

## **Intensive Course in Research Writing**

Texas A&M University

22 June through 10 July 2009

Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon except as otherwise announced

Main Classroom: Room 326A Veterinary Medicine Administration Building

Computer Laboratory: Room 028 Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Classroom Instruction: approximately 40 hours (about 3 hours per day)

Outside Work: approximately 120 hours

### **Course Staff:**

*Instructor:* Barbara Gastel, MD, MPH, Professor, Texas A&M University

(E-mail: bgastel@cvm.tamu.edu; Phone: 1-979-845-6887)

*Instructional Associate:* Roberto Tuda Rivas, PhD, Investigador, Facultad de Contaduría y Administración, Unidad Torreón, Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila

*Manuscript Reviewer (July 7–9):* Arkady Mak, PhD, MD, professional editor

*Graduate Assistant:* Karen Wakefield, RN, MS, graduate student, Texas A&M

This 3-week intensive course is designed mainly to increase your ability to write papers publishable in English-language international journals. Other goals of the course include increasing your knowledge of the academic publication process, enhancing your skill at other forms of professional communication (such as oral presentations), increasing your ability to edit or peer review others' work, and helping you to refine or maintain your English-language skills. We hope that you will find this course helpful and that you will share information from it with colleagues and students.

The goals of the course will be pursued mainly through presentations, small-group discussions ("workshops"), reading assignments, and writing assignments. Most of the reading will come from the book *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*, 6th edition, by Barbara Gastel and Robert A. Day (Greenwood Press, 2006). A Spanish translation of this book is available as *Cómo escribir y publicar trabajos científicos*, 4a edición (Organización Panamericana de la Salud, 2008).

The main writing assignments will entail preparing or revising the parts of a scientific or other scholarly paper about research that you have done. We expect that you will spend several hours per day on homework. You will be able to use the library facilities of Texas A&M University. We hope that by the end of the course, you will have a manuscript nearly ready to submit to a journal.

Class members wishing to do so can attend one or more sessions of a graduate course on science editing that is now under way. This course generally meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Further information is available on request.

The success of a course such as this one depends on the class members as well as the instructors. Suggestions for making the course more useful or enjoyable are welcome at any time.

## **Tentative Schedule**

### **Week 1**

Monday,  
June 22

Introductions: The Participants and the Course  
Presentation: Deciding When and Where to Submit a Paper  
Demonstration: Journals' Instructions to Authors  
Overview: The Structure of Papers  
Introduction: Drafting an Abstract  
Brief Tour of Building

Tuesday,  
June 23

Workshop and Discussion: Instructions to Authors  
Presentation/Discussion: Approaching a Writing Project  
Discussion: Writing in English as a Foreign Language  
Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Methods Section  
Presentation/Discussion: Providing Feedback on Drafts  
Workshop: Class Members' Abstracts

**Reading Due:**

- Preface, "A Word to International Readers," and Chapters 3, 6, 9, 11, and 34 in textbook

**Writing Due:**

- an informal abstract of the research about which you will write a paper

*Instructions: Please draft an informal abstract of the research about which you will write a paper. The abstract should run about 250 words (1 double-spaced page). It is suggested that you use the following headings: Background, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.*

**Other Item Due:**

- instructions to authors from 2 or 3 journals in your field  
*Instructions: Please bring instructions to authors from 2 or 3 journals in your field. At least 1 set of instructions should be from a journal to which you might want to submit a paper about your research.*

Wednesday,  
June 24

Presentation/Discussion: Titles and Authors  
Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Results Section  
Presentation/Discussion: Tables and Figures  
Workshop: Drafts of Methods Sections

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 7, 8, 12, 16, 17, and 18 in textbook

**Browsing Due:**

- papers in the journal for which you are writing a paper

*Instructions: Look at some papers in the journal for which you are writing a paper. Choose a paper that you think would be a good model for yours. Notice how the Methods section of the paper is written. Be ready to share your observations in class.*

**Writing Due:**

- draft of Methods section

*Instructions: Please draft the Methods section of your paper. Bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each other member of your small group, and a copy for the instructor.*

**Other Item Due:**

- copy of a paper, on a topic similar to yours, from the journal to which you will submit your paper

*Instructions: After doing the browsing assignment noted above, print the paper that you think would be the best model for you paper, and bring it to class. Also e-mail the instructor the paper.*

Thursday,  
June 25

Workshop: Examples of Tables and Figures

Presentation Discussion: Citing References

Presentation/Discussion: Poster Presentations and Oral Presentations

Workshop: Revised Drafts of Methods Sections

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 15, 27, 28, and 29 in textbook

**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of methods section

*Instructions: Using feedback received, revise the draft of your Methods section.*

**Other Items Due:**

- copies of some tables, figures, or both from papers reporting research similar to yours

*Instructions: Print out some copies of tables, figures, or both from papers reporting research similar to yours. Bring the copies to class.*

Friday,  
June 26

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Discussion

Presentation/Discussion: Preparing Acknowledgments

Workshop: draft of Results section; ideas for Discussion section

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 13 and 14 in textbook

**Writing Due:**

- draft of Results Section

*Instructions: Please draft the Results section of your paper. Bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each other member of your small group, and a copy for the instructor.*

## Week 2

(Note: Interested class members can give oral presentations in the afternoons this week.)

Monday,  
June 29

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Introduction  
Presentation/Discussion: Some Aspects of Writing Style  
Workshop: draft of Discussion; ideas for Introduction  
**Reading Due:** Chapters 1, 2, 4, 10, and 30 in textbook  
**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of Results section  
*Instructions: Using feedback received, revise the draft of your Methods section.*
- draft of Discussion  
*Instructions: Please draft the Discussion section of your paper. Bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each other member of your small group, and a copy for the instructor.*

Tuesday,  
June 30

Presentation/Discussion: More Aspects of Writing Style  
Workshop: Some Editing Practice  
Presentation/Discussion: Some Ethical and Other Issues  
Workshop: draft of Introduction  
**Reading Due:** Chapters 5, 31, 32, and 33 in textbook;  
Appendix 2 in textbook

**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of Discussion  
*Instructions: Using feedback received, revise the draft of your Discussion section.*
- draft of Introduction  
*Instructions: Please draft the Introduction to your paper. Bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each other member of your small group, and a copy for the instructor.*

Wednesday,  
July 1

Presentation/Discussion: Publishing a Paper  
**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 19, 20, 21, and 22 in textbook

**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of Introduction  
*Instructions: Using feedback received, revise the draft of your Introduction.*

Thursday,  
July 2

Presentation/Discussion: Preparing Grant Proposals and Progress Reports

Presentation/Discussion: Preparing a Curriculum Vitae

Workshop: drafts of Abstract

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 36 and 37 in textbook; also review Chapter 9

**Browsing Due:**

- annotated example of successful grant proposal, posted at <http://www.wooster.edu/grants/niaid.pdf>
- other examples of grant proposals, posted at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/ncn/grants/app/default.htm>

**Writing Due:**

- draft of Abstract

*Instructions: Please draft the Abstract of your paper. Bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each other member of your small group, and a copy for the instructor.*

- revised version of entire paper (may be submitted Friday if desired)

*Instructions: Using feedback received on the drafts and revised versions of the various sections of your paper, prepare a revised version of your paper.*

Friday,  
July 3

(University Closed because of Independence Day [July 4])

Independent Work on Revising Papers

Class Party: Dinner at the Home of Barbara Gastel and Tom Vogel

Week 3

(Note: Tuesday through Thursday afternoons of this week, class members will meet individually with professional editor Arkady Mak, PhD, MD, to receive feedback on their papers.)

Monday,  
July 6

Presentation/Discussion: Writing Review Papers

Presentation/Discussion: Observations of an Editor (tentative)

Workshop: drafts of entire papers

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 23 in textbook

**Browsing Due:**

- 3 review papers in your field

*Instructions: Find and look at 3 review papers in your field. Be ready to discuss what you notice about them.*

**Writing Due:**

- draft of your curriculum vitae (CV)

*Instructions: Please prepare a draft of your CV. Bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each other member of your small group, a copy for the instructor, and a copy for Dr. Mak.*

Tuesday,  
July 7

Presentation/Discussion: Other Writing for Journals  
Presentation/Discussion: Providing Peer Review  
Workshop: drafts of curricula vitae

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 24 and 40 in textbook
- examples of book reviews, editorials, letters to the editor

Wednesday,  
July 8

Presentation/Discussion: Writing Book Chapters and Books  
Presentation/Discussion: Communicating Specialized Information to the Public  
Workshop: examples of specialized writing for the public

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 25, 26, and 39 in textbook

**Writing Due:**

- revised curriculum vitae

*Instructions: Using feedback received, prepare a revised version of your curriculum vitae.*

Thursday,  
July 9

Presentation/Discussion: Selected Other Topics  
Discussion: Helping Others with Their Writing  
Workshop: class members' pieces presenting their research to the public

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 35, 38, and 41 in textbook

**Writing Due:**

- brief piece presenting your research to the public

*Instructions: Draft a brief article or news release presenting your research to the public. The article or news release should run about 250 to 500 words.*

Friday,  
July 10

Wrap-Up: Review and Evaluation of the Course  
Presentation/Discussion (optional): Other Topics of Interest to Class Members  
Workshop: Review Exercise

**Writing Due:**

- re-revised version of paper

*Instructions: Using feedback received this week, revise your paper further. Your paper should now be nearly ready to submit to a journal.*