

## **Intensive Course in Research Writing**

Texas A&M University, 24 June–12 July 2013

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

Main Classroom: Room 329 Veterinary Medicine Administration Building

Supplementary 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

(Room 47G Veterinary Teaching Hospital; e-mail: bgastel@cvm.tamu.edu;

Phone: 979-845-6887)

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

*Editorial Associate:* Colin Young, PhD, Adjunct Professor, Texas A&M University

(Afternoons: 47E Veterinary Teaching Hospital; e-mail: cyoung@cvm.tamu.edu)

*Faculty Associate:* Weston Porter, PhD, Associate Professor, Texas A&M University

*Graduate Assistants:* Michelle Yeoman (editorial), Karen Wakefield (administrative)

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 and grant proposals), 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, writing assignments, and meetings with the editorial associate. The reading will come from the book *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*, 7th edition, by Barbara Gastel and Robert A. Day (ABC-CLIO, 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.

Please double-space all writing assignments and use an unjustified right margin. Also, please use margins of at least 1 inch. The preferred font for this course is 12-point Times New Roman. For the writing indicated as *draft* on the syllabus, please write DRAFT at the top; for the writing indicated as *revised draft* on the syllabus, please write REVISED

at the top. Also, please remember to write your name and the date on all writing submitted.

Please e-mail completed assignments both to Barbara Gastel at bgastel@cvm.tamu.edu and to Colin Young at cyoung@cvm.tamu.edu. Feel free also to e-mail questions to these addresses. When you e-mail assignments or other items regarding the course, please begin the subject line with IC2013, to aid in identification (for example, Subject: IC2013—Draft of Abstract).

The deadline for assignments is 8:30 a.m. on the day for which they are listed. If possible, please submit assignments the previous afternoon or evening. Where designated on the syllabus, also bring the requested number of copies of assignments to class. If you cannot submit or print out an assignment on time, come to class as scheduled anyway. Do not be late to class in order to e-mail or print out an assignment.

On some days, the class will include a “no-lose quiz.” The quiz may contain material on the reading due that day or previously, the previous lecture material, or both. There is no penalty for doing poorly on the quizzes. However, if for the course as a whole you answer at least 75% of the questions correctly, you will receive a small souvenir.

If you wish to attend one or more sessions of a graduate science-editing course that is under way, you may do so. 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 and enjoyable are welcome at any time.

### **Tentative Schedule**

#### **Week 1**

Monday, June 24	<p>Introductions: The Participants and the Course</p> <p>Presentation: Deciding When and Where to Submit a Paper</p> <p>Exercise: Defining the Focus and Contribution of Your Paper</p> <p>Demonstration: Journals' Instructions to Authors</p> <p>Overview: The Structure of Papers</p> <p>Introduction: Drafting an Abstract</p> <p>Brief Tour of Building (optional)</p>
Tuesday, June 25	<p>Workshop and Discussion: Instructions to Authors</p> <p>Presentation/Discussion: Approaching a Writing Project</p> <p>Discussion: Writing in English as a Foreign Language</p> <p>Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Methods Section</p> <p>Presentation/Discussion: Providing Feedback on Drafts</p> <p>Workshop: Class Members' Abstracts</p>

**Reading Due:**

- Preface
- A Word to International Readers
- Chapter 6: Where to Submit Your Manuscript
- Chapter 9: How to Prepare the Abstract
- Chapter 3: Approaching a Writing Project
- Chapter 34: How to Write Science in English as a Foreign Language
- Chapter 11: How to Write the Materials and Methods Section

**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 5 copies of your abstract to class.*

**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 26

Presentation/Discussion: Poster and Oral Presentations  
Presentation/Discussion: Citing References—Some Basics  
Workshop: Drafts of Methods Sections

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 28: How to Prepare a Poster
- Chapter 27: How to Present a Paper Orally
- Chapter 15: How to Cite the References

**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 the requested number of copies.*

**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, print or download the paper you think would be the best model for your paper, and bring it to class.*

*Also e-mail Dr. Young and Dr. Gastel the paper.*

Thursday,  
June 27

Presentation: Giving a 15-Minute Talk (speaker: Dr. Porter)

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Results Section

Presentation: An Overview of EndNote (speaker: Dr. Tuda)

Presentation/Discussion: Tables and Figures

Workshop: Examples of Tables and Figures

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 12: How to Write the Results
- Chapter 16: How to Design Effective Tables
- Chapter 17: How to Prepare Effective Graphs
- Chapter 18: How to Prepare Effective Photographs
- Chapter 19: Rights and Permissions

**Writing Due:**

- none (but please be working on revising 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 28

An Example of a 15-Minute Talk (speaker: Dr. Porter)

Presentation/Discussion: Titles and Authors

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Discussion

Small-Group Exercise: Plans for the Results and Discussion Sections

Workshop: Revised Drafts of Methods Sections

**Reading Due:**

- Chapters 7: How to Prepare the Title
- Chapter 8: How to List the Authors and Addresses
- Chapter 14: How to State the Acknowledgments
- Chapter 13: How to Write the Discussion

**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of methods section

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

## Week 2

Monday,  
July 1

Presentation/ Discussion: Publishing a Paper  
Workshop: Drafts of Results Section

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 20: How to Submit the Manuscript
- Chapter 21: The Review Process (How to Deal with Editors)
- Chapter 22: The Publishing Process (How to Deal with Proofs)

**Optional Reading:**

- Chapter 1: What Is Scientific Writing?
- Chapter 2: Historical Perspectives
- Chapter 4: What Is a Scientific Paper?

**Writing Due:**

- draft of results section

*Instructions: Please draft your results section.  
Bring the requested number of copies.*

Tuesday,  
July 2

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work

Presentation/Discussion: Some Ethical and Other Issues

Presentation/Discussion: Some Aspects of Writing Style

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 5: Ethics in Scientific Publishing
- Chapter 30: Use and Misuse of English
- Chapter 31: Avoiding Jargon
- Chapter 32: How and When to Use Abbreviations
- Chapter 33: Writing Clearly Across Cultures and Media
- Appendix 2: Words and Expressions to Avoid

Wednesday,  
July 3

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Introduction

Presentation/Discussion: Preparing a Curriculum Vitae

Workshop: Revised Drafts of Results Sections

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 10: How to Write the Introduction
- Chapter 36: How to Prepare a Curriculum Vitae

**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of results section

*Instructions: Using feedback received, revise the  
draft of your results section. Please bring the  
requested numbers of copies to class.*

Thursday,  
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 attend the Independence Day events at the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. (For more information, see <http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/museum/events/0/614/>.)

Friday,  
July 5

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work  
Presentation/Discussion: Preparing Grant Proposals and Progress Reports (Note: This material might continue next week.)  
Workshop: Drafts of Discussions

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 37: How to Prepare Grant Proposals and Progress Reports

**Browsing Due:**

- annotated example of successful grant proposal, posted at <http://www.authoraids.info/resource-library/Annotated%20Grant%20Application.pdf/view>

**Writing Due:**

- draft of discussion

*Instructions: Please draft the discussion section of your paper. Bring the requested number of copies.*

Week 3

Monday,  
July 8

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work  
Presentation/Discussion: Writing Review Papers  
Presentation/Discussion: Writing or Supervising a Thesis or Dissertation  
Workshop: Drafts of Introductions

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 23: How to Write a Review Paper
- Chapter 35: How to Write a Thesis

**Browsing Due:**

- 3 review papers in your field

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

**Writing Due:**

- draft of the introduction section

*Instructions: Please draft the introduction to your paper. Bring the requested number of copies.*

Tuesday,  
July 9

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work

Presentation/Discussion: Other Writing for Journals

Presentation/Discussion: Providing Peer Review

Workshop: Revised Drafts of Discussions

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 24: How to Write Opinion (Book Reviews, Editorials, and Letters to the Editor)
- Chapter 40: How to Provide Peer Review

**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of discussion

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

Wednesday,  
July 10

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work

Presentation/Discussion: Communicating Specialized Information to the Public

Presentation/Discussion: Writing Book Chapters and Books

Review/Discussion: Writing an Abstract

Workshop: Revised Drafts of Introductions

**Reading Due:**

- Chapter 26: How to Write for the Public
- Chapter 39: How to Work with the Media
- Chapter 25: How to Write a Book Chapter or a Book
- (Chapter 9: How to Prepare the Abstract)

**Writing Due:**

- revised draft of introduction

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

Thursday,  
July 11

Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work

Presentation/Discussion: Some Aspects of Teaching Technique

Presentation/Discussion: Selected Other Topics

Workshop: Writing Assignments for Today

**Reading Due:**

- any parts of the textbook that have not been assigned that you would like to read

**Writing Due (total of 2 items):**

- a draft of the abstract of your paper
- any one of the following (length: about 1 to 3 pages)  
[Note: If you are staying for a fourth week, perhaps write one or more of the others next week.]
  - a brief curriculum vitae
  - an article presenting your work to the public
  - a review of a book in your field
  - a summary of a proposal you hope to submit
  - a commentary on a published article

- another brief piece of writing relevant to this course  
(please obtain approval from the instructor)

Friday,  
July 12

Presentation/Discussion: Selected Other Topics

Presentation/Discussion: Resources for Continuing to Develop  
Your Professional-Communication Skill

Discussion: The Completed Papers

Workshop: Review Exercise

Course Evaluation

Presentation of Certificates

**Writing Due:**

- draft of entire paper

*Instructions: Using feedback received throughout this course, prepare a version of your entire paper. Please make sure that it is cohesive and consistent. 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 and other writing, and they can continue receiving individualized feedback. If desired, brief informal sessions will be presented on supplementary topics.