

## ALI 235: Academic and Professional Writing

**Section No:** 10130

**Instructor:** Richard Jones

**Office:** PSD 106R

**Classroom:** SOS B43

**Email:** [jonesric@usc.edu](mailto:jonesric@usc.edu)

**Class time:** 3:30-4:50 M/W

**Office Hours:** M/W 1:30-3:00 and by appointment

Semester Holidays: 9/5

Last Day of ALI Classes: 11/29

**Thanksgiving Break 11/23-11/25 (Wed-Fri)**

**ACCORDING TO USC:** “The ability to communicate effectively in English - to read, write and speak the language fluently - is vital to your success as a university student, and may also serve as a vital tool in your future academic and professional success. USC graduate students are therefore expected to demonstrate proficiency in English at all levels of graduate study.”<sup>1</sup>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course you will work on writing skills needed to succeed in the academic environment at USC. The course will use instructor provided as well as student provided authentic materials on academic topics. The assignments and course work cover major components of academic writing, including understanding the organizational structure of academic papers, paraphrasing and summarizing others' ideas, and using outside sources to support arguments. The course will also cover specific language issues (grammar, vocabulary, register) that are often problematic for non-native speakers of English.

### COURSE GOALS

The overall goal of this course is to make your writing more accurate and academically appropriate. Accordingly, in this class you will do the following:

- Learn about the conventions of academic writing
- Apply the process of synthesizing and citing outside sources through research
- Use paraphrasing /summarizing skills to avoid plagiarism.
- Vary sentence structure to improve cohesiveness, conciseness and precision
- Edit your writing and vocabulary to develop awareness of greater usage accuracy
- Implement digital media tools to enhance your writing experience

<sup>1</sup> Proficiency in English. USC Graduate Admissions: International Students. Retrieved on Oct. 18, 2012, from <http://www.usc.edu/admission/graduate/international/english.html>

### COURSE MATERIALS

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Grammar Choices for Graduate and Professional Writers

Nigel A. Caplan

University of Michigan Press

ISBN-13 : 978-0-472-03501-4

Course content and reading/ writing assignments on Blackboard are an essential part of this course. Students are responsible for course assignments and updates announced on Blackboard and sent via e-mail. Hence, it is important to check Blackboard and e-mail on a regular basis. This will enable you to complete the homework and readings before class to maximize class time.

## **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments are not accepted except in the case of serious personal emergencies and with the prior approval of your instructor. You should therefore work on assignments well before the due date so that it will not have as big of an impact on your work.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Office hours provide you with a time to ask questions and discuss the course content. If you are unable to attend the scheduled office hours, please feel free to contact your instructor and set up a time to meet.

## **ALI ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Improving proficiency in a second language requires practice; hence, it is important that you not miss classes. If you find it absolutely necessary to be absent from class because of illness or an emergency, keep in mind that you are responsible to master all information presented during your absence. Do not ask the instructor to repeat important information - identify a classmate who will help you.

More than 6 hours of absence will result in a course grade of NC (no credit). Absence is counted for *any* reason, including illness, emergencies, and conference attendance. (Athletes, please note that a written excuse for absence due to competitions must be filed with the ALI Student Advisor.)

**ASSESSMENT:** This is a credit/no credit (CR/NC) class, which means that you will not receive a final letter grade (A/B/C/F) on your USC transcript. However, assignments are given to prepare for and practice material that is covered in class and the point totals for the assignments must be 70% in order to pass the course. Since this is a proficiency-based course designed to help improve your academic writing skills, your proficiency in these skills at the end of the course determines whether you will need an additional class or not. Therefore, it is in your own interest to do your best on each assignment. Do not expect your writing ability to improve simply by coming to class and putting minimum effort into your assignments.

## Grading

Short Writing Assignments (including group writing) 30

Online Writing Assignments 20

Midterm and Final Papers 50

## **Evaluation Criteria for Research Paper**

| Content  | Grammatical Structure & Style  | Sources & Citation   | Organization   |
|--|--|--|--|
| Range and depth of argument and/or analysis; logic of argument; quality of research or original thoughts; awareness of opposing views.<br>Use of | Ease of readability; appropriate voice, tone and style for assignment; use of hedging-boosting language; clarity of and variety of sentence structure; absence of comma splices, run-ons, fragments; accurate spelling; careful proofreading | Use of 3 minimum sources specified; use of proper in-text citations using appropriate style (e.g., APA, IEEE, MLA); reference/works cited page at the end of the paper | Clarity of thesis statement; logical and clear arrangement of ideas, effective use of transitions; good development of ideas through supporting details and evidence |

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

USC upholds high standards of academic integrity. ALI, in keeping with these standards, has to ensure that international students, new to the university learn to practice academic integrity. Copying another writer's work, improperly paraphrasing or citing a source, and getting outside assistance with your work constitute academic dishonesty and can have serious consequences on your status as a student at USC. In this course, we will discuss ways to promote academic integrity in your work (for information on how to avoid plagiarism, see [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/grad\\_ai.htm](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/grad_ai.htm)). Please note that while it may be helpful to have a native speaker proofread a paper for a class in your major, this would be considered cheating in this class because you are being evaluated on *your* English skills, not someone else's.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student requiring accommodation based on a disability is required to register with the Disability Services and Programs office (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved recommendations can be obtained through DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 9:00am-5:00pm, M-F. The DSP phone number is (213) 740-0776.

### **CLASSROOM COURTESY**

As a courtesy to your classmates and teacher, please make sure that your cell phones are off during class time and refrain from conversation when your teacher or others are talking. Text-messaging /social media is distracting, please stay focused on the class activities for maximum benefit. Also, please use only English in the classroom.

**Course Schedule: Please note that this is subject to change at instructor's discretion**

| Week | Weekly Topics  | Lessons and Assignments  |
|------|--|--|
| 1    | Diagnostic Test<br>Classmate Interviews<br>Course Introduction/Syllabus Review<br>Compare backgrounds with classmate | <u>HW</u><br>Writing 1: Classmate Introduction Paragraph and self comparison<br><br>Reading: Grammar Choices Unit 4  |
| 2    | Professional Writing<br>Paraphrasing Practice<br>Use of Common Academic Verbs<br>Generic Vs. Specific Noun Phrases   | <u>HW</u><br>Writing 2: Reaction Paper 1<br>Revise Writing 1<br>Reading Grammar Choices Unit 4 cont.   |
| 3    | Labor Day No Class on M/T<br><br>Conferences Tue-Wed   | <u>HW</u><br>Revise Writing 2  |
| 4    | Summary Writing Skills<br>Clauses and sentence structure<br>Grammar Choices Unit 2                                   | <u>HW</u><br>Grammar Choices Unit 2<br><br>Writing 3<br>Summary and Response paper 2   |
| 5    | Group Writing Project<br>Choose Topics & Create Research Questions   | <u>HW</u><br>Revise Writing 3<br>Grammar Choices Unit 2  |
| 6    | Finish Group Writing Project<br>Decide on Visual Presentation<br>Post to Blackboard blog                             | <u>HW</u><br>Grammar Choices Unit 6 (111-120)<br>Submit Group Writing  |
| 7    | Library Visits<br>Research Writing<br>Citations  | <u>HW</u><br>Writing 4: Annotated Bibliography of 3 articles in your field of interest – Rough Draft<br>Grammar Choised Unit 7   |
| 8    | Midterm Consultations  | <u>HW</u><br>Annotated Bibliography 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft<br>Explain the context/importance of topic/personal connection with it/ need for further research/evaluation |
| 9    | Deciding your Topic<br>Problem Solution structures   | <u>HW</u><br>Develop a Thesis statement for your final paper.  |

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|    |  | Grammar Choices Unit 5   |
| 10 | Conducting Own Research<br>Developing your Academic Claims                             | <u>HW</u><br>Turning your Annotated Bibliography into a literature review  |
| 11 | Using Evaluative Language -hedging/boosting<br>(Grammar Choices Chapter 6 pp. 120-129) | <u>HW</u><br>Add more data /evaluation /suggestions to paper<br>Submit First Draft of Paper (complete 1 <sup>st</sup> draft) |
| 12 | In class work on Final Papers<br>Teacher Feedback on Writing #4                        | <u>HW</u><br>Revise First Draft  |
| 13 | Presentation of Final Papers and Personal Blogs  | <u>HW</u><br>Abstracts and Images (on Personal Blog)   |
| 14 | Last Day of class - Course Evals   | <u>HW</u><br><b>Final Drafts due on Blackboard</b>   |

## Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

### Academic Conduct

Plagiarism—presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words—is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, [Behavior Violating University Standards](#). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on [scientific misconduct](#).

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the [Office of Equity and Diversity](#), or to the [Department of Public Safety](#). This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community—such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member—can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. [The Center for Women and Men](#), provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage, [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu), describes reporting options and other resources.

### Support Systems

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with

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scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the [American Language Institute](#), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international students. [The Office of Disability Services and Programs](#), provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, [USC Emergency Information](#), will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.