

## **502x Writing Skills for Engineering Ph.D. Students**

### **Tentative Course Schedule Spring 2017 (Session 1) January 10 – February 23**

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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 flexible and is modified to fit student needs)
- We often start writing assignments in class and they are finalized as homework
- We are flexible with deadlines and all writing assignments are short (up to 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**

- 1/10 **Course introduction**  
**Structuring a journal paper**  
assigned: writing sample – one-page description of ethical dilemma
- 1/12 **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

1/17 **NO CLASS**

*due: writing sample (ethical dilemma)*

*due: abstract a journal article provided in class, optional: abstract of article from your own work*

1/19 **Summarizing Material, Concision**

**The art of hedging to limit certainty of claims**

*assigned: TED talk summary*

## Week 3

1/24 **Writing data commentaries, paraphrasing**

*assigned: data commentaries (in-class material and your own)*

*due: TED talk summary*

1/26 **Conventions of visual perception – data displays and design**

**Gapping titles, headings, and cv's**

*assigned: graphic presentation*

## Week 4

1/31 **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*

2/2 **Improving flow, writing up discussion and results sections**

## Week 5

2/7 **Preparing for the quals and the dissertation proposal**

**Writing critical reviews and using evaluative language**

*assigned: critical review (of self-selected work)*

2/9 **Designing research funding proposals – industry/academic, developing a plan, budgets, describing qualifications**

*due: comparative materials – summary of two articles*

## **Week 6**

2/14 **Technical and Process Descriptions**

***due: critical review***

assigned: technical description

2/16 **Technical Communicating to Diverse Audiences (video)**

## **Week 7**

2/21 **Managing the journal submission process: answering reviewers, incorporating feedback**

***due: technical description***

2/24 **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.