

Scientific Writing in Physiology and Neurobiology

PNB3120W

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"In science, the credit goes to the man who convinces the world, not to the man to whom the idea first occurs." – Sir William Osler

Course Objectives:

The overarching goal of this course is provide you with the requisite skills to effectively communicate scientific and medical information to diverse audiences. We will first examine the key components of scientific writing and develop strategies for writing clearly, concisely, and compellingly. You will then apply these skills by authoring articles on topics in physiology and neurobiology, relying on source material from peer-reviewed journals. Your articles will be aimed at publication in general interest science periodicals (e.g. *Scientific American*), and mass media (e.g. *The New York Times*). Evaluation of your written assignments will be by both the instructor and your peers. You will be required to participate in classroom-based editorial sessions. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to submit samples of your best work for publication.

Required Texts:

Title: *Sin and Syntax: How to Craft Wicked Good Prose*,
Author: Constance Hale
ISBN: 0767903099

Grading:

Written Assignments (70%):

Finding the Fundamentals of a Research Study

- Abstract (10%) [Minimum: 2pg. **Revised Writing**]
- Review Article (25%) [Minimum: 10 pg. **Revised Writing**]

The Art of a Summary: Science for the Masses

- Newspaper Article (15%) [Minimum: 3pg. **Revised Writing**]
- News & Views (20%) [Minimum: 5 pg. **Revised Writing**]

Peer Evaluations (30%)

Students will be expected to participate in the peer review process throughout the course. This will consist of designing and applying a rubric to evaluate the work of their classmates. The reviewers themselves will be evaluated based upon their ability to defend and discuss their assigned papers with the rest of the class.

Revised Writing

All revised writing assignments will include submission of a first draft for instructor and peer review. Assignments must then be revised to address concerns raised by the reviewers and resubmitted in final form. All drafts will be graded

According to university-wide policies for W courses, you cannot pass this course unless you receive a passing grade for its writing components. In this course you will be responsible for a minimum of 18 pages of revised writing.

University Writing Center

All UConn students are invited to visit the University Writing Center for individualized tutorials. The Writing Center staff includes talented and welcoming graduate and undergraduate students from across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. They work with writers at any stage of the writing process, from exploring ideas to polishing final drafts. Their first priority is guiding each student's revisions, so they frequently provide a sounding board for a writer's ideas, arguments, analytical moves, and uses of evidence. They can also work with you on sentence-level concerns, but please note that they will not proofread for you; instead, they will help you become a better editor of your own work. You should come with a copy of the assignment you are working on, a current draft (or notes if you are not yet at the draft stage), and ideas about what you want out of a session. Tutorials run 45 minutes and are free. You can drop in or make an appointment. For hours, locations, and more information, please go to writingcenter.uconn.edu.

Academic Integrity

In this course we aim to conduct ourselves as a community of scholars, recognizing that academic study is both an intellectual and ethical enterprise. You are encouraged to build on the ideas and texts of others; that is a vital part of academic life. You are also obligated to document every occasion when you use another's ideas, language, or syntax. You are encouraged to study

together, discuss readings outside of class, share your drafts during peer review and outside of class, and go to the Writing Center with your drafts. In this course, those activities are well within the bounds of academic honesty. However, when you use another's ideas or language—whether through direct quotation, summary, or paraphrase—you must formally acknowledge that debt by signaling it with a standard form of academic citation. Even one occasion of academic dishonesty, large or small, on *any* assignment, large or small, will result in failure for the entire course and referral to Student Judicial Affairs. For University policies on academic honesty, please see UConn's *Responsibilities of Community Life: The Student Code* and the Office of Community Standards: <http://www.community.uconn.edu>

Students With Disabilities

Students who think that they may need accommodations because of a disability are encouraged to meet with me privately early in the semester. Students should also contact the Center for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible to verify their eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.csd.uconn.edu/>.