

Pittsburg State University
English 815: Writing for the Profession
Grubbs Hall 312, Spring 2014

Instructor: Dr. Jamie McDaniel

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Office Hours: MWF 1 – 3, TR 2 – 4, or by appointment

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This face-to-face course is designed to help you learn to write as a professional in Literary Studies, Creative Writing, Technical / Professional Writing, and Rhetoric / Composition. We will concentrate on form and style in each of these emphases as a way to discuss the common ground each emphasis shares in addition to exploring the defining characteristics of each emphasis. You will develop your ability to write in a variety of forms, including the researched literary interpretation, wiki entry / research overview, grant proposal, book review, and a variety of common professional documents. You will also be developing your style by working on clarity, grace, and appropriate diction, which changes with the audience and purpose of each piece. One goal is for you to be able to write strong papers for your Masters level classes, but the ultimate goal will be for you to write something that is refined enough to be submitted to a professional journal. Along the way, you will be finding your voice and progressing as a writer in general.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the commonalities and differences among different emphases in the English discipline.
2. Appreciate the ways that this understanding may contribute to a better grasp of your own emphasis.
3. Identify strengths and weaknesses in your writing and the writing of others.
4. Develop style by working on clarity, grace, and appropriate diction.
5. Develop good writing habits.
6. Read and write in a variety of professional genres.

Required Texts and Materials

Helen Sword, *Stylish Academic Writing*, Harvard University Press, 2012.
ISBN: 0674064488

Outside materials available for download from Canvas or on reserve in the library.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 77-79	D = 63-66
B+ = 87-89	C = 73-76	D- = 60-62
B = 83-86	C- = 70-72	F = below 60

Assignments and Evaluations

Participation and In-Class Assignments: 10%

Commentaries for Workshops: 10% (Pass / Fail)

CompFAQ Wiki Contribution: 20%

Grant Proposal: 15%

Book Review: 10%

Professional Portfolio with Revised Literary Research Paper, Reflections, and Professional Documents: 35%

You must fully complete all assignments for the course in order to receive a passing grade.

Electronics/Technology Policy

Cell phones should be turned off or on silent during class. If I see you using your phone for either phone calls or text messaging or if the ringer is not turned off, you will receive a “0” in participation for the day. If you must keep your phone on for emergencies or another reason, please let me know.

You may use a laptop, e-reader, or other electronic device to take notes or to bring in readings or assignments that are available via Canvas or the Internet. You may not use your electronic device to do anything other than reviewing class-related material or taking notes. If you use your electronic device for any purpose other than these, your privileges will be suspended. I maintain the right to revise this policy at any point during the semester if improper usage becomes a problem.

Presentation

This class depends upon actively engaged speakers, listeners, and writers. Your responsibility is to be an active participant. As a result, this class demands that all reading assignments are completed, **in full**, on the day they are due and that you **bring the assigned text to class**. In addition, all assignments are to be typewritten and done according to directions. I encourage you to think for yourself, challenge each other, and assume pride and ownership in every text you produce.

According to federal guidelines, you should expect to spend two out-of-class hours devoted to coursework for each hour spent in the classroom or in direct faculty instruction. Therefore, for this three-credit class, you should expect to devote at least six hours per week on average to prepare your work. Of course, some weeks may require more time, and some weeks will require less.

I also suggest that you consult the following links about interacting with faculty:

6 Things You Should Say to Your Professor

<http://www.usatodayeducate.com/staging/index.php/campuslife/6-things-you-should-say-to-your-professor>

5 Things You Should Never Say to Your Professor

<http://www.usatodayeducate.com/staging/index.php/campuslife/5-things-you-should-never-say-to-your-professor>

Late Work and Attendance Policy

I reserve the right to decrease the grade of late work by ONE FULL LETTER GRADE for every day it is late including the first. For example, if an essay is two days late and the original grade is a B+, the final penalized grade would be a D+. If you have a problem with an assignment, please see me or call me BEFORE the due date. Any student who accrues excessive absences (two or more) will most likely fail the course. If you do miss class for any reason, you are still accountable for the work given and due that day unless prior arrangements have been made. Finally, I also expect you to be on time to class. Any student who is tardy more than three times will be marked absent according to my discretion. If you have a problem getting to class on time (i.e., you have class on the other side of campus), please let me know as soon as possible.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes the presentation, without proper attribution, of another's words or ideas from printed or electronic sources. It is also plagiarism to submit, without the instructor's consent, an assignment in one class previously submitted in another. I reward plagiarism with a zero. Further action by the university may also be taken. Please familiarize yourselves with the university policy on plagiarism. If you feel that you need extra help with your assignments, tutors are available in the Writing Center in Axe Library (235-4694). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to cite sources properly, do not hesitate to ask me for help. Please also consult PSU's Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy available online at

<http://www.pittstate.edu/audiences/current-students/policies/rights-and-responsibilities/academic-misconduct.dot>

Also, make sure to consult the Syllabus Supplement, which can be thought of as a "one-stop" place for students to access up-to-date information about campus resources, notifications, and expectations. It is available at

<http://www.pittstate.edu/dotAsset/9e421c72-1f34-441c-8c7f-2f68fd510e80.pdf>

Course Structure

The course will focus on full-class or small group discussion and will include writing workshops. We will discuss theories of style and critical interpretation to prepare for workshoping essays and articles. For workshop days, the

students whose work is being discussed will post their essays to Canvas well ahead of time so everyone gets a chance to read and comment on them before class. Each of you will have one official conference with me to discuss your researched essay (the central assignment of the course), though I'm certainly available to meet more often and to discuss other assignment drafts.

I will read everyone's Defoe paper (or an equivalent if you haven't taken English 810) at the start of the course as well as a self-evaluation of your writing strengths and weaknesses. Based on these elements, I will give each of you a description of what you should work on this semester.

Because our focus is on style and form, you should use the Defoe paper as your major writing assignment (since you've done all the research already), but the paper will need to be re-written as an article with the intention of sending the article out for possible publication. If you prefer not to use your Defoe paper or if you have not taken Research Methods yet, please see me as soon as possible to select an adequate alternative.

Expectations

This is a practice course. I will be grading your work on the extent to which you show that you understand the concepts we talk about, rather than on the final product alone. In other words, I don't expect you to write at the professional level, but I do expect you to demonstrate that you understand what writing for the profession would entail and to do your best to work toward that goal. This means that revisions have to show real thought and the final product has to meet reasonable expectations of grammar, clarity, and content. The workshops will help you see what each kind of writing assignment requires. You will be writing your comments—marginal and final—on each workshoped piece. I will pick up copies of this commentary.

A Word of Advice

All students are more than welcome to drop by during office hours or schedule an appointment to ask questions, continue discussion of issues from class, or to offer comments. This is especially true during the first week of class and especially true for students with disabilities who are registered with the Center for Student Accommodations (235-4309) and who may need individual arrangements. **Make use of your teachers!!** We are here to help you learn, and we do not expect you to be perfect (who is?). We regard intelligent questions in and out of class and an eagerness to improve one's abilities as evidence of an A student more than written work alone. There is no such thing as a stupid question!

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments (ALL DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE!):

Key to Abbreviations

SW: *Stylish Academic Writing*

C: Available on Canvas

WEEK ONE

Jan. 13: Introduction to the Course
Your Writing Process
Waugh Papers Discussion
Writing Self-Assessment

WEEK TWO

Jan. 20: No class – MLK, Jr. Day.

WEEK THREE

Jan. 27: SW: Part I: Style and Substance
C: Selected Academic Articles (TBA)
C: Bruce McComiskey, "Introduction"
Online: Rob Faunce, "An Underclass is Educating Your Children"
<http://chronicle.com/article/An-Underclass-Is-Educating/124201/>
Online: Sally Racket, "Survivor's Guilt"
<http://chronicle.com/article/Survivors-Guilt/126710>

Online: #alt-academy (Explore the site's content.)
<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/alt-ac/>
Online: Occupational Outlook Handbook – Technical Writers
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/technical-writers.htm>
Find another article related to the job market and be prepared to discuss its content.

WEEK FOUR

Feb. 3: C: Katharine Haake, “Creative Writing” and Richard Taylor, “Literature and Literary Criticism”
C: Sample Book Reviews

WEEK FIVE

Feb. 10: Online: Joe Amato and H. Kassia Fleisher, “Reforming Creative Writing Pedagogy: History as Knowledge, Knowledge as Activism”
<http://www.altx.com/ebr/riposte/rip2/rip2ped/amato.htm>
Online: Marjorie Perloff, “Amato/Fleisher Too Pessimistic”
<http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/endconstruction/carnets>
SW: Chapter 4: Voice and Echo and Chapter 5: Smart Sentencing

WEEK SIX

Feb. 17: SW: Chapter 6: Tempting Titles, Chapter 7: Hooks and Sinkers, and Chapter 8: The Story Net
C: Selected Professional Documents

WEEK SEVEN

Feb. 24: SW: Chapter 9: Show and Tell, Chapter 10: Jargonitis, and Chapter 11: Structural Designs
C: Selected Professional Documents

WEEK EIGHT

Mar. 3: Essay Workshop

WEEK NINE

Mar. 10: Essay Workshop

WEEK TEN

Mar. 17: Spring Break

WEEK ELEVEN

Mar. 24: C: Mike Markel, “Collaborative Writing Guidelines” and “Proposals”
C: Carolyn Miller, “A Humanistic Rationale for Technical Writing”

WEEK TWELVE

Mar. 31: In-Class Group Work Day

WEEK THIRTEEN

Apr. 7: C: Nancy Allen, Dianne Atkinson, Meg Morgan, Teresa Moore, and Craig Snow, “What Experienced Collaborators Say about Collaborative Writing”
C: Johndan Johnson-Eilola, “Relocating the Value of Work: Technical Communication in a Post-Industrial Age”
C: Linda Driskill, “Understanding the Writing Contexts in Organizations”
C: Selected Professional Documents

WEEK FOURTEEN

Apr. 14: C: Janice Lauer, “Rhetoric and Composition”
C: James Berlin, “Contemporary Composition: The Major Pedagogical Theories”

Online: Selections from CompFAQs Wiki:
<http://compfaqs.org/CompFAQs/Home?from=Main.HomePage>
C: Selected Professional Documents

WEEK FIFTEEN

Apr. 21:

C: Carolyn Miller, “Genre as Social Action”
C: Peter Elbow, “Inviting the Mother Tongue: Beyond ‘Mistakes,’ ‘Bad English,’ and ‘Wrong Language’”
Online: Selections from CompFAQs Wiki:
<http://compfaqs.org/CompFAQs/Home?from=Main.HomePage>
C: Selected Professional Documents

WEEK SIXTEEN

April 28:

SW: Chapter 12: Points of Reference, Chapter 13: The Big Picture, and Chapter 14: The Creative Touch
C: Selected Professional Documents