

ALI 255: Advanced Writing Skills (2 units) Provisional Syllabus

Instructor: Richard Jones

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Classroom: VKC 153

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Class time: Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:20

**Office Hours: Tue/Thurs 1:00-2:00
and by appointment**

Midterm Project: Annotated Bibliography

Final Project: Research Paper

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.”¹

Course Description

This course has been designed to give you the academic writing skills needed to succeed in an American university and be prepared for an academic and professional world. Readings and assignments are designed to apply principles of style and clarity in writing. The course will also cover specific language issues (i.e., grammatical correctness) focused on developing cohesion and coherence in form and concision of message.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to prepare you for professional writing experiences. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Understand and apply the principle of style in academic writing.
- Write grammatically written passages with clarity of form and grace.
- Practice analysis in written form through synthesis of academic papers.
- Produce an original academic research paper in your field of studies.
- Provide constructive feedback to peers on their written work, and address issues identified by the instructor and peers when revising one’s own written work.
- Correctly use the preferred citation style (e.g., IEEE, MLA) in your field of studies.
- Use standard written English’s conventions or grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Learn strategies to avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

¹ Proficiency in English. USC Graduate Admissions: International Students. Retrieved on Jan. 10, 2014, from <http://www.usc.edu/admission/graduate/international/english.html>

Course Materials: Required

Swales, John M., & Feak, Christine B. (2012) *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills* (3rd ed.). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. (ISBN: 978-0-472-03475-8)

In addition to textbook required for the course, selected websites and handouts will be loaded onto USC Blackboard website: <https://blackboard.usc.edu> for course assignments and readings. You will find these under the "Course Content" section of Blackboard. During the course, you will also be required to find academic journals that specifically address issues related to your Final Research Paper.

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

Your instructor has scheduled regular office hours for one-to-one meeting with students. 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. Assignments are given to prepare for and practice material that is covered in class. 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 your final assessment. 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. You will be expected to demonstrate significant and meaningful improvement in your writing skills by the end of the semester.

To help the instructor evaluate your writing progress and proficiency, the course grading will be based on a 100% grading scale with the following breakdown.

Assignments	Percentage of Total Grade
Selected writing assignments	40%
Midterm project	20%
Final research paper	40%

Writing Assignments

Graded writing assignments will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and may include the following: Summary Synthesis, Technical Reports, Surveys, Literature Review, Annotated Bibliography, and Critical Reviews.

Professional Writing

Students will have the opportunity to develop a professional writing portfolio consisting of cover letter, resume, bio-statements, etc. Other aspects of professional writing, such as email and letters of complaints may be discussed in class.

Final Research Paper

The major assignment for this course is a Final Research Paper. The purpose of the final project is to provide you with an experience of writing a research paper as a specialist in your field. The final project requires demonstration of a number of distinct academic writing skills in both creation and presentation (which we will cover in the course of the semester) of your paper. You may choose to conduct an original research by engaging in one or more of the following: focus groups, qualitative interviews, or Qualtrics Survey (to be introduced in class). Or you may choose to do secondary research on a topic in your field for the assignment.

Please note, your topic must be approved prior to officially starting your research writing process. You may NOT change your topic without instructor's approval.

Therefore, be thoughtful and conscientious about your topic choice.

The Final Research Paper must meet the following requirements:

- Approximately 7-10 pages in length (double-spaced) in 12-point font
- Minimum of 2 illustrations (e.g., table, graph, chart) with data commentary
- Minimum of 5 scholarly sources (preferably peer-reviewed journals)
- Documentation of sources using the style in your field (e.g., APA, IEEE)
- "Reference/Works Cited" page at the end of your essay where you list the sources you used in your paper (not counted towards the required minimum)

Final papers must be turned in by the due date unless a student has experienced a serious

emergency (contact the instructor). In addition to submitting a hardcopy of the paper, student may be additionally asked to submit their final paper to turnitin.com via Blackboard to ensure that the work is not plagiarized.

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*, <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/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*, <http://equity.usc.edu/>, or to the *Department of Public Safety*, <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. 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*, <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/>, provides 24/7 confidential support, and the *Sexual Assault Resource Center* webpage, <https://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 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*, <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and

workshops specifically for international students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs*, http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, 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*, <http://emergency.usc.edu/>, will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

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 is distracting, please stay focused on the class activities for maximum benefit. Also, please use English only in the classroom.

Use of Technology

Computer use as a tool to learning is acceptable in the classroom, but please keep in mind the importance of being courteous and attentive to the professor and other students when they are speaking. In other words, NO social media use should go on during class time.

Course Schedule*

WEEK	TASK	HOMEWORK
1 (8/20)	Diagnostic Course Introduction Summary Writing	Response Writing Bio Statement, Email
2 (8/27)	Professional Writing (Biostatements, Resume, Cover Letter, Email)	Summary Writing Assignment Professional Writing
3 (9/4 - Labor Day 9/3)	Beginning of term Consultations Academic Integrity AWGS Ch1	Synthesis Writing Assignment
4 (9/10)	Academic Integrity, Citation & Paraphrasing Midterm paper introduction – Annotated Bibliography AWGS Ch1 cont	Revisions of Summary and Synthesis
5 (9/17)	Midterm Project – Continued Professional Writing Review	Work on Midterm Paper and Academic Integrity Blog
6 (9/24)	Midterm Project – Due	Midterm short paper
7 (10/1)	Integrity Blog presentations / Midterm Consultations	Topic Proposal Form for Final Research paper
8 (10/8)	Group project – continued Data Commentary AWGS, Unit 4	Hedging language handout
9 (10/15)	Group Discussion of Data Projects AWGS, Unit 8	Data blog post
10 (10/22)	Introductions Begin work on Final paper	Revised Thesis for Final Paper
11 (10/29)	Annotated Bibliography vs. Literature Review	Writing Final Paper
12 (11/5)	Discussions and Conclusions AWGS	Writing Final Paper
13 (11/12)	Hedging Language Review Final Paper First Drafts	Writing Final Paper Working on Academic

		Profile Blog
14 (11/19 21-23 Thanks giving Break)	Academic Blog	Work on Blogs & Papers in class
15 (11/26)	Final Paper Final Drafts Final class on Tuesday	Paper and Blog Presentation
16 (12/3)	Individual Consultations (optional)	

**Subject to change at instructor's discretion*