

Fall 2018

Writing for the Sciences

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CUNY City College

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Fall 2018

Writing for the Sciences (Section D)

Location: TBD

Class Time: Mon/Wed 12:30PM–1:45AM

Instructor: Debra Williams

Email: Dwilliams3@ccny.cuny.edu

Room: NAC 6/335C

Office Hours: Mon 11:30 AM (by appt. only)



Course Description: This course is designed to strengthen your reading, critical thinking, and writing skills for future academic and professional studies, specifically in the sciences. We will be building on a foundation of scientific knowledge by reading reports and studies from a variety of researchers in different scientific fields to develop an appreciation for scientific writing and thought. You will become a stronger writer and thinker capable of entering scientific discussion with a well-informed point of view. With a focus on examining different concepts and issues within the world around you, this course will help you synthesize information, find answers, and present ideas to an audience in different genres seen often in science writing. In particular, we will analyze various reports and critical reviews that have been recently published which will allow you to compose your own writing in these genres.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations.
- Develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing.
- Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations.
- Engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes.
- Understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences.
- Locate research sources (including academic journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles) in the library's databases or archives and on the Internet and evaluate them for credibility, accuracy, timeliness, and bias.
- Compose texts that integrate your stance with appropriate sources using strategies such as summary, critical analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and argumentation.
- Practice systematic application of citation conventions.

This course requires that you have access to the following platforms:

- Register for CUNY Academic Commons <https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/>
- Blackboard – www.cuny.edu/portal-login.html

Course Policies

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is copying and using other people's words without proper acknowledgment or citation as it is indicated in the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity. All writing submitted for this course is understood to be your original work. Plagiarism is unacceptable and has serious consequences that can include a failing grade. In cases where I detect academic dishonesty (the fraudulent submission of another's work, in whole or part, as your own), you may be subject to a failing grade for the project or the course, and, in the worst case, to academic probation or expulsion. You are expected to read, understand, and adhere to CCNY's Policy on Academic Integrity, which is available here: <http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/current/upload/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf> .

Students are expected to attend every class session of this course and to be on time. If you miss five classes, your final grade will be dropped by one-half of one letter (a 90 to an 85, for example). If you miss six classes, your final grade will be dropped one full letter. If you miss seven classes, you will not be able to pass the course.

Consistent late arrivals and early departures will have a negative impact on your grade. I will notify you by email if course absences (for full or partial classes) are having an impact on your grade. If you have special circumstances, please see me. I'm happy to work with you to help you complete this course.

Student Code of Conduct: All student members of the College community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect for the rights and personal/academic well-being of others, preserves the integrity of the social and academic environment, and supports the mission of the College. The College has an inherent right to address behavior that impedes, obstructs, or threatens the maintenance of order and attainment of the aforementioned goals by violating the standards of conduct set forth in the University student conduct policies noted below as well as other policies that may be established by the respective Schools, Global Sites, and administrative offices of the University. The goals of the CCNY Community Standards are:

- To promote a campus environment that supports the overall educational mission of the University
- To protect the University community from disruption and harm
- To encourage appropriate standards of individual and group behavior
- To foster ethical values and civic virtues
- To foster personal learning and growth while at the same time holding individuals and groups accountable to the standards of expectations established by the Code of Conduct: <http://www.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/community-standards.cfm>

Food and Drinks

Please! No eating in the classroom. Your snack could be a real distraction for other students. Drinks are fine.

Resources

Everyone here at City College is committed to making your academic experience an enriching one, and should you find yourself in need of help, please make use of these resources.

The Writing Center

<http://www.cuny.edu/writing/>

The CCNY Writing Center offers a supportive learning environment where students can have one-on-one tutoring sessions with writing consultants. It is a great resource for you to obtain extra help as you write and revise your papers. They DO NOT proofread your papers, but offer assistance on improving certain aspects of them. They also offer ESL tutoring. To set up an appointment or semester-long sessions, contact them in person at the Writing Center, which is located in the NAC, 3rd floor plaza or call (212) 650-8104.

Gateway Advising Center, NAC 1/220

<http://www.cuny.edu/gateway/>

Students without a declared major can receive academic advising, especially if you have questions about your course of study, core requirements, etc.

AccessAbility Center Tutoring Services, NAC 1/218

<http://www.cuny.edu/accessability/>

Provides one-on-one tutoring and workshops to all registered students with learning or physical disabilities.

SEEK Peer Academic Learning Center, NAC 4/224

Phone: 212-650-5786; email: seekpals@ccny.cuny.edu

Offers counseling and peer tutoring for students in need of academic and financial support who have registered for the SEEK Program.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Essays, Self-Reflections, and Final Portfolio/Self-Assessment Project

During the course of the semester, you will complete four major writing assignments: Informative Review, Position Paper, Proposal/Research Paper, and Portfolio Self-assessment essay. There will also be a short reflection paper for each major assignment.

There will be detailed instruction sheets distributed for each essay assignment, self-reflection, and Final Portfolio/Self-Assessment. All of your assignments will be submitted to our Blackboard (Bb) course site.

Assignments

Grade Percentages

Letter of Introduction

Not Graded

The Letter of Introduction tells your reader about your academic goals, career aspirations, and what you wish to gain from taking a Writing for the Sciences course. This assignment also requires you to reflect on your current writing process and approach.

Scaffolded Review Papers:

- **Informative Review (2-3 pages)** **10%**
The informative review paper updates readers about the state of knowledge on a focused science topic or research issue. The goal is to inform readers about a science discussion without taking a position on the issues. The topic for this paper focuses on the ethical issues concerning therapeutic and reproductive cloning.
- **Position Paper (3-4 pages)** **15%**
Position papers have the overall objective of convincing readers to accept claims on debatable research issues. You will take a position on a controversial science discussion and defend your position using evidence, concessions, and counter-arguments. The topic for this paper focuses on the controversy of hydraulic fracking and other alternative energy sources.

Scaffolded Research:

- **Research Proposal (3-4 pages)** **5%**
Students will write a proposal for a research topic focusing on a well-defined science issue, make recommendations, and present a proposed solution. This assignment will frame the discussion for the research paper to follow.
- **Research: (5-7 pages)** **25%**
This assignment draws from the research proposal where you use at least four scholarly sources to address a research problem, and propose and argue for further research. The IMRAD format will be used for this paper. This assignment includes a formal class presentation highlighting key features from your research, and a separate Blackboard post responding to two other students' presentations.

Self-Reflection paper for each essay assignment (2-4 pages)

10%

For each essay you will also complete a **Self-Reflection paper** about your writing process, rhetorical situations presented in your essay and Course Learning Outcomes associated with the essay assignment. All of the assignments will address one or more of the Course Learning Outcomes. You should consider these Course Learning Outcomes for your **Final Portfolio and Self-Assessment Project**. This kind of reflection will help you to better understand your writing process and to transfer what you learn in this class to other writing contexts.

Final Portfolio/Self Reflection (4-5 pages)

25%

The portfolio and self-assessment are in many ways the most important documents that you'll create for this class. Assembling the portfolio will help you to see your progress as a writer over the course of the semester; the self-assessment will give you the chance to evaluate that work based on your own criteria as well as the course learning outcomes.

The Self-Assessment will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate that you've understood the rhetorical terms that we've been working with all semester—rhetorical situation, purpose, audience, genre, stance, media/design, and exigence—and an introduction to your portfolio. The portfolio should include, at a minimum, the Informative Review, Position Paper, Research Proposal and Research Paper.

The portfolios will be collected by the first-year writing program, **so they must be in a digital format**. You will be using CUNY's Academic Commons: <https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/>, which uses the WordPress platform for your work. The CCNY Writing Program has video guides that you can use to create a WordPress site (search for "CCNY Writing Program" in Youtube). **A more comprehensive assignment sheet will be distributed and discussed for this assignment.**

Other Writing Assignments: classwork/participation, drafts, and Blackboard posts (Bb) 10%

The Bb gives you a chance to think through and respond to the reading before class. For each DBP, I'll provide you with a prompt. Usually, the prompt will ask for a specific response; the DBPs will be evaluated based on how well you respond to the question. While these posts will ask for specific information, the DBPs are informal. You won't be evaluated for typographical and grammatical correctness as long as these issues don't interfere with your meaning.

Grades Scored Between	Will Equal
97 % and 100 %	A+
94 % and Less Than 97%	A
90 % and Less Than 94%	A-
87 % and Less Than 90%	B+
84 % and Less Than 87%	B
80 % and Less Than 84%	B-
77 % and Less Than 80%	C+
74 % and Less Than 77%	C
70 % and Less Than 74%	C-
67 % and Less Than 70%	D+
64 % and Less Than 67%	D
60 % and Less Than 64%	D-
0 % and Less Than 60%	F

Weekly Course Schedule

Date	Homework due before class	In-Class Work
Mon 8/27		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Review Course Syllabus/course learning outcomes • <i>Distribute Letter of Introduction Assignment</i> • Discussion: What is science writing? Why do we write about science? • Handout Orwell / Sagan.
Wed 8/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Orwell and Sagan articles. • Confirm access to Blackboard • Register for CUNY Academic Commons https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/ <p>Bb: Fri. 8/31: Letter of Introduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review “What is science writing?” handouts (Orwell / Sagan) • Rhetorical situations in science writing • Primary and Secondary audiences • Using adaptive measures as rhetorical devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —metaphors —visual images/graphics —narratives —defining terms • Introduction to Informative Review Papers • Class exercise (NYT articles)
Mon 9/3	Holiday / COLLEGE CLOSED	
Wed 9/5 (Monday Schedule)	Read NYT articles #1 and #2 from course readings folder and respond to questions in Bb.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review NYT articles/writing structure/ HW responses • Discussion on Analyzing Your Audience for informative review papers • Identifying rhetorical approach in Savulescu’s <i>The Ethics of Cloning</i>
Mon 9/10	Holiday / NO CLASSES SCHEDULED	
Wed 9/12	Read and respond to questions in Bb: — Gale database: <i>Human Cloning (2017)</i> — Morales’ <i>Psychological aspects of human</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review HW: Savulescu and Morales’ articles. • Identifying the rhetorical situations in Morales’s article • Video: The Story of Dolly the Cloned Sheep Retro Report The New York Times (13:40) • Distribute Essay 1 assignment sheet: Informative review paper
Mon 9/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read two short NYT articles on Henrietta Lacks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/21/opinion/henrietta-lacks-why-science-needs-your-cells.html (2) https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/21/well/should-you-worry-about-being-the-next-henrietta-lacks.html 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz on HW reading • Discussion on ethics of science and the Henrietta Lacks story • Analyzing the writing structure and rhetorical modes in the articles on Henrietta Lacks. • Video: “The First Human Clone - Real Stories”
Wed 9/19	Holiday / NO CLASSES SCHEDULED	
Mon 9/24	Due: First draft Informative Review paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editing/Proofreading/Grammar workshop • Peer-review: 1st draft informative review

Wed 9/26 Meeting in CCNY/TechLab (TBD)	Due Bb: Final draft of informative review paper	Introduction to reflection paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on informative review writing process and rhetorical modes • Building Self-Assessment portfolio via Academic Commons, using Wordpress platform.
Mon 10/1	Due: Reflection Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Position Papers • Structuring arguments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and Incorporating opposing positions in science: Objections, Concessions, and Counter Arguments in position papers
Wed 10/3	BB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Opposing Viewpoints” articles, and identify objections, concessions, and counter arguments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fracking Does Not Contribute to Global Warming - Fracking Contributes to Global Warming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HW responses on fracking articles • Comparing/constrasting three opposing studies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cornell U study: Howarth/Santoro/Ingraffea research on Methane and greenhouse-gas 2. U of Texas study: http://dept.ceer.utexas.edu/methane/study/ 3. U of Texas study: http://www.austinsentinel.com/2016-04-15-university-of-texas-study-links-fracking-to-east-texas-largest-earthquake.html • Watch Rob Jackson at TEDxNCSSM: <i>Fracking and the Future of Gas</i> video
Mon 10/8	Holiday / NO CLASSES SCHEDULED	
Wed 10/10	BB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Rob Jackson at TEDxNCSSM: <i>Fracking and the Future of Gas</i> video • Identify areas where he is making concessions and/or counter-arguments that can be challenged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to essay #2: Position Paper • Taking a position on alternative/renewable energy options—using objections/concessions/counter-arguments • “Opposing Viewpoints” article <i>Alternative Energy Sources</i> • Accessing Review Papers from CUNY <i>Opposing Viewpoints</i> database
Mon 10/15	BB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select your alternative energy option for Position Paper #2. • Identify two “Opposing Views” articles on your alternative energy option and identify concessions/counter-arguments and biases, and then use it to form a position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review HW • Constructing a thesis statement for a Position Paper • Understanding your audience in position papers: <i>Writing for the Intended Audience</i> • Reading abstracts for relevance and deciphering difficult text • Accessing Review Papers from CUNY <i>Opposing Viewpoints</i> database
Wed 10/17	BB: Gather more content for position paper: at least two scholarly articles from CUNY database(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices analyzing science research papers. • Deciphering difficult text • Introduction to Abstracts • Structuring Scientific Arguments • Thesis workshop
Mon 10/22	Due: Position Paper 1st Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing workshop (clarity and logic) • In-class peer-review

Wed 10/24 Meeting in CCNY/TechLab (TBD)	Due: Position Paper Final Draft	Reflection Paper workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on position paper writing process and rhetorical modes • Building Self-Assessment portfolio via Academic Commons, using Wordpress platform.
Mon 10/29	Due: Reflection Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to research in science: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing scientific arguments: Introduction/Methods/Discussion - research proposals - review of literature in research - evaluating research studies - finding a “niche” in science research • Introducing the research problem in science writing: <i>The Introduction Section</i>
Wed 10/30	Due: Identify your research topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Essay 3: Research Proposal and Research Paper • Evaluating Research Methods • Introduction to synthesizing scientific studies
Mon 11/5	Continue gathering sources for your research, and bring a copy of your sources to class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesizing studies with similar and contrasting conclusions • Working with summary charts
Wed 11/7	Due: Research Proposal 1s draft for approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Proposal assessment/feedback/ approval
Mon 11/12	Due: Final Draft of Research Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation Sign-up sheet • Organizing a research paper • Abstracts for science research • Revising for logic and clarity in science writing
Wed 11/14	1st draft Research Paper: Bb Peer-Review Prepare for research presentations	Student presentations
Mon 11/19	Prepare for research presentations	Student presentations
Wed 11/21	Prepare for presentations Due: Research paper final draft	Student presentations
Mon 11/26	Prepare for presentations	Student presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to self-assessment essay
Wed 11/28	Prepare for presentations	Student presentations
Mon 12/3	Self-assessment 1st draft due	Portfolio workshop
Wed 12/5	Self-assessment final draft due Response Paper for student presentation	Portfolio workshop
Mon 12/10	Continue working on portfolio	Portfolio workshop
Wed 12/12	Continue working on portfolio	Portfolio workshop