

English 324—Writing in the Sciences

Spring 2020 3 credits Prerequisites ENGL 120 and junior status

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Minard 316N

Office Hours: MWF 10:00 – 10:50, 1:00 – 2:00

Course Description

The study and practice in written conventions of the sciences for academic, scientific, and public audiences

Course Objectives

You will be introduced to the practice of writing in the sciences by analyzing textual materials, creating textual materials, and considering textual reception. By the end of the semester you should be able

1. To develop textual materials (various types of writing, visual presentations, etc.) for specific audiences
2. To make complex statistical, conceptual, and political topics accessible for a variety of audiences
3. To evaluate rhetorical situations in order to make the appropriate communication decisions

General Education Outcome C

Communication Learning Outcome - students will use a variety of modes, particularly written, oral, artistic, and visual to

- a. effectively communicate analysis, knowledge, understanding, expression and/or conclusions
- b. skillfully use high-quality, credible, relevant sources
- c. demonstrate appropriate conventions in a variety of communication situations
- d. demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences in a variety of contexts

The three objectives have the General Education Outcome C, provided in the textbox, as their guiding reference. The completion of assignments and participation during course activities will fulfill the objectives. By fulfilling the objectives, you will be satisfying the outcome.

Required Resources

Writing Science by Joshua Schimel

Readings provided on Blackboard

Possibly \$10-15 to print a poster (Group will share cost: \$2-3 per group member)

Recommended Resources

GoogleDocs access (either the Google App suite affiliated with the NDSU account, or another Gmail)

BRING your laptop/tablet/device to class

We will often write during class, so you need to be prepared to write. Usually a phone is inadequate to work on projects so if you have another device, bring it.

Expectations of Emails (Help me, help you)

Subject Line - English 324 10:00: [Reason for sending the email]

Opening Statement – Mr. Warner, I am in the 10:00 section, I write [state reason].

Assignments

Form Analysis (150 points)

In preparation for writing a journal article, you will gather several articles in order to analyze them to learn about the expectations of the form. How does a writer structure content for the reader? What does the structure indicate about the expectations of the audience? Though the focus of the assignment is to learn about the *form* of the article as a genre, you will benefit from using the collection process as an opportunity to learn about possible topics. We will be reading about one version of form analysis in *Writing Science*, so the book will provide a long-form example of how to write a form analysis.

Proposal and Review Reports (150 points)

The course involves the creation of a mock “special issue” of a journal on a theme. Part of the creation is to propose a topic and provide supporting evidence that your selected focus on the topic is viable. In addition, the proposals need reviewers to determine which proposals should be included in the journal issue and set the theme. Therefore, we have two tasks: (1) write a proposal for our own topic and (2) review proposals for merits. Based on those two tasks, we will also define the theme of the special issue. Subsequently, we will examine calls for proposals then create our own call for the special issue – in effect setting the review criteria that we will use to evaluate proposals, your own proposal and the proposals by classmates.

Co-Authored Article (150 points)

While reviewing proposals, you should consider whether you might want to join the proposal author as a co-author, or consider how your proposal might intersect with other proposals. Ultimately, you will have co-authors when writing the articles, so an awareness of options is important. Each article will have three to four authors. No one may write alone for this assignment. **No one.** Developing from the selected proposal, the group will refine the topic then delegate tasks as needed. The expectation is that the article will have substantial supporting research and visualized data. Primary data is highly desired yet often not available under the circumstances, so you will have to work from secondary (for example, peer-reviewed journal articles) and tertiary sources (for example, reviews of research or popular science journals). The article will be 15-20 written pages and 2-5 visualized data pages, for a total of 17-25 pages.

Course Grading Scale

A (1000 – 900) – work completed at a professional level. The writing **exceeds** assignment requirements by incorporating inventive elements such as visuals, digital aspects, extensive research, etc.

B (899 – 800) – work completed at a professional level. The writing adheres to assignment requirements

C (799 – 700) – work completed at a professional level. The writing adheres to most assignment expectations but some parts are missing or weakly developed

D (699 – 600) – work completed yet unacceptable. Several assignment requirements not met and development lacking

F (599 – 0) – work is incomplete, a major assignment is not submitted.

Arrangements not prepared and documented to complete any unsubmitted work.

Poster Version of Article and Presentation (150 points)

After writing an article, you will convert the material into a visual format. Though I label this assignment a poster version of the article, you may decide to use another format, such as an interactive website or illustrated guide. The choice depends on the topic and how best to convey the information to a less topic-knowledgeable audience. However, the selected format should place a greater emphasis on a visual delivery of the contents of your article (for example, images of described organisms, larger plot size for figures of data). In addition, you will present the visual version of the article to the class and, pending arrangements, a larger audience (we will consider guest options as the special issue theme emerges so the guests will be appropriate audiences, technical and non-technical).

Reading Responses, Reflections, and Quizzes (250 points)

Reflection and responses to readings demonstrates engagement with course material and the other assignments. The readings provide the class a shared source of materials, so we might participate using similar concepts and terminology. Consequently, a familiarity with the concepts and terminology will be necessary to participate actively. Each unit of reading will have a corresponding response or reflection. The written responses and reflections will be less formal than other writing because the underlying purpose is to demonstrate awareness and understanding of broader concepts. Four quizzes related to the concepts and terminology within *Writing Science* will occur following the order provided in the Course Schedule. Each quiz can be 'made-up' following the procedures in the "Course Policies: Assignments."

Professional Packet (100 points)

This project is required of all 300-level writing courses. You will create a resume (you may revise an existing resume), solicit recommendation letters, a research statement, and some additional documents. If graduate study is your interest, you may write application letters and create a CV. You must also interview at least two researchers in a topic area that interests you then provide an interview summary.

Portfolio Letter (50 points)

The English Department uses student portfolios to assess the performance of the writing program. A portfolio will contain the work from the course. The department, not me, will assess this portfolio. Per department requirements, the portfolio must include at least three genres (satisfied with journal article, form analysis, and proposal) and consist of 18+ pages (some adjustment for visual projects). Note, if you are writing something for another class, you may include the piece in this set.

The assessment of the portfolio is for department purposes. The department wants to determine what seems to be effective or ineffective for the upper-division writing courses. The department assessment will not change your grade (for the better or for the worse). The fifty points are for the letter, which will be the final one-page assignment for the class. In the one-page letter, you will reflect upon the activities and assignments in terms of how you have developed a better understanding of communication practices within your discipline and in a broader sense.

Note about Examples of Assignments

For many assignments, I do not have examples. The purpose of the form analysis is to locate examples as references for your writing. Writing is a highly contextualized activity, so you need to learn about the context by finding, analyzing, and modifying examples in order to achieve a 'best fit' into the context of your discipline. We work in class and bring work outside of class for review, and in this way craft through a process effective writing skills and knowledge. Writing is labor so arrive to class ready to work. Learning to locate and evaluate examples are important skills that we will be enhancing during course activities.

Note about Assignment Submissions

You may submit assignments either as printed-copies or as electronic-copies. If you want to submit assignments as electronic copies, I prefer that you send materials to an email dedicated to this course,

warner.engl324@gmail.com

warner [period] engl324 [at] gmail [period] com

In particular, if you want to use GoogleDocs and then share an invitation to edit the file, you need to send the invitation to this email.

Course Policies

Assignments

There is a one-day of class “grace period” after established due dates. That is, an assignment due on Monday can be submitted on Wednesday. *However, the grace period requires documentation that explains the late submission.* The documentation is a short memorandum (25-75 words); you may initially state a verbal explanation, but I want follow-up written documentation and might even send an email requesting it if you do not provide it. The documentation is for both of us. I appreciate it so I can recall circumstances related to assignments. You will learn to appreciate it because you have evidence of what I have agreed to provide you (for example, an extension and specific new submission date). A similar procedure is necessary to ‘make-up’ a quiz or reading reflection or response.

There is one exception to the grace period policy: the portfolio has a firmly set, non-negotiable deadline (last day of class). On that date, the English department will conduct portfolio assessment, and consequently, if I do not have a portfolio, I will be unable to provide it to the assessment group. We will have a preliminary submission review in-class to prepare for the assessment, which should align all necessary projects. Even if you miss that particular class, the portfolio submission date will remain the same; I will assist as best as possible to assure that you have the necessary materials collected.

The grace period is a realization that, “life happens;” (cars will not start; doctor’s appointments occur at specific times, etc.). I will do my best to try and accommodate; however, the best accommodations happen through clear communication. If I am unaware of what is happening, I cannot help. Please maintain clear communication regarding what is happening, so I can respond in an informed, mindful manner. You do not need to provide vivid details – only the basics. Life happens.

Devices

I welcome laptop/tablet usage provided you remain engaged with the class. Please have phones set to a silent/vibrate or other less intrusive mode.

Note: I tend to have activities that require shifting around the room (forming groups, sharing work, etc.) so be mindful of what you are doing with your devices as well as what you are doing on them, and where you place them. Devices are well-built, but one drop while moving into groups, or a spill of coffee onto the screen, or accidental shove off the tabletop when turning to respond to a group member, or a string of other mishaps, and suddenly (expensive, stressful) problems ensue.

Devices welcome – but be good stewards of them, and respectful of classmates and me.

Attendance

The English Department adheres to [Policy 333](#), which is as follows:

Attendance in classes is expected and important. (The term “class” includes class, online class, laboratory, field trips, group exercises, or other activities.) However, there are instances in which students are unable to attend class and in which those absences must be excused. These instances are described in the following sections. Absences not covered by this policy are excusable at the discretion of the instructor. Class attendance policies may not have discriminatory effect (intentional or unintentional) on members of a protected class ([see NDSU Policy 100](#)). Students and instructors should note that the NDSU Student Health Service does not provide students with excuses for class absences or tardiness due to illness or injury.

My responsibilities per Policy 333.2 are as follows:

- a. Students must be clearly informed on the first day of class in writing in the syllabus (1) of class policy regarding class absence (including if supporting documentation is required); and (2) of class policy for making up missed coursework. It is recognized that sometimes an assignment is impossible to make-up.
- b. Excused students must be given an opportunity to address any missed coursework in a reasonable amount of time

Regarding Policy 333.2.a: We will have an end of week syllabus quiz, and we are reading the document on the third class meeting (to allow for add/drop changes to the roster).

Regarding Policy 333.2.b: You should review the section in Assignments that describes the procedure to submit missed course work or late submissions. I will add that I will be understanding provided I am aware of what is happening. Part of your maturation from students into professionals is to practice clear communication, which includes missing assignments (secret: in the work world, deadlines are missed...if there is a good reason).

Course Etiquette

Collaboration and Presentation

This course will involve frequent collaboration and presentation. Therefore, we must be considerate of one another. Disagreement is fine if conveyed in a professional manner. The collaborative projects of this course are designed with the course objectives and course outcome in mind. The sciences are highly interactive disciplines, so it is beneficial to practice coordinating with others for project management and even for individual project development to accomplish the outcomes for this course.

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. [NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#) applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty.

Academic Honesty Defined

From the NDSU University Bulletin: Students are responsible for submitting their own work. Students who cooperate on oral or written examinations or work without authorization share the responsibility for violation of academic principles, and are subject to disciplinary action even when one of the students is not enrolled in the course where the violation occurred. Students have the right to be informed when they are suspected of violating academic principles and have the right to a fair opportunity to refute them ([Full version available here](#)).

English Department Policy on Plagiarism

Instructors in the English department try to distinguish between inadvertent and deliberate plagiarism. Initial instances of inadvertent plagiarism will be pointed out and revision will be expected; deliberate plagiarism may result in zero for an assignment, possible F for the course. See the English department guidelines for more details.

Student Accommodations

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act, I encourage students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course to contact me as soon as possible so that the appropriate arrangements can be made. In addition, veterans and student soldiers with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify me in advance.

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the Disability Services Office (www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices) as soon as possible.

Course Schedule

The course schedule is tentative. While I will do my best to remain on the described arrangement, a variety of activities might cause changes. In the event that any change to the schedule is necessary, the updated schedule will be available in Blackboard and class-wide Announcement will accompany it.

Week	In-Class Activities	Out-of-Class Activities
Week 1	Welcome; Syllabus Quiz	Schimel, Chapters 1-3
Week 2	Introducing Form Analysis; First Reading Response	Schimel, Chapter 4
Week 3	Comparing Form Analysis	
Week 4	First draft of Form Analysis First Reading Quiz Friday - Submit Final Draft of Form Analysis	Analyze set of Call for Proposals, Schimel, Chapter 5-7
Week 5	Proposal Writing and Reviewing Structure of Call for Proposals	Writing individual proposal, Defining CFP for course special issue
Week 6	First Rounds of Proposal Review (bundles of three-four proposals)	"Physicists Reading Physics" Charles Bazerman (pdf in Blackboard); the Toulmin model of scientific argumentation (pdf in Blackboard)
Week 7	Reflection – is an IMRD report a journal article? Why, why not; when, when not? Second Rounds of Proposal Review (fewer proposals than first round)	Career documents readings in Blackboard; Schimel Chapter 8-9; Blackboard discussion of possible journal article topics (co-author selection)
Week 8	Second Reading Quiz Professional Documents	Journal article proposals
Week 9	Bring journal article draft one – review of internal structure	Schimel Chapter 10

Week 10	What even is a paragraph?	Schimmel Chapter 11 <i>Paragraphing</i> by Erika Lindemann (from <i>Rhetoric for Writing Teachers</i>)
Spring Break Week		
Week 11	Journal article draft two: Word choice exercises – clarity, concision, coherence, and consistency (many authors, one ‘authorial voice’)	Schimmel Chapter 12-14
Week 12	Word choice, condensing, and <i>now</i> we are “editing” Friday - Final Date to Submit Professional Documents	Schimmel Chapter 15-17 <i>Optional:</i> Schimmel Chapter 18 Dealing with Limitations (requires support from disciplinary experts that I and classmates simply do not possess – experimental designs and managing primary data)
Week 13	Third Reading Quiz; reading Course Special Issue for final compilation (flow is the focus), reflective writing on the collected articles Friday – Final Date to Submit Journal Article	Schimmel Chapter 19-20
Week 14	Converting from one medium (journal article) to another (poster) Friday – Final Proposal Review Documents	Scott McCloud <i>Understanding Comics</i> selections in Blackboard; Nathan Yau <i>Visualizing Data</i> selections in Blackboard; Robin Williams <i>Non-Designers Design Book</i> selections
Week 15	Compile Mock Special Issue of Journal Final Reading Quiz Claim a time to present poster version	Portfolio Letter

Week 16	Submit Final Portfolio with Portfolio Letter; Presentations (Submission of Poster Version depends on when the group will present it)	
Finals Week	Remaining Presentations	