THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development

# ED 513: ACADEMIC WRITING FOR EDUCATORS

## Spring 2016

Mondays 4:50-7:25 p.m., LeChase 305

**Instructors:**

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# COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on writing a literature review at the doctoral level and, more generally, improving your academic writing. **It is not a remedial course.** Rather, it emphasizes the interrelatedness of critical reading, writing, and thinking in the pursuit of identifying and understanding the research literature on a topic. It asks you to locate and closely examine peer-reviewed, published research articles on a topic in your field and then to write about them using advanced academic conventions. In a workshop setting, you will learn and practice concrete strategies for drafting and revising texts and you will develop greater metacognitive awareness of your writing processes.

The course is grounded in a view of literacy as a social practice, which means exploring how academic genres are involved in the professional practices of educational research and publishing communities. Academic writing conventions such as critical summary, argumentation, and citation are presented as ways by which researchers—and you as emergent professionals―negotiate membership in various academic communities. Through peer editing experiences, you will also develop the ability to be thoughtful readers of your colleagues’ writing, an ability that is useful for professionals as well as graduate students.

# REQUIRED TEXTS

American Psychological Association (APA). *Publication Manual* (6th ed.) Arlington, VA: APA.

Becker, H. (1986). *Writing for social scientists*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Feak, C. & Swales, J. (2009). *Telling a research story: Writing a literature review.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Graff, G. & Birkenstein, C. (20010). *They say, I say: The moves that matter in academic writing* (3rd ed.). New York: Norton.

Roe, S. & P. H. den Ouden. (2003). *Designs for disciplines: An introduction to academic writing* (1st ed)*.* Toronto: Canada Scholars’ Press.

Course readingson Blackboard

### RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Hacker, D. (2003). A writer’s reference (6th ed. or later) Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press. For student companion, see website: <http://www.dianahacker.com/writersref>.

Strunk, O., & White, E.B. (2010). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Swales, J. & Feak, C. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students* (3rd ed.).

Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

**COURSE GRADING SCALE**

**A:** *95-100;* **A-:** *91-94;* **B+:** *87-90;* **B:** *84-86;* **B-:** *81-83;* **C:** *71-80;* **F:** *≤70*

1. **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION** (20 points): The class is conducted as a workshop, so regular attendance is expected, essential for collaboration, and part of your course evaluation. If you must be absent or late, please contact Dr Curry in advance so that someone can collect handouts to place in your WS folder. You will be rewarded for prompt submission of assignments and for your contributions, collegiality, and conscientiousness in responding to the work of your peers. Missing more than two classes, even excused, may jeopardize earning all of the 20 points in this category.
2. **LITERATURE REVIEW** (RESEARCH PAPER) (25 points, 3 for proposal; 22 for paper). The culminating assignment for this course is a written literature review on a topic of your choosing. Your paper should develop a cogent argument for a particular research project or question that emerges from your reading of the academic literature around a specific topic. Your paper should provide a rationale for your project or question and position it within a particular discursive landscape. It must conform to APA conventions and formatting guidelines.

Due Feb. 15: 1-2 page topic proposal (submit on BB). To include: title (with content), brief contextual background and rationale for the problem, specific focus of your topic, preliminary overview of the relevant literature you’ve identified (not a list), grouped in categories of literature by topic, method, or theory (you justify). **3 points**

1. **ACADEMIC WRITING HANDBOOK** (15 points). Prepare a writing resource that includes reminders of the most useful and important concepts covered in the course. This handbook should be designed as a reference for your use when writing. While the final product may be in “book” form, suggestions about other formats that you would find equally, if not more, convenient and helpful are encouraged. For most classes, you will be offered ideas or suggestions for “pages” to create for your handbook; resource pages should reflect close reading of the course readings. Please bring a hard copy draft of the resource page assigned for each topic to class. You are encouraged to revise your resource pages following class discussions. Your final handbook is due (hardcopy or electronic) on April 18.
2. **SCHOLAR-AUTHOR STUDY** (15 points). As you deepen your knowledge of your research topic, you will identify a handful of researchers whose work is central to the topic. Choose the scholar whose work resonates most with you—possibly on the grounds of the topic, the research methodology, and/or theories used—to do an in-depth ‘scholar-author study’. In this study you will survey a minimum of three articles by the scholar (can be written in collaboration with others but must be first or second author) published over time (ideally, more than five years in total), in order to trace the evolution of the scholar’s thinking on a topic, use of methodological tools, and use of theory. Analyze how the scholar’s interests and views have developed over time and the contributions she/he has made to the research topic’s evolution. Use the scholar’s webpage(s) and CV, Google Scholar, Wikipedia, and other sources such as interviews with the scholar to glean biographical and intellectual information about the scholar.

**Due April 4**: A 1-page proposal that identifies the scholar-author under study, provides a rationale for the selection of this person which is related to your research topic, and includes a bibliography with at least three complete references in APA format for approval to develop into the assignment.

**Due May 9**: The assignment (4-6 pages) begins with a paragraph or two of biographical information about the scholar, including country of origin, education, other careers before academia (if any), disciplinary content areas, major positions (jobs) held, major publications. Next explain why you selected the scholar (in relation to your topic), then trace the development of his/her research interests, methodologies, and theories used or developed. Conclude the assignment with a discussion of what you’ve learned not only about the topic but also about how a scholar’s career evolves over time.

1. **WORKSHOP DRAFT PRESENTATION** (10 points). On the date for which you sign up to present your draft (April 18 or 25), post a draft of your paper-in-progress on Blackboard so the members of the class can read, analyze, and offer feedback. When you post your draft, include an overview of the issues you have worked to resolve, the challenges with which you are still struggling, and 2-3 questions you would like us to consider as we offer feedback. Please post your draft by the Thursday before class to give time for us to read and prepare comments. Readers may wish to comment on a print out or download and make comments electronically to pass back to the author.
2. **FINAL REFLECTION** (10 points). Write a 5-6 page paper reflecting on your development as a writer during this course. Address these questions:
   1. How have your beliefs about writing and the writing process evolved? How have your metaphors about writing changed, if at all?
   2. What concepts or strategies from the readings have had the most significant impact on your writing? Please cite appropriate sources.
   3. How is your final paper for this course different from papers you’ve written in the past?
   4. What do you see as current challenges for you as a writer? In what ways do you expect to continue developing as a writer?
   5. What other comments or reflections seem important?
3. **PRESENTATION** (5 points) based on your final paper to be given onthe last class. Presentations must not exceed 5 minutes, should be delivered from notes (i.e., not read aloud) or presentation software, and must be accompanied by a handout and visual aid. Presentations should cover these points: topic, the rationale for its importance to study, key findings from the literature, research gap.