

WRIT 340: Writing and Disciplinary Grand Challenges Section 66840R

Fall 2018

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00-6:20

GFS 104

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CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

WRIT 340X Advanced Writing (3-4, FaSpSm): Instruction in communicating research findings to various audiences using different forms of communication, including written, verbal, and electronic. *Prerequisite:* WRIT 130 or WRIT 140. *Required.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND TOPICS

Our course goal is to improve communication skills, both written and verbal, within the context of engaging with current disciplinary grand challenges. Students will research the “wicked problems” within their fields of study and communicate their significance, ethical implications, and possible solutions in a variety of forms. Emphasis will be placed on writing articles and reports, giving oral presentations, and learning to present data visually to various audiences. The class is designed to provide students with the writing and communication skills needed to undertake a more in-depth project (thesis, etc.) within their discipline.

WRIT 340 will provide you:

- A variety of professional and academic communication skills.
- Proficiency in writing for academic, public, and professional audiences.
- Flexibility in communicating for a variety of purposes.
- The ability to prepare effective written documentation both individually and collaboratively.
- The skills required to create and deliver effective oral presentations.
- An awareness of the ways your discipline affects broader society.
- An understanding of ethics within disciplinary practice.
- The ability to engage in rigorous critical analysis.
- The ability to give and receive critical feedback.

COURSE OUTCOMES

At the end of WRIT 340 you should be able to:

1. Write for academic, public, and professional audiences.
2. Demonstrate research and documentation abilities at the upper-division level.
3. Identify and analyze pressing ethical issues within a discipline.
4. Compose a proposal for a larger project (thesis, proposal) that reflects engagement in a disciplinary grand challenge.
5. Revise and edit to advanced academic and professional standards.
6. Prepare and give professional oral presentations for a variety of audiences and purposes.
7. Utilize visual aids in both written and oral communications.
8. Articulate the impact your discipline has on everyday life.
9. Work collaboratively to research, write, and present information and ideas.
10. Write accurate, precise technical prose.

TEXT

The Technical Writer's Companion, Alfred, et al., Bedford/St. Martin's.

Additional handouts will be distributed throughout the course.

ASSIGNMENTS

The course assignments are designed to prepare you to undertake a future, larger research project. Most likely, this project will be one of the many senior theses or capstone projects within various programs at USC.

The following assignments will also help us achieve the above-mentioned course objectives. The number of possible points for each is in parentheses. The point total for the class is 1,000.

Please note that you should “**avoid submitting identical or similar work in separate courses. Although it may be warranted and indeed suitable for students to draw on their previous studies and experience, all forms of written examination must consist of original writing. In addition, students cannot earn credits for the same work in more than one course.**”

Students need to consult their supervisors if they wish to make use of material that they have written for other courses or for other purposes.

Detailed prompts for each assignment will be provided.

WRITTEN

Ethics Paper (100 points)

You will write a position paper inspired by an ethical issue pertaining to a grand challenge in your discipline.

Article for a Lay Audience (100 points)

You will write an article for Illumin Magazine (<http://illumin.usc.edu>) per a call for papers. Your goal is to communicate an aspect of your grand challenge to a public readership primarily but not exclusively interested in technology.

Collaborative Paper (100 points)

You will critique your classmates' proposals in a collaborative, peer review format.

Proposal Components (105 points)

You will learn the rhetorical conventions in preparation for your capstone project after this course. These include summaries (research abstracts and proposal executive summaries) and literature reviews in various forms.

Final Project (150 points) Completed analyses

This will be a self-designated and approved portion of what will become your senior-level project. This might be an undergraduate research paper, a technology commercialization opportunity analysis, a needs analysis of a service learning project, or any deeper examination to be undertaken in a future semester.

Portfolio (100 points)

You will revise your Ethics and Illumin papers and resubmit them as a final portfolio.

ORAL

Progress Report (15 minutes, 5 min Q&A) (100 points)

You will present your project's progress to your classmates and, possibly, outside guests

Thesis Project Proposal (30 min, 15 min Q&A) (150 points)

This will be the oral presentation of key findings from your final project.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

One hundred (100) points will be dedicated to class participation (see below).

Item	Submission	Points	%
Ethics paper	Written	100	10.0
Magazine article for lay audience	Written	100	10.0
Collaborative paper	Written	100	10.0

Proposal Components	Written	100	10.0
Progress report	Oral	100	10.0
Final project	Written	150	15.0
Final presentation	Oral	150	15.0
Class participation		100	10.0
Portfolio	Written	100	10.0
Total		1,000	100%

Specific instructions for each assignment will be given. Ample warning will be given of any changes.

GRADING AND ATTENDANCE

Final grades will be assigned based on your point total. The total of the above points is 1,000. I will also consider your participation, attendance, promptness, and level of professionalism in assigning 100 of these points.

Points may be lost if

- you are absent without a reasonable excuse
- you are late to class, unprepared, unprofessional, or obstructive

Points may be gained if

- you make significant and valuable contributions in class participation
- you display consistent professionalism

There is no grading curve; grades will be assigned by a submission's own merits. I will do my best to make my expectations for the various assignments clear and to evaluate them as fairly and objectively as I can. We will review the requirements for good writing in class throughout the semester, and you can refer to the rubric common to all 340 classes at USC. **All assignments must be completed to pass the course.**

All assignments will be graded according to this rubric and assigned point values according to the following ranges:

- 90-100% (A)
(Your supervisor would be very impressed and remember your work.)
- 80- 89.99% (B)
(Your supervisor would be satisfied with the job, but not impressed.)
- 70- 79.99% (C)
(Your supervisor would be disappointed and ask you to revise or rewrite sections before allowing the document to be distributed.)
- 60- 69.99% (D)

(Your supervisor would be troubled by the poor quality of the work and would advise you that your position might be in jeopardy.)

- 0- 59.99% (F)
(Your supervisor would begin looking for your replacement because the work wasn't submitted or did not meet even minimum specifications.)

Pluses and minuses equal the top and bottom 2% of each grade category (i.e., 88 to 89.99% = B+ and 80-81.99% = B-).

Participation and Engagement

You are expected to be an active contributor to the class, not a passive listener. Active contribution includes volunteering answers to questions; asking questions; requesting clarification; challenging me or other students in productive ways; contributing useful and relevant comments; engaging fully in any workshop-type activities.

A particularly important contribution you'll make to the class is critiquing other students' work in our rough draft workshops. Our in-class workshops are crucially important, and *you must attend them*. If you do not, you will lose professionalism points as well as points on the assignment itself.

You will also, during the course of the semester, provide other feedback to your classmates and brainstorm with them. You also will be expected to get together with others outside of class to share work and give/get feedback.

The following will also impact your participation points: evidence of preparation for class, including having completed any reading; quality of otherwise non-graded work; quality of contribution to workshop activities; quality of e-mail correspondence; quality and quantity of participation in individual conferences; and quality and quantity of interaction with community partners.

The following behaviors will cost you significant professionalism points: leaving cell phones and pagers on in class or during conferences; leaving your area messy at the end of class; whispering with those around you; and sleeping or reading or doing other homework during class.

A note regarding email: Your email represents you as much as any other written or oral communication does. Take care to make it professional. That means applying all of the rules of good writing that we're discussing in class to your email. This includes, but is not limited to, using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation; employing a direct and concise writing style; and organizing the document to further its purpose.

Lateness and Mechanics

Any paper turned in late will receive half credit as a starting point. Any paper, in-class or take-home, not turned in will receive an "F". No exceptions.

Mechanics on written assignments are a given. Spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors will lower both the effectiveness of the written communication and the possibilities of the grade.

It is assumed you are available for all classes. If you do miss a class, you are responsible for missed information and any assignments given. You should also arrange for a classmate to deliver any assignments due that day. If you are more than 15 minutes late you will be marked as absent.

PLAGIARISM:

All cases of plagiarism will be addressed with utmost seriousness. Students found to plagiarize will fail the course and be referred to the Student Conduct Board. **The USC Viterbi School of Engineering adheres to the University's policies and procedures governing academic integrity. Students are expected to be aware of and to observe the academic integrity standards described in SCampus. These standards will be enforced in this class on all assignments.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged and inappropriate use of the ideas or wording of another individual . . . [It] is considered a grave violation of academic integrity and the sanctions against it are correspondingly severe. **(University sanctions range from a grade of F in the course to suspension from the university.)** Most simply, plagiarism can be characterized as ‘academic theft.’

As defined in the University Student Conduct Code (published in the current *SCampus*), plagiarism includes:

- ‘The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student’s own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form;
- ‘The submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style;
- ‘Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers.’

The Student Conduct Code applies these standards to any written work submitted by a student, whether a draft or a final version.

Because of the serious penalties for plagiarism, you should insure that any writing you submit represents your own assertions and abilities and incorporates other texts in an open and honest manner . . . In academic assignments, writing is

assumed to be the original words and thoughts of the student unless [the reader is] told otherwise (i.e.: material from other sources is clearly and properly cited).

From *Trojan Integrity: Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism*
(USC Office for Student Conduct, rev. Fall 2000, pp. 2-3)

In WRIT 340, we encourage peer review, since it's almost always helpful to have "another set of eyes" take a look at your paper and offer comments and suggestions. But where should you draw the line? According to the Writing Program,

The Writing Program encourages collaboration with your instructor, with Writing Center Consultants, and with your classmates; such interactions constitute one of the most important and effective means by which writing is taught. In undertaking collaborative interactions, however, remember that you are finally responsible for guaranteeing that the resulting text represents your abilities and authority and not those of the persons assisting you, however well-meaning they may be. A simple guideline may help: Never allow someone else to construct a section of your text longer than one or two sentences that you would not be able to produce on your own, and never allow anyone to copy-edit more than the first page of your paper.

From *Writing 150 Course Book*

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

Please feel free to ask me any questions you might have throughout the semester I want you to get as much out of this class as possible.