MICR 354: Scientific Writing
Fall 2012: 3 Credits
Prerequisite: MICR 350, ENGL 120

Instructor
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Office Hours
Thursdays 9-11am.

Course Description
This course will emphasize the qualities of sound logic, good structure, and honesty in the writing of scientific articles for professional and general audiences.

Learning Objectives
You will study and implement the tools for expressing ideas simply and clearly in writing.

You will learn how to read and analyze the structure of research proposals and journal articles. You will use this understanding to develop professional scientific documents.

You will practice a disciplined approach to drafting, writing, and revising.

You will explore the conventions of writing science documents for general audiences.

Required Text and Materials

Readings provided on Blackboard.

Useful Texts for Reference


Assignments & Grading
Professional Materials (200 points)
You will develop a personal essay, resume, and cover letter for a future job, graduate school, or professional school program.

Blogging (100 points)
In this assignment, you will post two entries to the class Bb blog. In the first entry, you will develop a meta-blog i.e. a blog about blogging. In the second entry, you will profile a microbiologist or science communicator that you admire. You will also be required to comment on other students’ blogs.

Science Information Project (200 points)
In this group project, you will design a newsletter for the Department of Veterinary and Microbiological Sciences.

Research Proposal (250 points)
You will research, plan, and write a grant proposal in response to a mock National Science Foundation request for proposals (RFP).

Scientific Presentation (100 points)
You will design and present a 10-minute powerpoint presentation based on your research proposal.

Portfolio (50 points)
This is the document that the Department of Veterinary and Microbiological Sciences uses to assess the course. The document will contain a sampling of the work that you feel best showcases your abilities and growth as a writer over the course of this semester.

Additional Points (100)
You will also receive in-class and participation points for editing, peer reading, emailing, planning, writing, and assessing exercises. You must be in class to receive these points.

Course Policies
Assignments: There is a one-day grace period around due dates for major assignments. An assignment that is two days late cannot earn better than a B. An assignment that is three days late cannot earn better than a C, etc. The grace period does NOT apply to in-class activities, pre-writing exercises, OR the portfolio assignment.

Grading Scale
A (90%-100%) = excellent documents/projects in all aspects-some slight room for improvement
B (80%-89%) = some aspects of documents/projects might be excellent, others good
C (70%-79%) = documents/projects acceptable; room for improvement in most areas
D (60%-69%) = a major aspect of the documents/projects has not been completed
F (below 60%) = incomplete documents/projects; conventions of genre not met, research not completed, page length not met, documentation not adequate, etc.
**Cell Phones and Computers:** Cell phones should be off and stowed for class meetings. Computers may be used for group work, taking notes, and/or opening Bb documents for discussion. If cell phones are used during class or if computers are used for personal things like checking email or accessing Facebook, **5 points will be taken away from your final point total** for each instance of inappropriate use.

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected; if you cannot make a class, please let me know in advance. Any student who misses 8 days of class will fail the course.

**Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism:** The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at www.ndsu.edu/academic honesty.

**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](http://www.ndsu.edu/graduate_handbook), NDSU Graduate School).

**Honor System:** Please remember that when taking a College of Agriculture, Food Systems and Natural Resources course, you are under the honor system. Please refer to the following web sites for complete interpretation of the code.
http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/academics/honor.htm

**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. In addition, veterans and student soldiers with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor in advance.