

Spring, 2024

Course Syllabus: Writing in the Sciences BIOL 877, 2 credits Spring 2024

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Letitia Reichart
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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Fridays 1:30-2:30pm, Wednesday 10-11am, or by appointment. Email to arrange a time for a phone discussion

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Academic writing in the sciences can be a daunting solitary endeavor. It is the hope of this course to take away the fear of the blank page and help to engage the class with a sense of community that is inherently beneficial to the writing process. This course is particularly geared towards students who have been away from academic writing for many years, or perhaps decades. This will be an introduction into this type of writing, complete with an overview of the materials available to you as a distance student. The primary purpose of this course is to improve your written communication skills. We will focus on your ability to prepare and write technical papers in a professional scientific format. A crucial part of learning to write technical papers is reading them and practicing writing them yourself. Plan to spend at least several hours each week on reading, writing, and practicing the skills we cover in this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- 1). Learn to identify and obtain scientific research articles from the primary scientific literature.
- 2). Explore multiple methods of scientific communication.
- 3). Learn and use the steps of writing a scientific literature review for a specific topic.
- 4). Learn to critically evaluate scientific writing and improve overall written skills in scientific communication.

INSTRUCTOR ROLE: As your instructor I will provide feedback to students in two ways. First, students will receive individual feedback for specific writing assignments (e.g., review article outline, rough draft of review article and the final version of the review article; see assignment list below). Second, I will read and may comment on student journal entries and/or online class discussions, and provide clarification or summary information for student questions. Any general comments or observations that would be helpful to the class as a whole will be made available to all students via announcement. I

will respond to every email sent from student UNKlopermail accounts, you can expect a response to your emails within 24 hours of sending, Monday-Friday. However emails sent on the weekends (or late on Friday) will not be seen until Monday morning.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Hofmann, Angelika. 2016. *Writing in the Biological Sciences: A Comprehensive Resource for Scientific Communication*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press. New York, NY. ISBN-13: 978-0190245603
2. Lamott, Anne. 1994. *Bird by Bird, Instructions of Writing and Life*. Anchor Books, Random House. New York, NY.

The required books can be purchased at The Antelope Bookstore

<http://unk.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&storeId=87923> or with your favorite online bookseller.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

It is recommended that students have a style book. Two options are as follows:

1. Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr. and EB White
2. The Bedford Handbook by Diana Hacker

Any edition is acceptable and can be found on Amazon currently for \$4.00 or below.

REQUIRED HARDWARE/SOFTWARE: Students should refer to the following eCampus website to make sure you meet the minimum hardware/software and internet connection speed required by all UNK eCampus students.

eCampus requirements: <http://www.unk.edu/academics/ecampus/resources-info/students/technology/requirements.php>

NOTE: Microsoft Office Word is the only acceptable word processing software for this course (All other file formats are unacceptable for submitting online documents). This software is available for download with your Office365 account. Please go to the following link to learn more about getting setup with appropriate software.

http://www.unk.edu/offices/its/instructional technology/office365_unk_email/index.php

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: UNK's Policy is the maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found in violation of the standards of academic honesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: Cheating, Fabrication and Falsification, Plagiarism, and Other Acts of Academic Dishonesty. You are expected to uphold the UNK standard of Student Conduct relating to Academic Integrity.

You assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the work you submit. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course and plagiarism will not be tolerated. All assignments will be scanned through Safe Assignment via Blackboard.

Students who plagiarize any part of their paper will fail this course.

GRADING SYSTEM: Grades will be determined according to the following scheme:

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>
Personal Statement	10
Library Exercise	10
Potential Topics	10
Final Topic & Annotated Bibliography	30
References (10 required)	20
Title Page and Outline	20
1 st Submission of Review Article	50
Peer Review of Review Article	35
2 nd Submission of Review Article	100
Close of Course Personal Statement	10
<u>Journal Writing (5pts each)</u>	<u>55</u>
Total Course Points	350

GRADING SCALE:

98 – 100 % = A+	80 – 82 % = B-	63 – 67 % = D
93 – 97 % = A	78 – 79 % = C+	60 – 62 % = D-
90 – 92 % = A-	73 – 77 % = C	59% or less = F
88 – 89 % = B+	70 – 72 % = C-	
83 – 87 % = B	68 – 69 % = D+	

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES OR THOSE WHO ARE PREGNANT:

Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities or those who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Academic Success Office, 163 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email unkdso@unk.edu. For those needing accommodation due to pregnancy, you need to visit with Student Health. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students>

If you have an accommodation plan, please see Dr. Reichart as soon as possible, so any necessary arrangements can be made for your learning. **No accommodations can be provided until a Reasonable Accommodation Plan is in place. Please remember,**

plans are not retroactive and cannot be used for assignments prior to the date of the instructor's signature. To the greatest extent possible, University Representatives, shall observe confidentiality with respect to any request for accommodation.

REPORTING STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL VIOLENCE OR SEXUAL

ASSUALT: Reporting allegations of rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking enables the University to promptly provide support to the impacted student(s), and to take appropriate action to prevent a recurrence of such sexual misconduct and protect the campus community. Confidentiality will be respected to the greatest degree possible. Any student who believes she or he may be the victim of sexual misconduct is encouraged to report to one or more of the following resources:

Local Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault Advocacy Agency 308-237-2599

Campus Police (or Security) 308-865-8911

Title IX Coordinator 308-865-8655

Retaliation against the student making the report, whether by students or University employees, will not be tolerated.

If you have questions regarding the information in this email please contact Mary Chinnock Petroski, Human Resources Director (petroskimj@unk.edu or phone 8655).

CLASS SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS: The class schedule (Table 1) and weekly reading assignments (Table 2) can be found below. Due dates must be followed and late papers are strongly discouraged. **All assignments are due on Monday at 12 midnight CST during the specified week** (e.g., assigned coursework during week 1 is due at the beginning of week 2). Due dates for all assignments will also be indicated on Blackboard. For assignments turned in late a **penalty of 5 points per day** will be deducted. A paper will get no credit when taking the 5 points for tardiness equals zero for the assignment or seven days after the due date, whichever comes first. Also, the rough draft of your Review Article will be given to other students in the course to review. If this draft is late you may lose the opportunity for peer review.

Table 1: Class Schedule & Written Assignments

DATE	WEEK	LECTURE/TOPIC	JOURNAL WRITING	ASSIGNMENT
Aug 22-26	1	Online Tools: Accessing the UNK Library, Writing Center	Welcome	Introductions & Personal Statement re: Scientific Writing, Research Writing, and Writing in General
Aug 29 - Sept 2	2	Plagiarism & Proper Paraphrase	Library Week	Library Assignment
Sept 6-9	3	Brainstorming	Bird by Bird	Potential Topics
Sept 12-16	4	Types of Scientific Writing	Video	
Sept 19-23	5	Sections of a Scientific Paper	Popular Press Articles	
Sept 26-30	6	Organizational Help	Review Articles	Final Topic & Annotated Bibliography
Oct 3-7	7	Language	Primary Literature	Title Page & Outline
Oct 10-14	8	Punctuation	Synthesis of Sources	
Oct 17-21	9	Documentation of Sources	Citation	
Oct 24-28	10	Writing Improvement Strategies--Meal Plan and other helpful hints	Meal Plan	1 st Submission of Review Article
Oct 31 - Nov 4	11	Critical Eye/Critiquing Others and Your own Work	Bad Writing	Peer Review of Review Articles
Nov 7-11	12	Revising, Revision, Revised		
Nov 14-18	13			2 nd Submission of Review Article AND End of the Semester Personal Statement
Nov 21-25	14	Final Assignments are DUE November 30, 2016 at midnight CST		

Table 2: Weekly Reading Assignments

WEEK	READINGS: <i>Writing in the Biological Sciences: A Comprehensive Resource for Scientific Communication (2nd Edition)</i>	READINGS: <i>Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life</i>
1	Chapter 1: Science and Scientific Communication	Introduction, Getting Started, Short Assignments
2	Chapter 4: Literature Sources Chapter 10: Reading, Summarizing, and Critiquing a Scientific Research Article	Shitty First Drafts, Perfectionism, Polaroids
3	Chapter 2: Fundamentals of Scientific Writing, Part I - Style	Writing a Present, Finding Your Voice
4	Chapter 3: Fundamentals of Scientific Writing, Part II - Composition	Looking Around, The Moral Point of View
5	Chapter 7: Laboratory Reports and Research Papers	Broccoli, Radio Station KFKD
6	Chapter 11: Term Papers and Review Articles	Jealousy
7		Index Cards
8	Chapter 6: Data, Figures, and Tables	Calling Around
9		Writing Groups
10	Chapter 8: Revising and Editing	Someone to Read your Drafts
11		Letters, Writers Block
12	Chapters 13, 14, & 15: Oral Presentations, Posters, Research Proposals	False Starts, How do you Know When you are done?
13		Giving, The Last Class