

502x Writing Skills for Engineering Ph.D. Students

Tentative Course Schedule Fall 2017 August 22 – October 7

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

- 8/22 **Course introduction**
Structuring a journal paper
assigned: writing sample – one-page description of ethical dilemma
- 8/24 **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

- 8/29 **Summarizing Material, Concision**
due: writing sample (ethical dilemma)
due: abstract a journal article provided in class, optional: abstract of article from your own work
- 8/31 **Constructing the literature review**
The art of hedging to limit certainty of claims
assigned: TED talk summary

Week 3

- 9/5 **Writing data commentaries, paraphrasing**
assigned: data commentaries (in-class material and your own)
due: TED talk summary
- 9/7 **Conventions of visual perception – data displays and design**
Gapping titles, headings, and cv's
assigned: graphic presentation

Week 4

- 9/12 **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
- 9/14 **Improving flow, writing up discussion and results sections**

Week 5

- 9/19 **Preparing for the quals and the dissertation proposal**
Writing critical reviews and using evaluative language
assigned: critical review (of self-selected work)
- 9/21 **Designing research funding proposals – industry/academic, developing a plan, budgets, describing qualifications**
due: comparative materials – summary of two articles

Week 6

9/26 **Technical and Process Descriptions**

due: critical review

assigned: technical description

9/28 **Technical Communicating to Diverse Audiences (video)**

Week 7

10/3 **Managing the journal submission process: answering reviewers, incorporating feedback**

due: technical description

10/5 **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.