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

Instructor: Richard Jones
Office: PSD 106R

Classroom: VKC 153
Email: jonesric@usc.edu

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.”

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.

Course Materials: Required

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selected writing assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm project</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final research paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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</table>

**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/](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/](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/](http://equity.usc.edu/), or to the Department of Public Safety, [http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us](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/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/), provides 24/7 confidential support, and the Sexual Assault Resource Center webpage, [https://sarc.usc.edu/](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://dornsifede.usc.edu/ali](http://dornsifede.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](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/](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*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>HOMEWORK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (8/20)</td>
<td>Diagnostic Course Introduction Summary Writing</td>
<td>Response Writing Bio Statement, Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 (8/27)</td>
<td>Professional Writing (Biostatements, Resume, Cover Letter, Email)</td>
<td>Summary Writing Assignment Professional Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 (9/4 - Labor Day 9/3)</td>
<td>Beginning of term Consultations Academic Integrity AWGS Ch1</td>
<td>Synthesis Writing Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 (9/10)</td>
<td>Academic Integrity, Citation &amp; Paraphrasing Midterm paper introduction – Annotated Bibliography AWGS Ch1 cont</td>
<td>Revisions of Summary and Synthesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 (9/17)</td>
<td>Midterm Project – Continued Professional Writing Review</td>
<td>Work on Midterm Paper and Academic Integrity Blog</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 (9/24)</td>
<td>Midterm Project – Due</td>
<td>Midterm short paper</td>
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<td>7 (10/1)</td>
<td>Integrity Blog presentations / Midterm Consultations</td>
<td>Topic Proposal Form for Final Research paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 (10/8)</td>
<td>Group project – continued Data Commentary AWGS, Unit 4</td>
<td>Hedging language handout</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 (10/15)</td>
<td>Group Discussion of Data Projects AWGS, Unit 8</td>
<td>Data blog post</td>
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<td>10 (10/22)</td>
<td>Introductions Begin work on Final paper</td>
<td>Revised Thesis for Final Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 (10/29)</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography vs. Literature Review</td>
<td>Writing Final Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 (11/5)</td>
<td>Discussions and Conclusions AWGS</td>
<td>Writing Final Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 (11/12)</td>
<td>Hedging Language Review Final Paper First Drafts</td>
<td>Writing Final Paper Working on Academic</td>
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<td>Profile Blog</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 (11/19 21-23 Thanksgiving Break)</td>
<td>Academic Blog</td>
<td>Work on Blogs &amp; Papers in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 (11/26)</td>
<td>Final Paper Final Drafts Final class on Tuesday</td>
<td>Paper and Blog Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 (12/3)</td>
<td>Individual Consultations (optional)</td>
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*Subject to change at instructor's discretion*