

**WRITING 2131G:  
No Bones About It: Writing in the Sciences  
WINTER 2019**

**SECTION: 001**

**TIME: Monday 9:30-11:30 and Wednesday 9:30-10:30**

**ROOM/LOCATION: SH-3307**

**PROFESSOR: Dr. Aaron Schneider**

**EMAIL: [aschnei4@uwo.ca](mailto:aschnei4@uwo.ca) or OWL mail**

**OFFICE: UC 2431**

**OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday 10:30-11:30 and Thursday 12:30-1:30 or by appointment**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Writing in the Sciences introduces students to the basic principles and genres of writing required for science students in their under-graduate careers. Writing in the sciences requires students to observe clearly, record their observations systematically, follow and write clear procedures, summarize the work of others clearly, report the work of other researchers accurately, and communicate their own actions in detailed reports. This kind of discourse often takes the form of reports, research essays, poster presentations, and oral presentations, and as such will constitute the major assignments for this course.

In this course you will learn how to

- analyse scientific journal articles
- write for non-scientific audiences
- document your activities in a lab setting
- write research reports on scientific topics
- document your sources correctly
- write in a style appropriate to scientific discourse
- edit and revise your work to conform to Standard Edited English

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Messenger, William E., Jan de Bruyn, Judy Brown, and Ramona Montagnes. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*. Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, 2012.

Penrose, Ann M., and Steven B. Katz. *Writing in the Sciences: Exploring Conventions of Scientific Discourse*. Pearson Longman: Toronto, 2009.

Readings posted on OWL

**Assignments/Assignment Format**

Rhetorical Analysis (Diagnostic Assignment)	500 words	0%	Jan 30
Writing for Non-Scientists	750 words	20%	Feb 13
Revised Lab Report and IMRAD Analysis	See assignment	25%	Mar 20
2 Quizzes (7.5% x 2)	NA	15%	Feb 26 and Mar 18
Research Paper	2000 words	40%	April 8

In addition to submitting final drafts on the due date for each assignment, you are required to bring a draft of each assignment to class for each of the scheduled peer-review sessions. Failure to attend a scheduled peer-review session with a draft sufficiently complete (in your instructor's opinion) to permit meaningful review, or to participate actively in the peer-review session, **will** result in the earned mark for that assignment being reduced by 10%. In other words, an assignment that would have earned a 78, for example, will receive instead a recorded grade of 68. This penalty will be applied in addition to any other penalties incurred (e.g., for late submission).

Note: Assignment due dates, and peer-review session dates are listed on the class schedule.

Note: Complete assignments will be posted on OWL.

### **Submitting Assignments/Due dates/late submission penalties etc.**

*In this course you will be required to submit the final version of each of your assignments electronically, through OWL to turnitin.com and provide your instructor with a hard copy in class the day the assignment is due.*

Late assignments will receive a penalty of 5% per day. To qualify for an extension, you must have a valid reason and contact your instructor prior to the deadline. Please see the medical accommodation policy below.

If necessary, please submit essays to the Department of English and Writing Studies drop box directly across the hall from my office, making sure you include your instructor's name and your section number. However, do not

- fax assignments
- e-mail assignments

Keep copies (electronic, paper, or both) of all assignments submitted.

### **EMAIL POLICY**

I respond to email within two working days. You can email me via Western mail or OWL. I do not respond to email on the weekend.

### **Attendance policies**

Attendance at class is required to improve as a writer. Here is the Writing Studies attendance policy in this class:

- You may miss up to three hours (the equivalent of one week of class) of class meetings during the term without explanation. That means that the first three class hours you miss will be recorded as absences but *excused provided you don't miss any more*.

- However, if you miss a total of four to nine class hours (the equivalent of up to three full weeks of class), your final grade will be reduced by 10% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 72).
- If you miss a total of more than nine hours of class meetings (the equivalent of more than three weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be reduced by 15% (e.g. an earned final grade of 80% will be reported as a final grade of 68).

This policy will be waived only for medical or compassionate reasons. If you have good reasons for waiving an absence of one class meeting (e.g. if you've missed three hours, and need or want to miss another class meeting) discuss these reasons with your instructor within one week of that absence. If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty, who may require documentation. That advisor may then contact all of your instructors. See also: '**Medical Accommodation Policy**' below.

**Attendance also extends to tardiness.** If you are more than 20 minutes late, you will be penalized an hour of attendance. Please make every effort to be on time as late entry can disrupt the flow of discussion in our class. Early departures from class, which have not been previously arranged with the instructor, will also be counted as an absence. If you leave during the break, you will be docked an hour of attendance.

**Note:** a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course will count as non-attendance, and will attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario shall not require a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is your choice; your absence will not be excused.

### **Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism**

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:  
<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

### **Prerequisites**

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision

may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

### **Medical Accommodation Policy**

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or Writing Studies, and Writing Studies requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s home Faculty.

**“Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.”**

### **Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing**

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information.

Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

## **Class Meeting Schedule**

**Note:** You should do all of the readings for a week for the first class (the Monday class) of that week

### **Week 1 (Jan 7 and 9):**

**Topic:** Introduction to the Course, and The Communication Process: Audience, Credibility and Purpose

**Readings:**

- *OWL Reading:* “Writing About Biology: How Rhetorical Choices Can Influence the Impact of a Scientific Paper”
- *Grammar Handbook:* Chapters 3 and 6 (all), 7a, 8a-d, 10-13

### **Week 2 (Jan 14 and 16):**

**Topic:** The Writing Process, and Paragraphs

**Readings:**

- *Writing in the Sciences:* “Chapter 1: Science as a Social Enterprise” and “Chapter 3: Ethics in Scientific Communication”
- *Grammar Handbook:* Chapter 1, and Chapter 2

### **Week 3 (Jan 21 and 23):**

**Topic:** Writing with Power: Verbs, Active-Voice, Parallel Structure and Cohesion

**Readings:**

- *Writing in the Sciences:* “Communicating with Public Audiences”
- *Grammar Handbook:* Chapter 8 and 9

**Draft of Rhetorical Analysis due Jan 23**

**Peer-review workshop Jan 23**

### **Week 4 (Jan 28 and 30):**

**Topic:** Writing to Inform, and Illustrations, Tables and Charts, and the Comma

**Readings:**

- *OWL Reading:* “Explanatory Writing”
- *Grammar Handbook:* Chapter 15

**Rhetorical Analysis due Jan 30**

### **Week 5 (Feb 4 and 6):**

**Topic:** Writing to Inform and Illustrations, Tables and Charts Continues, and Colons and Semicolons

**Readings:** Grammar Handbook: Chapters 16 and 17

**Draft of Writing for Non-Scientists due Feb 6**

**Peer-review workshop Feb 6**

**Week 6 (Feb 11 and 13):**

**Topic:** Research Proposals, and Creating an Annotated Bibliography, and Grammar Review

**Readings:**

- review all of the previous material from the *Grammar Handbook*

**Optional Readings:**

- *OWL Reading*: “Writing Research Proposals”
- *Writing in the Sciences*: “Chapter 7: Writing Research Proposals”

**Writing for Non-Scientists due Feb 13**

**\*\*Reading Break\*\***

**Week 7 (Feb 25 and 26):**

**Topic:** Research, and Common Sentence Problems

**Readings:**

- *OWL Reading*: “Locating Useful Sources,” “General Advice on Reading and Note-Taking”
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapters 33 and 5

**Quiz #1 Wednesday February 26**

**Week 8 (March 4 and 6):**

**Topic:** Lab Reports

**Readings:**

- *OWL Reading*: “Writing Lab Reports and Research Papers,” Lab-Write Resources (on-line)
- *Writing in the Sciences*: “Chapter 4: Reading and Writing Research Reports”

**Research Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography due March 6**

**Week 9 (March 11 and 13):**

**Topic:** Writing to Persuade, Writing the Research Project, and Dealing with Sources

**Readings:**

- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapters 14 and 35
- *Writing in the Sciences*: “Chapter 4: Reading and Writing Research Reports” redux, “Chapter 5: Reviewing Prior Knowledge”
- *OWL Reading*: “Writing Essays and Review Papers,” and “Review Articles”

**Draft of Revised Lab Report and IMRAD Analysis due March 13**  
**Peer-review of Revised Lab Report and IMRAD Analysis March 13**

**Week 10 (March 18 and 20):**

**Topic:** Dealing with Sources Continued

**Readings:**

- *OWL Reading:* “References and Plagiarism,” “Total Quality Management for Your Draft”
- *Grammar Handbook:* Chapter 36

**Quiz #2 Monday, March 18**

**Revised Lab Report and IMRAD Analysis due March 20**

**Week 11 (March 25 and 27):**

**Topic:** Catch Up, Bringing it All Together, and Presentation Tips

**Readings:**

- Review course readings up to this point with a particular emphasis on those that are relevant to the Research Paper

**Week 12 (April 1 and 3):**

**Topic:** Revising Strategies, and Sundry Grammatical Issues

**Readings:**

- *OWL Reading:* “Revising the Manuscript”
- *Grammar Handbook:* Chapter 25

**Draft for Research Paper due April 1 and April 3**

**Week 13 (April 8)**

**Research Paper due April 8**

**\*\*Note 1:** Brief lectures on issues of grammar and composition may be added to this schedule when necessary. In preparation for these lectures, you may be asked to review material from the textbook or read additional material.\*\*

**\*\*Note 2:** You may be asked to read additional material in preparation for class discussions. These additional readings and related discussions will be specifically geared towards preparing you for your assignments.\*\*