



U15 213 – Research Writing for the Sciences

Time: Mondays 4:00–7:00 p.m., January 23–May 8

Location: Farrell Learning and Teaching Center (FLTC), Room 213

Instructor: Karen Schwelle

Offices: Stix International House 202A (Danforth Campus) / Mid-Campus Center 2044 (Medical Campus)

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Course Materials: blackboard.wustl.edu

About the Course

This course addresses grammar, structure, style, and information flow for research articles in the natural sciences, focusing on biomedical fields. Participants use their current writing projects to practice drafting, proofreading, and editing all sections of a research article: title, abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion, and supporting information. Participants also learn how to take advantage of current language learning technology, including textual databases that enable them to find answers to their questions about elements of usage and structure typical for writing in their fields. Several editing workshops and individual tutorial meetings are built into the course to address language issues common to the course participants and to help strengthen participants' skills at editing their own writing.

Objectives

- Writing within appropriate formats for articles in research journals
- Using language appropriately in context
- Working with supporting arguments
- Reviewing paragraph structure
- Paraphrasing in a manner consistent with expectations for academic integrity
- Summarizing
- Avoiding grammar and usage errors common to highly advanced multilingual writers
- Thinking and writing critically

Textbook (Required)

Zeiger, M. (2000). *Essentials of writing biomedical research papers*. New York: McGraw-Hill. ISBN-13: 978-0071345446. ISBN-10: 0071345442.

Policies and Grading

Please note the following University policies that apply in U15 213:

- WUSTL employees/postdocs receiving the tuition benefit to cover the tuition cost of this course are required by the university to pay the full tuition for it if they fail the class or withdraw after the drop deadline
- Find links to the full tuition remission policies on the University College web site at <https://ucollege.wustl.edu/tuition/employee>
- Anyone using a tuition benefit to cover the tuition cost of this course has the final responsibility for understanding the tuition benefit policies
- WUSTL students in schools other than University College have the responsibility to know and follow policies in their schools such as add and drop deadlines

Writing Samples (#1: 20%, #2: 25%) and Test (10%)

This course should not require you to do any writing above and beyond what you are already doing for your research or your studies. To receive individualized feedback on the academic/research writing that you are currently working on, you will turn in two writing samples. The length of each writing sample will be specified by the instructor but will not exceed 1,000 words. For each writing sample, you will submit a first draft to the instructor and then, based on the feedback, revise your writing sample and submit a revised draft.

The writing samples can be writing that you are doing in connection with a research project, assignments (or parts of assignments) that you are turning in for a class, or writing that you have done in the past for coursework or research. The writing you submit for U15 213 must be writing that you have composed yourself, not writing that has been composed, edited, or proofread by someone else; drafted as a group; or copied from an existing source.

Grading criteria for writing samples are posted in Blackboard (Course Documents, Week 1 and in the Assignments area for each writing sample). Writing samples must be turned in on time to receive feedback and full credit, with one exception: one extension of the due date (with no penalty) is allowed for the semester.

Another part of your grade will be a test which will focus on word choice and sentence structure. The format of the test will be similar to that of the word choice and sentence structure exercises covered in class.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will test your ability (1) to revise sentences and paragraphs in order to improve them grammatically and stylistically, and (2) to use the writing and proofreading techniques addressed in the course in order to produce a well-written section (or part of a section) of a research paper without assistance.

Attendance and Participation (20%)

Because this is a discussion-based and activity-based course, your attendance and participation in class sessions (11) and one-on-one tutorial meetings (3) are vital for strengthening your writing and editing skills. The attendance/participation grade will initially be calculated as follows.

0-1 absences:	20/20 points	4 absences:	10/20 points
2 absences:	18/20 points	5 absences:	6/20 points
3 absences:	14/20 points	≥6 absences:	0/20 points

If you miss class, look for the day's materials in Blackboard. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have questions about your missed work.

In order to participate productively in the class and achieve your goals of strengthening your writing skills, you will need to prepare for each class as directed on the course schedule (pp. 5-7). Consistently valuable contributions to class discussions may result in the initial attendance/participation grade being raised by 0.5-2 points (e.g., from 18 to 20 points). Appropriate class participation also depends on engagement with classmates and the instructor (as opposed to electronic devices). Although you may use electronic devices such as laptops and tablets for class purposes such as taking notes or referring to online resources, consistent use of electronic devices that interferes with class participation may result in the initial attendance/participation grade being lowered by 0.5-2 points (e.g., from 18-16 points).

Attendance/participation at one-on-one tutorial meetings also counts toward this part of your grade. Please arrive on time for the tutorial meeting and send me your writing sample by the deadline announced in the tutorial sign-up process. In case of unforeseen circumstances, each participant may reschedule one tutorial meeting during the course of the semester. In order to reschedule, please notify me at least six hours before our meeting time.

Because of the importance of class activities, it is the English Language Programs' expectation that class participants attend at least 80% of class sessions. If you expect that your obligations will cause you to miss three or more classes, you should consider waiting to take U15 213 until you have more room in your schedule.

Academic Integrity

The writing you submit for ELP 213 must be writing that you have composed yourself, not writing that has been composed, edited, or proofread by someone else; drafted as a group; or copied from an existing source. Turning in writing under your own name that has been composed or edited by someone else would constitute a violation of Washington University's Academic Integrity Policies. Since the purpose of this course is for you to improve your own writing, you may not seek proofreading assistance outside of U15 213 for the purpose of revising the drafts you submit for a grade.

Skills necessary to upholding academic integrity policies, including proper paraphrasing, will be practiced in class. Violating these policies may result in a failing grade for an assignment (e.g., a writing sample) or

for the course as a whole. If you are ever unsure about how to comply with Washington University's policies, please ask.

Grades

Your grade in the course will be based on the following:

Test	10%
Writing Sample #1	20%
Writing Sample #2	25%
Final Exam	25%
Attendance and Participation	20%

You may choose to take the course for a letter grade or pass/fail. Points for all of the above work will be converted to a scale where 100 is the highest possible score. If you enroll with the letter grade option, your letter grade will be assigned as follows: 93–100, A; 90–92.9, A-; 88–89.9, B+; 83–87.9, B; 80–82.9, B-; 78–79.9, C+; 73–77.9, C; 70–72.9, C-; 68–69.9, D+; 63–67.9, D; 60–62.9, D-; less than 60, F. If you enroll under the pass/fail grade option, a passing grade (CR) will be assigned when the final grade is 70.0 or above. A failing grade (NCR) will be assigned when the final grade is under 70.0.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns regarding the course policies.

Course Schedule

Updated January 4, 2017 and subject to change

Date	In-class topic	To prepare for the next class ¹
Jan. 23 Week 1	Overview, needs analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Complete “Academic Integrity” in BB ◦ Get the textbook and read “The goal: clear writing,” pp. 1–9 ◦ Read “Word choice,” p.11 and look over Exercise 1.1 ◦ Read the abstract and first three sections in Hyland (2008)²
Jan. 30 Week 2	Building blocks: word choice, using AntConc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Look over Exercise 1.2, pp. 16–21 ◦ Read “Sentence structure,” pp. 22–26 ◦ Look over Exercise 2.1, pp. 27–28, items 1–12 ◦ Start building your corpus from your reference portfolio (10 to 15 articles) ◦ Make a list of the articles and upload it to Blackboard (counts as participation)
<p>Tuesday, January 31 Last day for University College students to drop a course Last day for University College students to add a course Add/drop deadline for students in other WUSTL schools may differ</p>		
Feb. 6 Week 3	Building blocks: sentence structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Look over Exercise 2.6, p. 47 ◦ Read “Paragraph structure,” pp.52–72 ◦ Look over Exercise 3.1, p. 56
Feb. 13 Week 4	Information flow, linking, paragraph structure (I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read “Paragraph structure,” pp. 83–101 ◦ Look over Exercises 3.7 (p. 80), 3.8 (p. 88), 3.9 (p. 95), and 3.10 (pp. 96-97) ◦ Complete DCA³ #1 and prepare to informally report about it to the class ◦ Prepare for the test on word choice, sentence structure and paragraph structure (I)

¹ Page numbers refer to the Zeiger textbook unless otherwise noted. When asked to “read” something or “look over” an exercise, look closely enough that you can discuss it in class. Consider looking at the exercises first and seeing if you understand what they are asking for. If not, skim/read the appropriate portion of the textbook as needed.

² Readings other than those in the Zeiger textbook will be posted in Blackboard.

³ DCA = Discourse Community Assignment. In these assignments (which are ungraded, but count toward participation), you will be asked to use AntConc to analyze articles in your corpus so that you can identify patterns of language usage relevant to writing in your field of study/research.

Feb. 20 Week 5	Test Literature reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read “References,” pp. 260–266 ◦ Skim Kies (1990) ◦ Take a quick look at NSF Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide ◦ Prepare Task One, Unit 3 (Swales & Feak) ◦ Start working on the first draft of Writing Sample #1
Feb. 27 Week 6	Proposals: literature review + paragraph structure (II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Complete DCA #2 and prepare to informally report about it to the class ◦ Read “The title,” pp. 300–318 ◦ Sign up for Tutorial #1 ◦ Turn in first draft of Writing Sample #1 in BB no later than Monday, March 6, 11:59 p.m.
Mar. 6 Week 7	Proposals: significance and objectives Tutorial #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read “Materials and Methods,” pp.127–135 ◦ Turn in the revised draft of Writing Sample #1 in BB no later than Monday, March 20, 11:59 p.m.
Mar. 13	No class: Spring Break	
Mar. 20 Week 8	No class: TESOL conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read “Organization” in “Materials and Methods,” pp.135–142 ◦ Start writing your Methods section (at least one page) and bring it to class
Mar. 27 Week 9	Methods section (I) Methods section (II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read “Results,” pp.155–166 ◦ Bring personal research data to class for the R&A workshop ◦ Sign up for Tutorial #2. Bring any part of your M&M section you would like to discuss OR your version of Exercise 5.1 (pp. 146–150) or 5.2 (pp. 151–153).
Apr. 3 Week 10	No class: Tutorial #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Revise your M&M section and start writing your R&A section ◦ Look over Exercise 6.2, pp. 174–175 ◦ Read “Figures and tables,” pp. 223–257 ◦ Complete DCA #3 and prepare to informally report about it to the class

Apr. 10 Week 11	Results section & supporting documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Turn in the first draft of Writing Sample #2 in BB no later than Monday, April 17, 11:59 p.m. ◦ Make your supporting documents ◦ Sign up for Tutorial #3 and prepare by working on the R&A section OR Exercise 8.2 (p. 259) ◦ Read “Discussion,” pp. 176–219
Apr. 17 Week 12	No class: Tutorial #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Read “Introductions,” pp. 107–122 ◦ Turn in the revised draft of Writing Sample #2 in BB no later than Monday, April 24, 11:59 p.m.
Apr. 24 Week 13	Discussion & Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Complete DCA #4 and prepare to informally report about it to the class ◦ Read “The abstract,” pp. 269–89 (only the pages that discuss hypothesis-testing papers)
May 1 Week 14	Abstract & Critique (peer review) About the final exam	Prepare for the final exam
May 8 Week 15	Final exam	