be several assignments involving peer review of writing, worth 20% of your total grade.
  - a. **Informal peer review.** Informal peer review on the second draft of a classmate's course paper. 6.66%
  - b. **Formal peer review.** A polished peer review in the style of a review for a journal article submission, conducted on the full draft of a classmate's course paper. 6.66%
  - c. **Formal response to peer review:** Respond to your classmates peer review in the style of a response to a reviewer. 6.66%
  
3. **In-class activities.** For each class session, you will have a chance to receive credit for engaging in an in-class activity. Activities may involve a written reflection on readings, or just providing input in the class discussion. You will receive 10 points for each activity. These will generally be pass/fail (all 10 points or none). You can get up to two zeros without it affecting your grade (i.e., two lowest activity points are dropped). This makes up 20% of your final grade.

### Course schedule

This represents current plans for the course. It is likely that it will be updated as the course progresses. All changes will be discussed in class and/or via canvas.

Date	Content	Reading (by 1:55 PM on day of class)	Workshop focus	Assignments due (by 1:55PM on day of class)
1/10/18	Introduction, syllabus			

1/17/18	Selecting research topics; Journals and the publishing process	- Roediger 2008 Twelve Tips for Editors, and One Suggestion* - MacDonald & Eva. 2018. It's time to stand up to the academic publishing industry.*	Discussion and independent work on selecting manuscript topic and identifying journal	
1/24/18	Overcoming mental barriers to writing; Manuscript components	How to Write a Lot chapters 2 and 3; example empirical article TBD	Developing writing plan and action plan for overcoming barriers	Description of article topic and rationale for targeted journal
2/7/18	Style & Structure 1; Gopen principles	Gopen & Swan 1990, The Science of Scientific Writing*; Hofmann Ch 2: Fundamentals of Scientific Writing—Style	Applying principles learned to an existing writing sample of yours (bring in a few rough paragraphs from your recent writing)	
2/14/18	Style & Structure 2; Gopen principles	Hofmann Ch 3: Fundamentals of Scientific Writing—Composition	Cont. applying principles learned to an existing writing samples	Manuscript outline
2/21/18	Learning and citing the literature; Publication reporting guidelines	Hofmann Ch 4: Literature Sources; They Say, I Say chapter TBA	Review and share observations on several reporting guidelines; Give feedback on project outlines together	Annotated bibliography
2/28/18	Writing with colleagues, mentors, and mentees; Revising and editing your work	Chawla Science blog post*; Hofmann ch 8—Revising and editing	Work on revising partial first draft	Partial first draft (introduction and methods only)
3/7/18	SPRING BREAK			
3/14/18	Open science practices; ethical and legal issues in writing and publication	Cruwell et al, 2018; 8 Easy Steps to Open Science*	Continue revising second draft	Partial second draft (introduction and methods only) and documentation of self-editing

3/21/18	Peer review	Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines*; PLOS How to peer review webpage*;	Work on peer review	Full draft and cover letter
3/28/18	Writing for public impact	TBA article	Individual meetings with students about drafts	Informal peer review
4/4/18	Style and structure, revisited	They Say, I Say TBA chapter	Individual meetings with students about drafts	Formal peer review
4/11/18	Writing for grant applications		Work on final draft	Response to peer review
4/18/18	Course review and wrap up			Final manuscript

\*\*\*Link to readings:

- Roediger 2008 Twelve Tips for Editors, and One Suggestion\*  
<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/twelve-tips-for-editors-and-one-suggestion>
- MacDonald & Eva 2018: <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/in-my-opinion/time-stand-academic-publishing-industry/>
- Gopen & Swan 2018: <https://www.americanscientist.org/blog/the-long-view/the-science-of-scientific-writing>
- Chawla Science blog post: <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2018/12/assigning-authorship-research-papers-can-be-tricky-these-approaches-can-help>
- Cruwell et al 2018: <https://psyarxiv.com/cfzyx>
- Committee on Publication Ethics guidelines:  
<http://publicationethics.org/files/u7140/Peer%20review%20guidelines.pdf>
- PLOS How to peer review webpages: <http://reviewers.plos.org/resources/>

### Course Policies

- ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS:** During the lecture/discussion portion of this class, I ask that you do not use your cellular phones and if you use a laptop, only have it opened to a blank note taking page (unless during the class we are doing an activity using other websites).
- EXTRA CREDIT.** No extra credit opportunities will be provided.
- DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** To give every student the best possible chance at success, students with disabilities will be given the opportunity for accommodations to meet their needs. Students with disability requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

- d. **COURSE WITHDRAWAL AND FAILING GRADES:** Students who have a very low grade but do not drop/withdraw from this course nor explain his/her situation to the instructor on or before 04/12/2019 will be given an “E” (Failing grade), NOT an “I” (Incomplete grade).
- e. **TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS:** All assignment are due at their designated times.
- i. Assignments required to be submitted electronically via email to me on or before 1:55 p.m. on their designated due dates. I
  - ii. Late Assignments: Late assignments are accepted within 24 hours of their due date. All late assignment will automatically incur a 50% deduction in points.
- f. **EXCUSED ABSENCES.** Acceptable reasons for absences from class are consistent with the UF Policy which includes the following: illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate, and court-imposed legal obligations. In the event of one of these, your absence will be considered excused and you will be allowed to make up any missed in-class activities if the following conditions are met.
- i. Provide me with notification of your absence (via email or phone/phone message) within 24 hours of the absence.
  - ii. Submit formal documentation of reason for absence via email, fax, or through campus mailbox within 24 hours of your return to class.
  - iii. Reach out to me to complete a make-up activity
- g. **COURSE EVALUTION:** “Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.”
- h. **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>. “UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.”

### **Campus Resources:**

#### Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care:  
If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

- Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).  
<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

#### Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:Learningsupport@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.  
<http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>
- Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.  
<http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>
- Student Complaints Campus:  
[https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF\\_Complaints\\_policy.pdf](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf)  
On-Line Students Complaints: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaintprocess>

**\*\*\*\*\*This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced, and it is your responsibility to be aware of any announced changes.\*\*\*\*\***