

ALI 245: High Intermediate Writing Skills (2 units)

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Class time: Fri 9:00-11:50

Office Hours: M/W 10:00-11:30

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 at an American university and be prepared for the 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) and focus on developing cohesion and coherence in form and concision of message.

Course Objectives

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

- Understand and apply various stylistic principles in academic writing.
- Compose grammatically correct passages with clarity of form.
- Practice analysis in written form through synthesis of academic papers and other materials.
- Write 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 conventions for 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:

Exploring Options in Academic Writing: Effective Vocabulary and Grammar Use

Jan Frodesen & Margi Wald
University of Michigan Press
(Available online)

Suggested:

Academic Writing for Graduate Students, 3rd Edition: Essential Tasks and Skills

John M. Swales & Christine B. Feak
University of Michigan Press

In addition to the textbooks required for the course, handouts and links to selected websites will be uploaded to USC Blackboard (<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.

Office Hours

Your instructor has scheduled regular office hours for individual meetings 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 due to 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 can help you.

More than six 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 both prepare for class and practice material covered during class time. 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 Assignment	20%
Final Research paper	40%

Course Assignments & Exams

This course focuses on writing skills. Most assignments will involve writing or revising. The course may also include in-class writing tests.

Writing Assignments

Graded writing assignments will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor and may include the following: Summary and 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 a cover letter, resume, bio-statement, etc. Other aspects of professional writing, such as email and letters of complaint 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 the experience of writing a paper as an academic researcher. This project requires demonstration of a number of distinct academic writing skills (which we will cover in the course of the semester) in both creation and presentation of your paper. You may choose to conduct original research by forming focus groups, conducting qualitative interviews, or reviewing secondary research on your topic.

Please note that 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.

Requirements for Final Paper

The Final Research Paper must:

- Be approximately 1200-1500 words in length (double-spaced) in 12-point font
- Include at least one illustration (e.g., table, graph, chart) with relevant commentary
- Have a minimum of five scholarly sources (preferably peer-reviewed journals)
- Provide documentation of sources using the style in your field (e.g., APA, IEEE)
- Include a “References/Works Cited” page at the end of your essay where you list the sources you used in your paper.

Final papers must be turned in by the due date unless a student has experienced a serious emergency (contact the instructor). Students must submit their final papers 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 of the 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 for more information. 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	Diagnostic Course Introduction Summary Writing	First summary/Introduction
2	Professional Writing (Biostatements, Resumes, Cover Letters) EOWS Ch 10	Summary Writing Professional Writing
3	Beginning of term meetings Professional Writing, continued	Revising professional writings and summaries
4	Summarizing vs. Synthesizing EOAW Ch 10	Rough Draft of Synthesis
5	Paraphrasing and Plagiarism EOAW Ch 9	Second Draft of Synthesis
6	Academic Integrity EOAW Ch 9	Topics for midterm papers
7	Citations EOAW Ch 8	Midterm papers continued

8	Midterm consultations Annotated Bibliography	Annotated Bibliography Draft 1
9	EOAW Ch 8	AB Draft 2
10	Spring Break March 15-22	
11	Reviewing/Giving Opinions Professional Writing Email EOAW Ch 7	Thesis Statements/Final Paper
12	Library Visit EOAW Ch 7	Literature Review/Final Paper
13	EOAW Ch 3&4	Data Commentary/Final Paper
14	Third section of Final Paper Review of summarizing, synthesizing, hedging, and boosting. Focus on language used for possibilities and probabilities	Final Paper/Discussion
15	Academic Blog/Work on Final Paper second draft	
16	Final Presentations	

**Subject to change at instructor's discretion*