

Professional English: Written and Spoken Communications for Graduate Students

Wuhan University

May 8-26

Instructors: Kristina Lauer, Bob Eckhart, Erin Lebacqz, and Pete Dully
Class time: Monday - Thursday -- Group A, 10:00-12:00; Group B, 2:30-4:30
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday -- Group A, 9:00-10:00; Group B, 1:30-2:30

I. Overview:

This intensive course is intended for graduate students who have prior experience with spoken and written communication in English. The aim of the course is to help participants improve their spoken and written language skills, understand the conventions of academic and professional English usage, produce and submit writing for publication, and learn how to participate in professional activities such as a conference.

II. Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will:

- ☐ locate and evaluate current research in the field that relates to their programs of study
- ☐ develop strategies for paraphrasing and synthesizing information
- ☐ learn about plagiarism and intellectual property as it is understood in the West
- ☐ write a brief literature review based on their research
- ☐ produce a journal article suitable for publication with correct formatting
- ☐ produce a digital presentation (PPT/Prezi/poster) reflecting the journal article's content
- ☐ provide oral and written peer reviews and respond to feedback from peers
- ☐ revise their writing to improve sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation
- ☐ develop abstracts and titles for conference proposals
- ☐ write e-mails to collaborators and/or journal editors in the U.S.
- ☐ share current research in poster presentations at a mini-conference

III. Course Readings

Open-source readings and instructional videos will be provided to students on a course website; students are expected to retrieve and read necessary materials before each class session begins.

IV. Format and Procedures:

This course will include a combination of lecture, mini-workshops, group and class discussion, short in-class presentations, and lab time. Students are expected to work collaboratively with their peers and the instructor and to share their insights and experiences with the class.

V. Grading Procedures:

1. Class participation and attendance: 10%
2. Short writing assignments : 40%
3. Mini-Conference Presentation: 25%
4. Final Paper: 25%

VI. Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance and participation: Students will be expected to attend all class sessions or contact the instructor with an excuse, preferably before class meets.
2. Short writing assignments: Students will be asked to submit 2-4 small assignments, which will be the building blocks for their final paper. Grades on these assignments will collectively comprise 40% of the grade in this course.
3. Presentation: Each student will make a final presentation of their work either in-person or submitted electronically. These presentations will be practice for actual presentations students will be expected to give at academic conferences in your field.
4. Final paper: You and your instructor will decide on the nature and length of your final paper based on actual projects which will benefit you professionally and you will submit this assignment by midnight on Friday, May 26. Ideally, this will be a piece of writing which you can use for some real-world professional activities.

VI. Academic Integrity

Any work submitted by a student in this course must be exclusively the student's own work. Even in academia, plagiarism and theft of intellectual property is a common problem. You might be surprised that sometimes even the most famous professors, politicians, and published authors plagiarize work. The availability of materials on the internet has, unfortunately, made it increasingly difficult for authors to protect their intellectual property. If you are going to be a successful scholar and academic and bring credit to your university, you must fully understand the importance of adequately citing reference works in your written, and spoken, communication.

IX. Tentative Course Schedule

1. Week 1 -- Introductions; Researching writing conventions/styles in your field; Identifying the most important journals and opportunities to publish as graduate students
2. Week 2 -- Generating a draft of a literature review as the basis of an article; Starting a piece of writing which you could submit
3. Week 3 -- Revising and Editing your writing; Developing a digital presentation based on your writing; Presenting your article; Participating in a mini-conference

[n.b. This syllabus is subject to change by the instructor; students will be notified in as timely a manner as possible.]