

Academic Writing for Presentation & Publication

MMC 6936 – Fall 2021



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Note: This is a draft schedule for the course, which means I may make changes to assignments, required readings and deadlines depending on students' needs. Because I am teaching this specific class for the first time and because I anticipate that students' writing skills will vary widely, I am reserving the right to adjust as needed.

Course Description and Purpose

MMC 6936 Academic Writing is a graduate-level course focused on helping students learn to produce several types of products, including conference papers and presentations, journal articles, theses and dissertations.

Developing such products successfully – meaning that your paper is accepted for presentation at a conference or for publication in an academic journal or is approved by your master's or doctoral committee – obviously requires much more than writing skill. No matter how good a writer you are, you must understand and be able to apply theory, and you must be able to collect appropriate data using rigorous, scientifically sound methods. We will, of necessity, touch on these topics. However, the focus of the course will be on writing, which means your primary focus should be this: “How can I communicate these ideas (my own and those of others) and describe my methods, findings and their implications in the clearest and most useful way?”

Too often, people assume that “good” academic writing should be “profound” or complex or challenging for the reader. After all, if *anyone* can understand what I've written, it must

not be that innovative/intellectual/sagacious, right? (Bonus points here if you know what “sagacious” means.)

In fact, this notion could not be more wrong. The purpose of academic writing (like all other good writing) is to communicate. Communication cannot occur unless the reader can comprehend what you’re trying to say. And in truth, it’s *far* more challenging to write clearly than it is to merely throw a lot of four-syllable words together. The inability to write clearly often means that the writers themselves don’t fully understand the ideas they’re attempting to get across.

Course Objectives

This course is intended to break a rather massive subject, academic writing, into essential components. Thus, by the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Develop a work plan for identifying and overcoming personal barriers to writing productively
- Generate topic ideas for papers with a good chance of being accepted for presentation at academic conferences and in peer-reviewed publications
- Cite others’ ideas and research using correct citation formats and avoiding plagiarism
- Understand and follow basic rules of English grammar and word usage
- Write a clear and concise statement of purpose for a research paper
- Clearly explain the goals of and rationale or need for the research the paper describes
- Identify and describe a sound theoretical framework or grounding for the study
- Write sound, logical and useful hypotheses and/or research questions
- Describe clearly and completely the methods employed in a research study; explain the rationale for methodological decisions
- Present the findings of your research clearly in both text and, when appropriate, in tables or figures
- Discuss the importance/implications of your findings in the context of theory, previous research and, when appropriate, current and/or future professional practice
- Understand how the peer review process works
- Provide peers with honest and useful feedback on their academic writing
- Submit a manuscript for presentation at an academic conference or for publication in a peer-reviewed journal

Learning Approaches

To achieve the course objectives, we’ll use a variety of approaches.

- We will read, analyze and critique various sections of published academic papers. If you want to know how to succeed as an academic writer, it helps to evaluate what others have done so you can see what worked.

- Each of you will conduct the necessary research to write an academic paper, section by section. We then “workshop” every student’s paper, meaning that everyone in the class will read, analyze and critique each other’s work.
- We will read and discuss “*They Say, I Say*”: *The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. This text addresses the reality that research – and its presentation either orally or in writing – is essentially a conversation with those who’ve come before you. As the book’s introduction explains, “Experienced writing instructors have long recognized that writing well means entering into conversation with others. Academic writing in particular calls upon writers not simply to express their own ideas, but to do so as a response to what others have said.”

Readings & Other Resources

Required: *A Pocket Style Manual, 7th Edition* (by Diana Hacker & Nancy Sommers), which includes citation and reference formatting information for APA (preferred), MLA and Chicago styles.

Recommended: “*They Say, I Say*”: *The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, 5th Edition* (by Gerald Graff & Cathy Birkenstein). It’s probably useful to have the more recent edition in book form, but an earlier edition will be available (free) in pdf form on Canvas.

Other useful resources:

[Academic Writer Tutorial](#): Basics of Seventh Edition APA Style. This tutorial is designed for people who’re new to APA style, but even if you aren’t, it’s likely to be helpful. The APA Style Guide offers a number of useful tutorials and webinars [here](#). The [APA Style Blog](#) also is useful.

[Organizing Academic Research Papers](#), from Sacred Heart University Library, is a useful resource.

The [Online Writing Lab](#) (OWL) from Purdue University also offers useful information.

Class Policies

Classroom Atmosphere: Each of you plays an important role in shaping this course. I encourage you to be actively involved in class discussions and activities. Class participation is an important (and graded) element of the class, and you can’t participate if you aren’t in class, so attendance is required. In class discussions, please aim to strike a happy medium – Speak up when you have something to say, but don’t blather on. Remember that when you have a question, it’s all but guaranteed that someone else has the same question, so do everyone a favor and ask!

Please also be appreciative of the contributions of others, including any guest speakers, and help create a class environment that is respectful and inclusive. This does not mean you should never disagree, but you should ***always*** do so courteously and thoughtfully.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The University of Florida’s College of Journalism and Communications embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We expect each of our courses to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication in a global society.

People of all backgrounds have important contributions to make to this class, and I expect all of you to respect that. If, at any point, you believe others in the class – including me – have expressed ideas in inappropriate ways, please let me know. My goal is to make certain everyone feels comfortable participating in and listening to class discussions and that these discussions support a diversity of perspectives and experiences and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, abilities, etc.).

If you prefer a name and/or pronouns that differ from those in the official records, please tell me so I can refer to you appropriately. If experiences outside this class are interfering with your performance in the class, please let me know; I’d like to help connect you with appropriate resources for dealing with any such issues. And if you prefer to speak with someone outside the course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC’s director of inclusion and diversity, is an excellent resource. You can reach her via email at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.

COVID-19 considerations: The University of Florida community respects science, and the CJC’s research and theory courses are aimed at helping you learn how to be good scientists yourselves. Hence, it makes sense to follow science-based recommendations for preventing the continued spread of COVID-19. UF administrators strongly recommend that everyone get the vaccine, and I would certainly echo that recommendation – for your own benefit and that of the people around you. I have been vaccinated, but in keeping with the CDC’s recommendations, I will “mask up” during class until I can ascertain that everyone in the class also has been vaccinated. I would urge each of you to do the same. (FYI, although I will not ask you about your vaccination status, you may tell me if you wish to do so. And no, despite what you might have heard, neither asking about nor sharing information about vaccination status violates HIPAA or any other federal law.)

Cell Phones and Other Distractions During Class: Recently published [research](#) shows that college students who have their laptops and/or cellphones open during classes score lower on exams. There are no exams in this class, but I do expect you to learn the material we cover, and that means paying attention to what’s going on in class. For that reason, keep your laptop closed unless I or other class speakers specifically ask you to use your laptop or phone for some class activity. I strongly recommend that you take handwritten notes for the class, if possible; [research](#) documents that hand-writing your notes increases your likelihood of remembering and understanding the material. Multi-tasking is not [effective](#).

Attendance: See the discussion above. Keep in mind, too, that the class is small – I will notice if you're not here. I reserve the right to lower grades due to excessive absences or tardiness. Assume you will need to make yourself available beginning at 8:30, not 8:40, not 8:35. Your attendance and *participation* are important to making this class a success. I expect that you will attend every class unless an emergency or illness prevents you from doing so. If you find that you do have to miss a class due to an emergency, let me know immediately. You may be allowed to miss class if you're attending a media-related conference or professional experience, but *only* if you let me know in advance and can document that you have a time conflict, especially given that most conferences are still being held virtually. Obviously, if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are quarantining due to exposure to COVID-19, you will not be penalized for missing class.

Missing Deadlines or Assignments: In the communications field, meeting assignment deadlines is vital. The same holds true in this class. If you believe you have an exceptional reason for missing a deadline, please discuss it with me *immediately* and *in advance*. Fairness, both to me and to your classmates, requires that you meet all deadlines. Most often, I will count a missed deadline as a missed assignment, meaning that there will be a significant grade penalty, up to and including a zero grade on the assignment. **All assignments are due at the time listed in Canvas. Failure to turn in your assignments on time will result in a late penalty at a minimum.**

Accommodations for Special Needs: I am more than happy to work with you to find accommodations for legitimate, documented special needs. You must register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide appropriate documentation to you, and you should provide this documentation to me at the beginning of the semester. Please do so, even if you do not believe you will need the accommodations. It is your responsibility to initiate this conversation early in the semester.

Grading

Assignments & Points Possible

Research matrix & research proposal	50
Introduction, including statement of purpose	50
Literature review, including background, theory discussion and Hs and/or RQs	100
Methods section	100
Results section	100
Discussion & conclusions section	100
First draft of paper	100
Final research paper with abstract & references	200
Poster presentation of research paper	50
Class participation & attendance	100
Total	1000

By the time this class is over, you should have a paper that is ready, at least, for submission to a conference. (See list of selected conferences at end of syllabus.)

Academic Honesty Issues

In accordance with UF policy, I'm including in this syllabus the definitions of the types of academic dishonesty that seem most likely to be potential problems for students in this class. If a situation ever arises in which you think something you're contemplating *might* constitute one of these types of academic dishonesty, **ask before you do it!** Apologies after the fact will not resolve the problem for anyone.

Definitions

Misrepresentation: This means any act that is intended to deceive a teacher for academic advantage, including lying about the circumstances under which you collected data, turning in a paper you've previously submitted for another class, and failing to provide honest information when confronted with an allegation of academic dishonesty.

Fabrication: For this class, the primary concern would be making up data or falsifying your findings (e.g. claiming a hypothesis was supported when it was not, etc.)

Plagiarism: Any use of someone else's ideas or words in a way that presents those ideas or words as your own constitutes plagiarism, even if the ideas or words have not been published. This includes using word-for-word or only slightly altered segments of wording from someone else, regardless of who that individual is, without providing a citation that gives the original author credit – which includes putting the original words in quotation marks. Obviously, submitting anyone else's work as your own constitutes plagiarism, but I also encourage you to look at the plagiarism guide provided by UF's Smathers Library: <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/copyright/plagiarism>

Plagiarism is one of the most serious crimes in academia and in communication. We will discuss in class how to avoid plagiarism, but it is **your** responsibility to make certain you correctly cite other people's research and writing in your papers. Be especially careful about keeping track of the sources of information you glean from Internet-based materials. Unintended plagiarism is still plagiarism, and *all plagiarism will be treated as intentional* because I cannot know what you meant to do. It is acceptable, of course, to include verbatim materials from other people's works, but when you do, you must either include such material in quotation marks or set it off from the rest of the paper by indenting and single spacing.

The plagiarism avoidance guide our graduate faculty has approved will be provided on the e-learning site. If you read through that guide and still aren't certain what's acceptable, **ask me!** Do not assume that any other student or professor can tell you what will be acceptable in my class. Asking questions ahead of time is encouraged and comes with no penalties – but there are *serious* penalties for failing to credit someone else's work properly because you didn't ask questions.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY: You are free at ANY point to ask me for guidance about how to credit others' work properly – even if you need to ask about something as you're handing the paper to me. Submitting your papers through the Canvas site also will allow you to check the papers through Turnitin.com. Therefore, if you include improperly credited material in any of your work, **you will fail the class**. Not just the assignment – **the whole class**. If I find you have plagiarized, I will submit an academic dishonesty report to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the Student Judicial Affairs office.

Another no-no is “recycling” your own work for this class. Let's make the policy clear and simple: **You will not turn in for this class any work you previously have submitted to another instructor or that you plan to submit for any other class at UF or any other institution.** Writing your paper for this class on a topic you've worked on before may be acceptable, but discuss it with me *in advance*. It's perfectly reasonable for you to draw on work you've already done for other classes. It's not reasonable for you to turn in the same paper or one that is substantially the same as work you've already used. If you're currently taking another course for which you must write a paper, and you want to write both papers on the same general topic, we'll need to work out an agreement acceptable to me **and** the other instructor before you proceed.

Editing assistance: You will discover fairly quickly that I give detailed feedback on your writing, including suggesting wording changes that may be necessary for clarity. To do so, however, I must be able to at least guess what you're attempting to say. That can be difficult if I'm not familiar with your chosen research topic. In some cases, I may suggest that you work with an editor who is familiar with your research area and/or who is proficient in both English and your first language; this person's job is NOT to rewrite your paper for you but to help you figure out how to express your ideas clearly.

Topics, Required Readings & Assignments

(Note: TSIS is shorthand for the textbook “They Say, I Say.” All non-textbook readings will be available in Canvas, but whenever possible, they're hyperlinked here, too. You should complete all listed readings/videos *before* the class for which they're listed. Also, I reserve the right to add reading assignments, as needed. Your written assignments are due before class, and you should have done all of the listed readings before class, too.)

Week 1 (8/25)	Introduction to the class, syllabus, texts, course goals & organization
Week 2 (9/1)	Choosing a topic, doing background & literature review research Guest speaker: April Hines, librarian for journalism & mass communication Read/Watch: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choosing a research topic

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a literature review & using a synthesis matrix • Writing the empirical social science research paper: A guide for the perplexed • Organizing academic research papers: The introduction • How to write a research paper introduction (video – 6:28) • Paraphrasing • The value of 10 minutes: Writing advice for the time-less academic <p>DUE: Research topic synopsis</p>
<p>Week 3 (9/8)</p>	<p>The research proposal – what do you want to know? Guest speaker: Dr. Amy Jo Coffey answers your questions about the UF IRB process Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 1-3 of TSIS • Sample APA research paper • APA headings and seriation • What are primary and secondary sources? • Primary research • Arenberg & Lowrey, “The impact of web metrics on community news decisions: A resource dependence perspective” (Be prepared to discuss the introduction to this article – essentially the part before the Literature Review heading – and how it sets up the rest of the article.) It may help to review “Organizing academic research papers: The introduction” • UFIRB: Definition of a Human Subject Research • Watch/review IRB Basics for Gator Grads slide show & Zoom recording • Be prepared to discuss your research proposal in class <p>Not required but useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods of researching media effects • What is content analysis and how can you use it in your research? • Qualitative vs. quantitative research • Media framing • Focus groups as qualitative research • A quick guide to survey research • What is a systematic review? • What makes a systematic review different from other types of reviews? • UFIRB policies, guidelines & guidance • Frequently asked questions about Institutional Review Boards <p>DUE: Research proposal with hypotheses and/or research questions</p>

<p>Week 4 (9/15)</p>	<p>Writing the introduction & literature review</p> <p>Read/watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 4 & 5, TSIS • General research paper guidelines: Introduction • Organizing a literature review: What is a lit review • Basics of literature reviews • Organizing academic research papers: 5. The literature review • Writing a literature review (video) • Review Literature Review Example Paper • Another annotated example to review • 8 hacks for using Google Scholar effectively • A must-know Google Scholar tip for researchers and educators <p>Not required but useful writing tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional words and phrases • Transitions • Effective transition terms in academic papers • The practice of writing (Canvas) • How to use Zotero and Scrivener for research-driven writing • Tools for creating works cited/references lists <p>DUE: Introduction</p> <p>Bring enough printed copies of your introduction for everyone in class. We will be workshopping the introductions during class.</p>
<p>Week 5 (9/22)</p>	<p>Writing clearly; when to quote & when/how to paraphrase</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 6 & 7, TSIS • Paragraphs • How to write paragraphs • The elements of style • Nine basic ways to improve your style in academic writing <p>Not required but useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synonyms for “said” • (Note: Be cautious about throwing in synonyms too often. For academic writing, you are most often going to use the “argumentative” synonyms or words like “found” or “reported”) • Getting grammar • Grammar and punctuation • Twelve common errors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, concise and conversational <p>Due: Literature review, including draft hypotheses & research questions Bring enough printed copies of the literature review for everyone in class. We will be workshopping the literature reviews. (Note: It's likely to take me more than one week to get these all graded & returned to you. The more carefully you have edited your papers before submitting them, the sooner I'll have them all returned and the better your grades will be.)</p>
Week 6 (9/29)	<p>What did you do? Writing the methods section</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 10 & 11, TSIS • How to write an APA methods section • Organizing academic research papers: 6. The methodology <p>Due: Methods (Bring enough printed copies for everyone. We will workshop the methods sections in class.)</p>
Week 7 (10/6)	<p>What did you find? Writing up your results</p> <p>Guest speaker: Dr. Jay Hmielawski on presenting quantitative results effectively and clearly</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 15&16, TSIS • Organizing academic research papers: 7. The results • Reporting results of common statistical tests in APA format • How to report numbers and statistics in APA style • How to format tables and figures in APA Style <p>Due: Results (Note: It may take me more than one week to get these all graded & returned to you.)</p>
Week 8 (10/13)	<p>Writing week</p> <p>No class – please use this time to work on revising everything you've turned in so far and writing your discussion & conclusions section. I will be in my office during class time if you have questions.</p>
Week 9 (10/20)	<p>How do my findings fit with previous research & what do the results mean? The discussion & conclusions section</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to write a discussion section

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing academic research papers: 8. The discussion and 9. The conclusion • Limitations of the study • How to organize limitations of a research study <p>Not required but useful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a paper: Proofreading • Editing and proofreading • <p>Due: Discussion & conclusions Bring copies of your discussion & conclusions section. We will workshop these during class.</p> <p>Sign up for an individual meeting time next week.</p>
<p>Week 10 (10/27)</p>	<p>Individual conferences</p> <p>Please come prepared with specific questions about your paper, comments I've made on previous sections, etc. If there is a section of or addition to your paper that you want to discuss and I have not already read it, please send it to me in advance so I can read it before we talk.</p>
<p>Week 11 (11/3)</p>	<p>Revising your writing</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a paper: Proofreading • Revising • Steps for revising your paper • Revising & editing a research paper (Make sure you also click on the left-rail links for "Revision checklist," "Editing Checklist," and "See it in practice.") <p>Due: First draft of full paper (no abstract or references required. Please ensure that you HAVE incorporated all changes/suggestions/editing noted on any of the previous sections.)</p>
<p>Week 12 (11/10)</p>	<p>Putting your work out there – Submitting your research to conferences and journals</p> <p>Guest speaker: Dr. Yu-Hao Lee (via Zoom) on choosing the best conferences and journals for your research submission</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to choose a journal to submit an article • How to publish your journal paper

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where to publish your research: Choosing the right journal • Choosing a good conference for presenting research • Your complete guide to academic conferences • Getting the most out of academic conference attendance: Five key strategies <p>Not required but recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to submit a journal article (tutorial, available in several languages, 30-45 minutes, requires free registration) • ‘What’s the best journal for my paper?’ New tool can help
Week 13 (11/17)	<p>Learning to love (or at least not hate) Reviewer 2 – Responding to reviewers and reviews</p> <p>Guest speaker: Dr. Debbie Treise on how to address reviews productively.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample response to reviewers • Another sample response to reviewers • How to respond to reviewers – the CALM way • How to respond to reviewers’ comments: A practical guide for authors • How to deal with reviewer comments • How to respond to comments by peer reviewers
Week 14 (11/24)	<p>No class</p> <p>Due: Final research paper with abstract & references</p>
Week 15 (12/1)	<p>Presenting at conferences: Creating good presentations & posters</p> <p>Guest speaker: Dr. Myiah Hutchens</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to create a research poster • How to design an award-winning conference poster • Designing effective conference posters • Designing communications for a poster fair <p>Not required but recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UF poster samples & templates • Poster templates & graphic standards • Scientific poster PowerPoint templates • More poster templates
Week 16 (12/8)	<p>Present your research!</p> <p>Due: Poster presentation of research paper</p>

Key conference dates & sites (approximate)

Conference/ Organization	Submission deadline	Conference dates	Conference location
World Journalism Education Congress	~Dec. 15, 2021	July 8-13, 2022	Beijing, China
Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication	~April 1, 2022	Aug. 3-6, 2022	Detroit, MI, USA

International Association for Media & Communication Research			
National Communication Association	~March 27, 2022	~Nov. 17-20, 2022	New Orleans, LA, USA
International Communication Association	~Nov. 1, 2021 ~Nov. 1, 2022	May 26-30, 2022 May 24-29, 2023	Paris, France Toronto, Canada
Broadcast Education Association	~Dec. 15, 2021	April 23-26, 2022	Las Vegas, NV, USA
American Association for Public Opinion Research	~Nov. 25, 2021	May 12-15, 2022	Chicago, IL, USA
American Academy of Advertising	~Oct. 1, 2021	March 24-27, 2-22	St. Petersburg, FL, USA