

## MMC 6047: Academic Writing for Mass Comm Fall 2025

*Syllabus is subject to change; always refer to Canvas for the most recent version.*

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, or by appointment.

**Course Meeting Times:** Tuesdays, 1:55 pm – 4:55 pm  
**Course Dates:** August 26 – December 2, 2025  
**Course Location:** Grad Division conference room 2010

### Course Description and Goals

MMC 6047 is designed to provide graduate students with practical knowledge and skills in various academic writing formats. A primary goal is to improve each student's ability to produce manuscripts for publication and professional development goals. This hands-on, interactive course helps students build healthy creative practices that enhance their productivity and confidence as writers who craft coherent, concise, and compelling writing. To this end, the class offers students the knowledge, resources, and tools they need to excel at academic writing.

This course introduces students to three types of writing outputs: 1) social scientific conference papers and research articles, 2) supplementary documents and publications, and 3) career/professional development materials such as personal statements, CVs, cover letters, and research statements. Supplementary writing products include but are not limited to abstracts, responses to reviewers, and public-facing articles.

Due to this seminar's interactive and personalized nature, assignments and class materials may be tailored to each student's background, interests, and career goals. As such, the syllabus is subject to modification to meet each student cohort's unique needs.

### Course Learning Goals

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Develop a deeper understanding of the conventions of academic writing in the social sciences, with a particular focus on developing research papers.
- Understand the distinctions between strong quantitative and qualitative writing.
- Learn how to incorporate and cite sources in written work effectively.
- Communicate research findings clearly and concisely.
- Become aware of how the peer review process operates.

- Practice how to give honest and helpful feedback to peers and effectively respond to feedback received.
- Practice writing for different genres and audiences.
- Compose important written documents for academic careers, such as personal statements, cover letters, or CVs.
- Improve overall writing skills, including clarity, concision, and organization.
- Be familiar with digital writing tools.
- Create a strategy for identifying and addressing personal obstacles to productive writing.
- Know yourself better as a writer.

## Course Requirements

### Course materials:

The class will be tailored as much as possible to each student's needs, career stages, and research interests. As such, the reading material will be partially chosen by the students themselves, in addition to being suggested by me after we get to know one another during the first few weeks of the semester.

- **Core Required Readings:**
  - Barros, L.O. (2016). [\*The Only Academic Phrasebook You'll Ever Need\*](#).
  - Silvia, P. J. (2019). [\*How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing\*](#). Second Edition. American Psychological Association.
  - Silvia, P. J. (2015). [\*Write it up: Practical strategies for writing and publishing journal articles\*](#). American Psychological Association.

**\*\*Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to obtain a copy of the [\*APA Publication Manual, Seventh Edition\*](#) (2020).**

- Additional required and recommended reading material will be available through Canvas, either linked or attached as a PDF.
- To access the material through the provided links, you must be connected to UF Wi-Fi or the UF network via our **VPN** software if you are off campus. Refer to this [video for instructions on how to connect to the VPN](#).
- We will use textbook chapters, academic journal articles, book chapters, and nonacademic sources (news articles, videos, documentaries, etc.).

### Assignment expectations:

- This is a hands-on course focused on the practice of academic writing. Therefore, frequent assignments will be geared towards improving skills and knowledge about different academic writing formats.
- Students will read, analyze, and critique published academic papers. Some of these assignments will require students to select the material to analyze, depending on their interests.
- Students will practice writing different sections of a research paper. If students are already working on a research project, it is convenient to use that material unless it is a finished draft ready to submit or submitted to a conference or journal.
- Students will practice different forms of academic and general audience writing related to publishing, such as short critical essays and response statements.
- Students will also become familiar with different forms of career writing, depending on their career goals and stages. For example, they will learn to write cover letters for academic and industry job applications.
- Although "good writing" is subjective, this course will focus on mastering the most standardized academic writing formats in the social sciences, emphasizing producing precise, concise, and succinct written work.
- Meeting deadlines is crucial to the success of any project in academic settings, and this class is no exception. Students are expected to adhere to all deadlines outlined in the course syllabus. Failing to meet deadlines is detrimental to your progress and can also be unfair to your classmates. If you foresee any issues meeting a deadline, you must inform me as soon as possible so I can plan accordingly.

### Class attendance and participation:

- Students should come to class having read/listened/watched all class material for that class.
- Students can miss 1 class without medical justification, but are expected to notify me as soon as possible.
- This is a small class, and we will do activities in class, so your engagement and participation are crucial to its success.

- If you attend a conference in person and must miss class, please let me know as soon as possible.
- Class participation won't be graded, but it is highly encouraged.

## Academic Policies & Resources

Please visit the [UF Academic Resources & Policies](#) website for details about student accommodations, course evaluations, and academic honesty.

## Assignments

For this class, we will do the following assignments. Additional instructions and examples will be provided in class and on Canvas.

1. **Research statement:** Students must submit a summary of a research paper topic they intend to develop throughout the semester. This may be a paper for which data has already been collected but has not yet been written. Please note: This statement should not come from a fully completed manuscript that is ready for submission. This exercise allows students to consider a project at the beginning of the class that can be used for various assignments throughout the semester. This statement should articulate the study's scope and aims, scholarly contribution, prospective data collection methods, and social relevance. ***Students must come to office hours to discuss their statements.*** (500 - 750 words).
2. **Analysis of published research articles:** Based on shared interests between students in the class, we will select papers to analyze individually before the class and collectively during the class. We will read qualitative and quantitative papers in the social sciences. Students will have to hand in an analysis based on guiding questions about the writing style and structure of the paper. These assignments aim to identify the standardized academic writing format for social scientific research papers. (750 words each).
3. **Writing an annotated bibliography and literature review:** Students practice writing an annotated bibliography and literature review for their proposed manuscript. This is a crucial step in the writing development process. The annotated bibliography helps position the present study in an existing body of literature and gives context for research questions that will guide the data collection process. Students will workshop a literature review draft with their peers for practice. This assignment aims to help students become more proficient in reading and writing literature review sections for social science papers. (1000 – 1500 words).
4. **Writing a methods section:** Students will practice writing a methods section for a manuscript of a social scientific research paper. They should explicitly describe their data collection process and rationale (methodology). Word count will vary depending on whether the project is quantitative or qualitative.

5. **Writing research findings:** Students will practice writing their manuscript's findings section. These can be preliminary findings from an empirical study or anticipated results. Word count will vary depending on whether it is a quantitative or qualitative project.
6. **Writing a concluding discussion:** Students will practice writing their manuscript's concluding discussion section. This section should emphasize key takeaways from the study, its limitations, avenues for future studies to explore, and broader social implications to consider. (500 and 750 words).
7. **Writing an introduction and abstract:** Students will practice writing their manuscript's abstract and introduction section. The abstract is limited to 200 words, and the introduction should be between 500 and 750 words. The introduction must articulate the paper's core argument, its data collection methods, and scholarly contributions to academia and society.
8. **Short essay and peer-review:** Students will practice writing a 1 to 3-page journalistic essay that explains to a general audience the study's topic, its social relevance, the motivations behind the research, data collection methods, and a discussion of the findings. They will also exchange essays and practice writing a peer-review response to this essay. During the review process, keen attention should be given to clarity, evidence of scholarly rigor, and engaging qualities that communicate relevance.
9. **CV or resume and cover letter:** Students will draft their CVs or resumes for industry positions and a 1–2-page cover letter, depending on their career goals and stages. We will practice doing a peer review with these materials.
10. **Final revised paper (with cover page):** Students will submit a final revised paper that includes an abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, findings, concluding discussion, and APA-formatted bibliography.

***All assignments must include the student's name, date, course title, assignment name, and page numbers. Points will be deducted for omissions. Cover pages are not necessary for each assignment submitted. Only the final revised paper must include a cover page that follows APA 7 formatting.***

## Grading

### Deadlines and Points (200 total)

Assignment	Deadlines	Points
#1 Research statement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft</li> <li>Revised after peer review</li> </ul>	Draft due August 29 Revised draft due September 5	n/a 10
#2 Analysis of published research papers	Analysis #1 due September 19 Analysis #2 due October 10	10 10
#3 Writing a literature review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annotated bibliography</li> <li>Lit review draft</li> <li>Revised after peer review</li> </ul>	Annotated bibliography due September 12 Draft due October 3 Revised draft due October 10	10 n/a 20
#4 Writing a methods section – draft	October 17	15
#5 Writing findings – draft	October 17	15
#6 Writing a concluding discussion – draft	October 24	15
#7 Writing an introduction and abstract – draft	October 31	15
# 8 Short essay or op-ed for general audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer-review of short essay</li> </ul>	November 14  December 2	10  10
#9 CV or resume and cover letter	December 2	20
#10 Final revised paper (with cover page)	December 9 <sup>th</sup> , 5:00 pm	40

**2-point deductions will be made for grammatical, formatting, and clarity errors.**

### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percent	Letter Grade	Percent	Letter Grade	Percent	Letter Grade	Percent
		B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A	100-93%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%
A-	92-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	D-	62-60%

For information about UF grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

## Class Schedule

### Mapping Your Writing Voyage

#### Class 1 (August 26):

- Introduction to the class, reading materials, and participation expectations.
- Introduction to the structure and purpose of research statements and papers.
- Opening reflection circle activity – discussing the goals and vision of your writing voyage.
- **Reminder: You must schedule office hours to discuss ideas for your original research paper.**
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE AUG. 29
  - Research statement – first draft.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE SEPT. 2
  - Silva, P. (2019), *How to Write a Lot*, pp. 3 – 58.
  - Barros, L. (2016), *The Only Academic Phrasebook You'll Ever Need*, pp. 1 – 21 (sectional quizzes are optional).

#### Class 2 (September 2):

- In-class analysis of research paper structure examples.
- Tips for how to give instructive feedback.
- Each student shares ideas for their research statement.
- Group discussion to start practicing instructive feedback.
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE SEPT. 5
  - Research statement – revised draft.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE SEPT. 9
  - Tomlinson, B., Torrance, A., and Black, R. (2023), [“ChatGPT and Works Scholarly: Best Practices and Legal Pitfalls in Writing with AI.”](#)
  - Lin, Z. (2025), [“Techniques for supercharging academic writing with generative AI.”](#)
  - Silva, P. (2019), *How to Write a Lot*, pp. 75 – 87.
  - Barros, L. (2016), *The Only Academic Phrasebook You'll Ever Need*, pp. 30 – 42 (sectional quizzes are optional).

#### Class 3 (September 9):

- Tips for using AI tools when developing your academic writing.
- How to create rigorous scholarship without plagiarizing.
- Developing good citation practices: an overview of the [APA Seventh Edition](#).
- Review structural standards for writing social scientific papers (e.g., APA's [JARS](#) and Silva's IMRAD).
- Citation management tools (e.g., Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote).
- Locating your place and charting a course in a sea of literature.
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE SEPT. 12
  - Annotated bibliography (APA 7 formatting) – 10 influential texts relevant to your research topic.

- Supplemental resource: [Oxbridge Essays – "What is an Annotated Bibliography? Learn How to Write One."](#)
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE SEPT. 16
  - Journal Article Example #1.

#### **Class 4 (September 16):**

- Literature review writing – Part 1.
- Paraphrasing, direct quotes, and “conceptual nods.”
- Elements of style discussion and digital writing tool demonstration.
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE SEPT. 19
  - Analysis of Journal Article Example #1.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 21
  - Silva, P. (2015), *Write It Up*, pp. 31 – 62.
  - Silva, P. (2019), *How to Write a Lot*, pp. 59 – 74.

### **Going with the Flow**

#### **Class 5 (September 30):**

- Literature review writing – Part 2.
- Elements of style discussion and digital writing tool demonstration (cont.)
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 3
  - Literature review draft.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 7
  - Journal Article Example #2.
  - Peer review of literature review draft (take notes for group discussion).
  - Barros, L. (2016), *The Only Academic Phrasebook You'll Ever Need*, pp. 43 – 52 (sectional quizzes are optional).
  - Silva, P. (2015), *Write It Up*, pp. 107 – 122.

#### **Class 6 (October 7):**

- Workshopping literature review in small groups.
- Methods section writing for quant, qual, and mixed methods studies.
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 10
  - Analysis of Journal Article Example #2.
  - Literature review revisions (based on peer feedback).
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 14
  - Silva, P. (2015), *Write It Up*, pp. 123 – 136.

#### **Class 7 (October 14):**

- Writing up your findings.
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 17
  - Methods and Findings sections draft.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 21



- Silva, P. (2015), *Write It Up*, pp. 137 – 156.
- Barros, L. (2016), *The Only Academic Phrasebook You'll Ever Need*, pp. 53 – 64 (sectional quizzes are optional).

## Arriving at Your Destination

### **Class 8 (October 21):**

- Writing your concluding discussion (with study limitations).
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 24
  - Concluding discussion draft.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 21
  - Silva, P. (2015), *Write It Up*, pp. 85 – 106.

### **Class 9 (October 28):**

- Writing the introduction and abstract.
- Abstract writing exercise in class.
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE OCT. 31
  - Draft of the introduction section and abstract.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE NOV. 4
  - [“PEG Access Media: Local Communication Hubs in a Pandemic,” Center for Media and Social Impact report.](#)
  - [“Public, Educational, and Governmental Access Media: Providing Contactless Community in a Pandemic,” SSRC article.](#)

### **Class 10 (November 4):**

- Preparing your submissions for conference and journal publication review.
- Understanding the academic review process.
- Converting your article into a (journalistic) short essay/op-ed piece.
- In-class discussion of reading assignments, giving attention to elements of style, structure, and audience.
- Digital writing tool demonstration for short essays.
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE NOV. 14
  - Short essay about the study.
- READING ASSIGNMENT DUE NOV. 18
  - [UF Career Connection Guide \(CVs and Resumes\)](#)
  - [UF Career Connection Guide \(Professional Cover Letter\)](#)

**November 11 – NO CLASS – VETERANS DAY OBSERVANCE**

### **Class 11 (November 18):**

- Introduction to curriculum vitae and industry resume formats.
- Introduction of cover letters and personal statements for academic jobs and Ph.D. program applications.

- In-class analysis of examples (provided by instructor).
- WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE DEC. 2
  - Peer-review analysis of short essays.
  - Draft of CV, resume, and professional cover letter (for academic or industry position).

**November 25 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Class 12 (December 2):**

- In-class small group discussions about professional materials (cover letters, CVs, and resumes).
- Closing reflection circle.
- Course evaluations.

**December 9 – FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE, 5:00 p.m. ET**