

English 325: Writing in the Health Professions

Spring 2013: 3 credits

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Course Description:

Study of and practice in language use and written conventions of the health professions for academic, professional, and public audiences. Prerequisite: English 120, Junior status. Disciplinary knowledge expected: Students in this course will be expected to have the necessary background / course work to read scientific, medical, and professional documents, as well as write technical and professional documents relevant to these fields.

Students do not need to be admitted into the Schools of Pharmacy, Nursing, Allied Sciences, or other health-related programs in order to take this course. This course has been approved for the General Education category, Communication, and is organized around the following Gen Ed Outcomes:

General Education Outcome 1: Communicate effectively in a variety of genres for various audiences, purposes, and situations.

Communicate effectively in appropriate genres for health professionals, academic and public audiences, and written, oral, and visual communication.

- Analyze health-profession genres and their practical and situated applications.
- Write professional prose effectively in situated scenarios.
- Write about health related topics for specialized and public audiences.
- Emphasize communicating information visually when appropriate.

GE Outcome 6: Integrate knowledge and ideas in a coherent and meaningful manner.

- Introduce students to relevant databases and websites.
- Teach students proper in-text and end-text citation methods.
- Read, analyze, and incorporate secondary sources effectively.
- Integrate technical health information in a style appropriate to the genre and audience.

English Department's Upper Division Writing Goals

- Students will be able to manage sophisticated writing and research projects, planning, documenting, completing, and assessing work on time and within the constraints of the project.
- Develop professionalism exhibited in such qualities as self-direction, cooperation, civility, reliability, and care in editing and presenting the final product.
- Master the discourse and generic conventions of writing in the health

professions.

Course Specific Goal: Understanding Health Literacy

Increase students understanding of the health issues in general and one's chosen health profession in particular, with an emphasis on **health literacy**.

- Read popular literature and web-based information on health issues.
- Increase knowledge of health professions.
- Increase each student's health literacy.
- Raise students' awareness of the general public's health literacy.

Required Texts:

1. Zarcadoolas, Christina, Andrew F. Plesant, David S. Greer. (2006). *Advancing Health Literacy*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.
2. Additional readings will be made available through Blackboard or the Web.

Assignments and Grading

Revisable Documents:

1. Memo 1. (25 pts)
2. SWA 1. (50 pts)
3. Community Profile. (100 pts)
4. IMRAD. (100 pts)
5. Cover Letter for IMRAD. (100 pts)
6. Proposal. (50 pts)
7. Health Document. (100 pts)

Un-revisable Documents:

8. Final Cover letter. (50 pts)
9. SWA 2, 3 and 4. (50 pts each)
10. Memo 2-4. (25 pts each)
11. Discussion board posts. (100 pts)
12. Peer Review Memos 1-4. (25 pts each)

Course total: 1000 points.

As we work through this quick session, please keep in mind how all of these assignments are fitting together. Think about how they provide important information for your final project, and how they lead you to accomplish the course goals. These are important things you will need to analyze and write about at the session's end.

Definitions of letter grades and point values for course.

I will provide a grading rubric for each assignment, but all of the assignments will use the same grade definitions.

A = excellent document/project in all aspects—some slight room for improvement. (920-1000).

B = good to very good; some aspects of the document or project might be excellent, others will be good. (801-919).

- C = acceptable completion of the assignment. No major problems, but room for improvement in most areas of the assignment. (701-800).
- D = a major aspect of the assignment has not been completed. Elements of the assignment might be quite good, but with unsatisfactory completion of certain elements, the assignment will remain a D. (601-700).
- F = incomplete assignment because page length was not met, proper research was not completed, proper documentation conventions not followed, genre conventions not adhered to, etc. (600 and below).

Course Policies

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: Work submitted for this course must adhere to the Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct as cited in the *Handbook of Student Policies*: “The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. Occasionally, this trust is violated when cheating occurs, either inadvertently or deliberately. This code will serve as the guideline for cases where cheating, plagiarism, or other academic improprieties have occurred . . . Faculty members may fail the student for the particular assignment, test, or course involved, or they may recommend that the student drop the course in question, or these penalties may be varied with the gravity of the offense and the circumstances of the particular case” (65). See the NDSU policy manual for full details: <http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm>

Academic Honesty Defined: All written and oral presentations must “respect the intellectual rights of others. Statements lifted verbatim from publications must be cited as quotations. Ideas, summaries or paraphrased material, and other information taken from the literature must be properly referenced” (*Guidelines for the Presentation of Disquisitions*, NDSU Graduate School, 4).

English Department Policy on Plagiarism: Instructors in the English department try to distinguish between inadvertent and deliberate plagiarism. Initial instances of inadvertent plagiarism will be pointed out and revision will be expected; deliberate plagiarism may result in zero for an assignment, possible F for the course. See the English department guidelines for more details: <http://www.ndsu.edu/ndsu/english/view.php?ArtID=165>

Special Needs: In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act, I would encourage students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course to contact me as soon as possible so that the appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate particular needs.

Expectations

Upper Division Writing classes are pre-professional classes; a significant amount of the work you do will be about learning to communicate as a professional. To further re-enforce this point, my expectation is that we will treat the course as a professional work environment, not just another class on your way to a degree.

- Have a positive attitude; you should be trying to make the best of any work situation, even if it isn't your cup of tea.
- Email me to set up an appointment if you need to discuss something on an individual basis. Be sure to see the Professional Email Assignment for specifications about email.
- Turn in your work on time. Email me if you need an extension. If you don't and your work is one week late, the grade will be an F.
- If you are having trouble keeping up, talk to me. If you are confused, talk to me. Remember that as your "professional coach" I want you to succeed, but I need to know how to help. Get used to asking for help; this skill might be very useful when you start a new job.
- If you have suggestions for improving the course feel free to share them. Get used to investing in your work place, trying to make it a better place.
- Take responsibility for your grade. All the points for the semester are listed on your documents, and I will give your work back with comments and a grade. Keep track of your progress. I may not post grades on blackboard; I will expect you to know where you stand after every assignment.
- Take responsibility for your learning. I understand that assignments may not be clear to everyone at first—and I am happy to discuss them with you, but I can't if I don't know you are having trouble. Take the initiative to ask for clarification or help.

Learning to be a professional is part of learning to write like a professional. Linguist James Gee explains it this way: "At any moment we are using language we must say or write the right thing in the right way while playing the right social role and (appearing) to hold the right values, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, what is important is not language, and surely not grammar, but *saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing combinations.*" Make the best use of this class to become an expert at using language tailored to your field.