ENV966 DEL Professional Writing

Image from: http://blogs.longwood.edu/cannon479/files/2013/01/environmental-writing-typewriter.jpg

Course Description

Writing in environmental fields encompasses many genres, from policy memos to manuals, blog posts to interpretive signs. This course will allow you to refine and reflect on your writing process. For some, the course may serve as a tune-up; for others, a significant remodeling. Through ten modules, on-line discussion, and a series of writing assignments, we will examine the most important aspects of any piece of professional writing: organization, use of evidence, clarity and cohesion, and incorporating feedback during the revision process. The goal is for your writing to become more powerful as a result of this work.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Situate your writing in the context of academic and popular literature
- Clearly articulate your positions on environmental topics
- Target a specific audience when writing
- Edit your own work for clarity and correctness
- Give generous and assertive feedback on the written work of peers
- Use the feedback of peers to improve your writing
- Revise and rethink your writing through multiple drafts

Instructor

DR. NICOLETTE L. CAGLE
Email: nicolette.cagle@duke.edu
LECTURER IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & POLICY
DUKE ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
NICHOLAS SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT
DUKE UNIVERSITY, DURHAM, NC, USA

Nicki Cagle, Ph.D. is Faculty in Environmental Science and Policy, the Director of the Environmental Science Summer Program, and the Director of the Writing Studio in Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment.

Teaching Assistant: Rachel Brinks, Email: rachel.brinks@duke.edu

ENV966 DEL Professional Writing

Course Structure

This course is designed to give you space to reflect on your own writing process. It is also an opportunity for us to create a community of writers to support revision and to explore challenges that we face with professional and academic writing. The course is organized around five components:

I. Readings: Each reading module was designed to bring together useful tools that help refine your writing style and aid you in completing assignments for the DEL program. Please refer to the schedule below for due dates.

II. Interaction via Participation & Discussion Boards **(10% of final grade)**

Participation. We will meet as a group for six AdobeConnect meetings. During these meetings, I will briefly provide additional information on writing topics and ask you to reflect upon and explain your writing. Attendance and participation in these meetings will determine the participation component of your grade. Please refer to the schedule below for meeting dates.

You should complete all readings and view all lectures before our class meeting. During our class meeting we will discuss writing, answer questions, and look at examples of writing to help improve our own skills. It is expected that you will participate actively in these class meetings and demonstrate familiarity with the readings for the week. You will also be **graded on preparedness in an individual pop quiz format** (based on readings) during lecture, with names randomly selected.

Discussion Boards. Discussion boards count toward your participation grade each week. You should aim to **post 2+ times per weekly module**. In your posts, **connect the course content to something outside of class** (e.g., your daily life, a news or magazine article). In addition, you are welcomed to use the discuss board to discuss readings, your projects, or any other aspect of the course.

III. Writing Assignments **(90% of final grade)**

Overview*:* In this class, you will **work through one writing project from the brainstorming stage to revisions and final draft**. Your writing project can take <u>any</u> form or genre (e.g., newsletter, op-ed, policy memo). Your writing project can be something that you are writing for work or pleasure. If you do not have a current writing project that you feel compelled to pursue, consider writing a policy memo or Op-Ed. You will also work through a **series of additional assignments to gain competency in various genres of writing**.

ENV966 DEL Professional Writing

Brainstorming & Reflection (5%)

For this assignment, first pick a form or genre of writing (see Duke's TWP *Genres of Writing*) that you will work on for the entire course. Then pick two brainstorming techniques described in our readings (UNC Writing Center Brainstorming, Amherst College *Getting Started*, Gallaudet University Mapping) and use them to brainstorm ideas for your writing project. Write a brief (1 to 2-page, single-spaced) reflection about the brainstorming techniques you tried. Describe the challenges you encountered while brainstorming, the strengths and weaknesses of each brainstorming methods, and any other relevant thoughts you have related to brainstorming. Please include copies of your "brainstorms" with your assignment.

Citation & Paraphrasing (5%)

Using the resources provided, write a 1-page (single-spaced) factual summary of an environmental topic of your choice. Properly cite and reference your sources using APA style. Your piece should also include examples of paraphrasing and direct quotation.

Audience Analysis (5%)

Using the process and guidelines suggested in Callison & Lamb (2004), identify the audience(s) for your writing project, and then analyze the background and needs of the audience(s), and describe the results of at least one "audience analysis" technique. The final product of this analysis should be a 1 to 2-page, single spaced document that uses clear and appropriate headings and subheadings to help the reader (me) understand the organization of your text.

Memo Analysis & Revision (10%)

After reviewing the video on memo writing and completing the readings, write a 1-page (single-spaced) analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the sample mem (on Sakai). This should be a cohesive, well-structured analysis with a summary paragraph, and body paragraphs themed by scale (e.g., sentence- or document-level), at minimum. Then, use track changes to revise the sample memo. Turn in both the analysis and the revision. (See Peer Review instructions below for more ideas on how to structure the analysis.)

Outline/Sketch (10%)

Now that you have brainstormed ideas for your writing project and identified the needs of your audience, it is time to begin planning the organization of your content. Create an outline or some other visual representation of your content that addresses the following questions: What are the major sections and subsections you will need? What will be the topic of each paragraph? How will the content be organized on the page? What will be the main references or sources you use to support your content?

Blog Post (10%)

You will write one blog post (700 to 1,000 words) that thoughtfully and engagingly reflect on an environmental issue of your choice. The blog entry should be a coherent, cohesive piece of formal writing.

Blog entries should be grammatically correct and strong in the following areas:

- ❖ Thoughtfully analyzes the environmental issue at hand
- ❖ Makes connections between issue and personal experience
- ❖ Uses analogy or metaphor
- ❖ Considers issues or ecological processes at multiple scales (*e.g.*, local, regional, global)

> ❖ Extends discussions or poses new possibilities and ideas
> ❖ Considers different perspectives
> ❖ Reflects on the evolution of your thinking about the issue

The entries should also include **newspaper-style citations** (see Sakai) and **a terminal reference list** including at least two credible sources, *i.e.,* scientific articles or technical reports that further your understanding of the issue, its impacts, and solutions. These sources should **not** be a popular science, newspaper, or magazine article or a blog, although you may also reference those types of sources in your blog post. Terminal references should be in APA style. Please put an asterisk in front of your credible sources on that reference list.

1ˢᵗ draft of Writing Project (10%)
The first draft of your writing project should be a complete draft. You should organize your draft according the principles of effective document design and craft each paragraph carefully. While you still have time to refine the sentence-level clarity of your work, your first draft should be edited for correctness.

Review a Masters Project (MP) Proposal (10%)
After reviewing the materials on writing proposals, write a 2-page (single-spaced) analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of an MP proposal. This should be a cohesive, well-structured analysis with a summary paragraph, subheadings divided by scale (e.g., sentence- or document-level), and clearly focused paragraphs. (See Peer Review instructions below for more ideas on how to structure the analysis.)

Peer Review (10%)
You will write a 1 to 2-page review (single-spaced) of the writing project of one of your classmates. You should organize your review with relevant headings and subheadings that address three to four main writing issues (e.g., organization, paragraph-level concerns, editing, audience relevance, strength of argument). The review should address global (design, organization, ideas, argument) and local (editing, word choice, and sentence structure) concerns. Remember to write a peer review that is both generous and assertive, carefully balancing positive feedback and constructive criticism. It is often helpful to sandwich the meat of constructive criticism between two sesame buns of positive feedback and compliments.

Final draft of Writing Project (15%)
The final draft of your writing project should reflect the substantial revisions that you made to your 1ˢᵗ draft based on self-evaluation of your own work and the comments of your instructor and fellow students. Before turning the final draft in, you should evaluate it using the checklists provided in class, reverse outlining, and another editing technique (e.g., reading aloud and using a cover). Along with your final draft, you should turn in a short, one-page reflection about how your writing process has changed during this course. You should also turn in a color-coded comparison document that shows the changes that you made between drafts. If you are using MS Word, this is easily done using Compare tool found under Review.

IV. Conferences: We will schedule one conference (via telephone or Skype) to workshop the most recent draft of your writing project. This conversation will allow us to discuss the piece as a whole, including its organization, use of evidence, tone, clarity, and cohesion. You should come to the conference with a set of concerns you have with your writing, either specific to your piece or more generally.

ENV966 DEL Professional Writing

V. The Reader Project: This year, our class has the opportunity to participate in the Reader Project. According to Cary Moskovitz, in Duke University's Thompson Writing Program:

"The Reader Project offers Duke students the opportunity to get feedback on a class writing project from a Duke alum (and occasionally a Duke employee) who has the background and expertise to serve as an authentic member of the target audience for a class writing project. Student participation is optional; those who opt in are paired with a reader. The writing projects can range from scholarly/research writing in a particular discipline to forms of communication intended for a broader audience. We have a pool of about 700 volunteers and work with Alumni Affairs to solicit additional readers if our pool doesn't yield enough readers with the right background for specific writing projects. Students meet with their reader two or three times during the semester to get feedback on drafts of their work in progress. "

If you choose to participate, here is a suggested schedule to follow with your reader:

I. Introductory meeting: discuss target audience for your chosen piece of writing
    a. Meet with readers around Sep 2
    b. Submit Audience Analysis to Reader by Sep 6
    c. Audience Analysis due Sep 11
II. Feedback on Draft
    a. Send draft to readers by Oct 9
    b. 2nd draft due by conference (Nov 1 to 17)
III. Feedback on Near Final Draft
    a. Send draft to readers Nov 1 to 17
    b. Final draft due Nov 27

Course Schedule

Week	Weekly Topic (with scheduled meetings)	Readings Due (Read before completing assignment)	Assignment Due (due Mondays by 11:59PM)	AdobeConnect Meetings (Wednesdays) at 8pm EST
Week 1 Aug 27	**Writing as a Process**	Lamott, A. 1994. *Bird by Bird.* Duke's TWP Writing as a Process Duke's TWP Genres of Writing Pearson What is the Writing Process? UNC Writing Center Brainstorming Amherst College Getting Started Gallaudet University Mapping	Brainstorming & Reflection Discussion Board	***AdobeConnect Meeting***
Week 2 Sep 3	**Focus Module: Citation**	Bovee & Thill 2016 pp242-255 Citation & Referencing Handout Duke Avoid Plagiarism Handout Purdue Paraphrasing Handout TWP Quotations Handout	Citation & Paraphrasing Discussion Board Meet with Readers to Discuss Target Audience	

ENV966 DEL Professional Writing

Week 3 Sep 10	**Discourse Communities & Audience Evaluation**	Broyles, C. D. 2011. *Discourse communities* Wardle, E. 2011. *Learning to write in new workplaces* Dryzek, J. S. 2006 *Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* Callison & Lamb 2004 *Audience Analysis* UNC The Writing Center Audience TWP Scientific Writing for a Popular Audience	Audience Analysis Discussion Board	***AdobeConnect Meeting***
Week 4 Sep 17	**Focus Module: Memos**	NSOE on Memos Memo Video Memo Content & Form TWP Policy Memo *Sample memo to revise (see assignment)*	Memo Analysis & Revision Discussion Board	
Week 5 Sep 24	**Document Organization & Design**	Pearson Effective Print Document Design Boag 2011 Why whitespace matters Boulton 2007 Whitespace Kostelnick 1996 Supra-Textual Design Cagle 2013 Document Design Checklist	Outline/Sketch Discussion Board	***AdobeConnect Meeting***
Week 6 Oct 1	**Focus Module: Blog Posts**	NSOE Blog Overview Moz Blogging Best Practices Duke Student Affairs Social Media and Blogs	Blog Post Discussion Board	
Week 7 Oct 8	**Crafting Paragraphs**	Pearson Writing Paragraphs TWP MEAL Plan UNC Writing Center Transitions Cagle 2013 Paragraph Checklist	1st draft Discussion Board Send Draft to Reader	***AdobeConnect Meeting***
Week 8 Oct 15	**Focus Module: MP Proposals**	MP Proposal Writing Best Practices NSOE MP Proposal Guidelines *Sample MP Proposal to Analyze (see assignment)*	Review an MP Proposal Discussion Board	
Week 9 Oct 22	**Sentence-Level Clarity & Conciseness**	Pearson Parallelism, Variety, & Emphasis Pearson The Impact of Words Bedford/St. Martin 20 Most Common Errors Cagle 2013 Sentence-level Checklist	Peer Review Discussion Board	***AdobeConnect Meeting***
Weeks 10-12 November 1 to 17		**Skype Conferences** (draft due 48 hours in advance of conference) Send Draft to Reader		
Week 13 Nov 19		**Fall Break**		
Week 14 Nov 26	**Editing, Evaluation, & Revision**	TWP Editing & Proofreading TWP Revision Strategies TWP Reverse Outlining Cagle 2013 Editing & Revising Checklists	Final Draft Discussion Board	***AdobeConnect Meeting***

Last Modified: 11 May 2017
Created: 24 Sep 2012

ENV966 DEL Professional Writing

Assessment. In this course, you will be evaluated on quality of the assignments listed, including participation in class (think: individual pop quizzes at random on readings) and discussion boards.

To compute your final grade, I will assign the letter grade received on each assignment a percent according to the left-hand table. Your grade would be computed as follows in the right-hand table:

Letter Grade	Percent Equivalent	Range for Final Grade
A+	100	100
A	95	>92 to <100
A-	92	90 to 92
B+	88	88 to <90
B	85	>82 to <88
B-	82	80 to 82
C+	78	78 to <80
C	75	>72 to <78
C-	72	70 to 72
D+	68	68 to <70
D	65	>62 to <68
D-	62	60 to 62

List of Assignment	Weight	Letter Grade	% Equiv.	Weight x % Equiv.
Participation|Discussion Board	10%	A	95	9.5
Brainstorming	5%	B	85	4.25
Citation & Paraphrasing	5%	B+	88	4.4
Audience Analysis	5%	B	85	4.25
Memo Analysis & Revision	10%	A	95	9.5
Outline/Sketch	10%	A-	92	9.2
Blog Post	10%	A	95	9.5
1st Draft of Writing Project	10%	B	85	8.5
Review an MP	10%	B-	82	8.2
Peer Review	10%	C	75	7.5
Final Draft	15%	A	95	14.25
			Grade:	**86.1/B**

Submitting Work. All assignments must be submitted by email (as an MS Word or Open Office document) by 11:59PM on the due date provided, unless otherwise specified. Late work will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and may lower your grade (usually a full letter grade per day late – e.g., A to B). For assignment format, please use Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, and single spacing, unless otherwise noted. For papers longer than one page, please number the pages.

Avoiding Plagiarism & Citations. When you quote, paraphrase, respond to, or in any other way draw on the work of others in your writing—as you will surely do in this course—you need to acknowledge that you are doing so. This is the case whether your sources are published authors, fellow students, teachers, or friends.

The Duke Library has posted guides to documenting sources at http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/citing. The Library also has posted guidelines on avoiding plagiarism at http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism/index.html.

In addition, please review the Duke Community Standard (http://www.integrity.duke.edu/standard.html). Misrepresenting the work of someone else as your own is plagiarism. When you quote, paraphrase, or draw upon the texts or ideas of others in your writing, you must note your use of their work.

Other. Please do not hesitate to inform me if you have a learning disability, physical condition, or any other situation that may hamper your abilities in this course.

ENV966 DEL Professional Writing

It can be overwhelming to look for good writing resources. These books come highly recommended by writing gurus at Duke and beyond:

1. On Writing Well, 30th anniversary edition, by William Zinsser. 2006.
2. Line by Line, by C. K. Cook, 1985.
3. How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper, 5th edition, by Robert Day. 1998.
4. Elements of Style, 4th Edition, by Strunk and White. 2000.
5. Eats, Shoots & Leaves by Lynne Truss. 2003.
6. Write Right, a desktop reference, 4th Edition, by Jan Venolia. 2001.
7. Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace 7th edition, by Joseph Williams. 2003.

Acknowledgements