502x Writing Skills for Engineering Ph.D. Students

Tentative Course Schedule Spring 2017 (Session 2)
March 21 – May 4

The writing activities listed below are relevant to writing your dissertation and journal papers as well as tasks related to a career in academia or industry, e.g. proposals, review articles, career communications. Personalized attention is emphasized – you are encouraged to bring in your own work for feedback. Activities are focused to student’s individual strengths and challenges.

- We do exercises and short readings in class (schedule below is usually modified to fit student needs)
- We often start writing assignments in class and they are finalized as homework
- Deadlines are flexible and all writing assignments are short (about one page). Late assignments are always accepted
- You can substitute any of the writing assignments with your own writing tasks: abstracts, papers, quals, etc.

**Week 1**

3/21 Course introduction
   Structuring a journal paper
   assigned: writing sample – one-page description of ethical dilemma

3/23 Elements of an introduction – creating a research space
   Abstracting information: techniques, academic tone
   assigned: write an abstract (journal article provided in class)
   **due: background info sheet**
Week 2

3/28  Summarizing Material, Concision
      *due: writing sample (ethical dilemma)*
      *due: abstract a journal article provided in class, optional: abstract of article from your own work*

3/30  Constructing the literature review
      The art of hedging to limit certainty of claims
      *assigned: TED talk summary*

Week 3

4/3   Writing data commentaries, paraphrasing
      *assigned: data commentaries (in-class material and your own)*
      *due: TED talk summary*

4/6   Conventions of visual perception – data displays and design
      Gapping titles, headings, and cv’s
      *assigned: graphic presentation*

Week 4

4/11  Comparative Summaries and citing
      *assigned: comparative materials – summary of two articles*
      *due: in-class presentations: analyze and present graphics from your field*
      *due: data commentaries*

4/13  Improving flow, writing up discussion and results sections

Week 5

4/18  Preparing for the quals and the dissertation proposal
      Writing critical reviews and using evaluative language
      *assigned: critical review (of self-selected work)*

4/20  Designing research funding proposals – industry/academic, developing a plan, budgets, describing qualifications
      *due: comparative materials – summary of two articles*
Week 6

4/25 Technical and Process Descriptions
   *due: critical review*
   assigned: technical description

4/27 Technical Communicating to Diverse Audiences (video)

Week 7

5/2 Managing the journal submission process: answering reviewers, incorporating feedback
   *due: technical description*

5/4 Workplace and academic communications: cv, cover letter, teaching philosophy, personal statement, job talk
   *(note: you can give me your cv anytime during the semester to get help)*

*Note: Class schedule is tentative and will be modified to meet the class’s specific needs. In addition, class time may be used for individual conferencing, workshops, and guest speakers.

**Do your best to meet deadlines, but you may always turn in an assignment late. I will always accept it and provide you with feedback.

***Each student shows two versions of their research in a short informal presentation. One version is the original introduction or abstract, and the second is a rewritten version that is tailored to the level of expertise of your fellow students in the class.