

Intensive Course in Research Writing

Texas A&M University

25 June–13 July 2012

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

Main Classroom: (To Be Announced)

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/Guest Lecturer: (To Be Announced)

Graduate Assistants: (To Be Announced)

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*, 7th edition, by Barbara Gastel and Robert A. Day (Greenwood, 2011). A Spanish translation of the previous edition 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.

During the course, please e-mail completed assignments to Barbara Gastel at bgastel@cvm.tamu.edu. Feel free also to e-mail questions to this address. When you e-mail assignments or other items regarding the course, please begin the subject line with IC2012, to aid in identification (for example, Subject: IC2012—Draft of Abstract).

If you wish to do so, you may attend one or more sessions of a graduate course on science editing concurrently under way. 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 25

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

Tuesday,
June 26

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. Please bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each other member of your small group, and a copy for the instructor.

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 27

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 or download the paper you think would be the best model for you paper, and bring it to class. Also e-mail the instructor the paper.

Thursday,
June 28

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 or download some copies of tables, figures, or both from papers reporting research similar to yours. Bring the copies to class.

Friday,
June 29

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Discussion
 Presentation/Discussion: Preparing Acknowledgments
 Workshop: draft of Results section; ideas for Discussion section
 Special Presentation: A Brief Introduction to Bibliographic
 Management Software (speaker: Dr. Roberto Tuda)
*Note: During the rest of the course, Dr. Tuda will
 be available outside class hours to give class
 members individualized help with EndNote.*

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: The class sessions this week include, in addition to other items, oral presentations by course participants. If the regular class hours do not include enough time for all the presentations, some presentations may be held in the afternoon.)

Monday,
July 2

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work
 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 Results 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,
July 3

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work
 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 4

The university is closed July 4 for the US Independence Day holiday. This day can be a good time to catch up on work for the course—or to catch up on rest. Interested class members are invited to join the instructor and her husband for Independence Day events at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum.

Thursday,
July 5

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work

Review/Discussion: Writing an Abstract

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.

Friday,
July 6

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work

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.authoraid.info/resource-library/Annotated%20Grant%20Application.pdf/view>

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.

- draft of entire paper:

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

Week 3

(Note: Some afternoons this week, class members will meet individually with the guest editor to receive feedback on their papers. Also, at least some of the morning sessions this week may include presentations by the guest editor.)

Monday,
July 9

Brief Presentation: Some Aspects of Use of English
Presentation/Discussion: Writing Review Papers
Presentation/Discussion: Writing Book Chapters and Books

Reading Due:

- Chapters 23 and 25 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. Aiello.

Tuesday,
July 10

Brief Presentation: More Aspects of Use of English
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 11

Brief Presentation: More Aspects of Use of English
Presentation/Discussion: Communicating Specialized Information
to the Public

Workshop: examples of specialized writing for the public

Reading Due:

- Chapters 26 and 39 in textbook

Writing Due:

- revised curriculum vitae

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

Thursday,

Brief Presentation: More Aspects of Use of English

July 12

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. Please bring a copy for yourself, a copy for each member of your small group, and a copy for the instructor.

3:30 p.m., Thursday, July 12: open lecture by guest editor
 (title and location to be announced)

Friday,
 July 13

Brief Presentation: More Aspects of Use of English
 Wrap-Up: Review and Evaluation of the Course
 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.

Week 4 (optional)

During week 4, interested course registrants can continue working on their papers. If desired, brief informal sessions will be presented on supplementary topics.