502x Writing Skills for Engineering Ph.D. Students
Section 28579R

Tentative Course Schedule Fall 2019
Tuesday Aug 27 – Thursday Oct 10   4-5:50PM
Location: GFS 205

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 on building your individual strengths and giving you tools for continued improvement.

- We do exercises and short readings in class (schedule below is modified to fit student's needs)

- Bring your laptop to class

- We will often begin writing assignments in class and then you can finish and refine them as homework

- Deadlines are flexible. Writing assignments are short (about one page). Late assignments are *always* accepted

- You can substitute homework assignments with your own writing tasks: abstracts, journal and conference papers, qualifying exam proposal, etc.

- There are 8 short writing assignments (1 page or less, one per week)

	Writing Assignments	Due Date
1	writing sample	9/3
2	abstract (in-class)	9/3
3	abstract (from your own work)	9/5
4	Ted Talk summary	9/10
5	technical description	9/19
6	data commentary	9/24
7	critical review	10/1
8	comparative summary	10/8

Week 1

8/27 **Course introduction**
Structuring a journal paper
Elements of an introduction: creating a research space
assigned: background info sheet
assigned: writing sample – one-page

8/29
Abstracting information: techniques, academic tone
assigned: write an abstract (journal article provided in class)
assigned: abstract of an article from your own work

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Week 2

9/3 **Summarizing, concision**
Constructing literature reviews
assigned: summary of Ted Talk
due: in-class abstract
due: writing sample

9/5 **"Hedging" to limit certainty of claims**
due: abstract from your work

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Week 3

9/10 **Academic tone**
due: summary of TED talk

9/12 **Technical and process descriptions**
Parallel construction
assigned: technical description

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Week 4

9/17 **Data commentaries**
assigned: data commentary (in-class material and your own work)

9/19 **Improving flow, writing discussion and results sections**
Conventions of visual perception – data displays and design
due: technical description

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Week 5

9/24 **Writing critical reviews and using evaluative language**
Gapping titles, headings, and cv's
assigned: critical review (of self-selected work)
due: data commentary

9/26 **Preparing for the quals and the dissertation proposal**

Week 6

10/1 **Comparative summaries and citing material**
assigned: comparative summary of two articles
due: critical review

10/3 **Designing research funding proposals – industry/academic,**
developing the workplan, budget, qualifications

Week 7

10/8 **Exercises to generate ideas and linkages**
due: comparative summary

10/10 **Managing the journal submission process: answering reviewers,**
incorporating feedback
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)

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*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 late assignments. I will always accept and provide feedback.

***Each student gives a short informal "writing presentation." You will show a paragraph or two describing your research (an introduction works well) – you can take this from an existing paper. You show the class this introduction or summary, and then show a second version that you have rewritten. In this second version, you try to match the level of expertise of your fellow students in the class. Explain what you have done to modify the second version (taking out terms, providing background, substituting specialized vocabulary, etc.)