

**Writing 2131G:**  
**No Bones About It: Writing in the Sciences**  
**Winter 2026**  
**Section 650**

## 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:

- Thaiss, Christopher. *Writing Science in the Twenty-First Century—Second Edition*. Broadview Press: Peterborough, 2024.
  - Price: \$50.95
  - You must use this textbook and this edition for the course
- Messenger, William E., Jande Bruyn, Judy Brown, and Ramona Montagnes. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*. Third Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, 2023.
  - Price: \$46.95
  - You can use older editions of this textbook for the course, although the page/chapter numbers may vary from those on the syllabus
- “Writing About Biology: How Rhetorical Choices Can Influence the Impact of a Scientific Paper,” by Randy Moore (posted on OWL)
- “The Delphic Oracle: A Multidisciplinary Defense of the Gaseous Vent Theory,” by Henry A. Spiller, John R. Hale, and Jelle Z. De Boer (posted on OWL)

## ASSIGNMENTS:

Writing for Non-Scientists	750 words	20%
Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	See assignment	15%
Poster	See assignment	25%
Research Paper	2000 words	40%

# Course Schedule:

## Week 1 (January 5-9):

**Topic:** Introduction to the Course: Reading Rhetorically

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 1: Writing to Reach Readers
- OWL Reading: “Writing About Biology: How Rhetorical Choices Can Influence the Impact of a Scientific Paper”
- Week 1 Lecture: Welcome to the Course
- Week 1 Lecture: Writing About Biology

## Week 2 (January 12-16):

**Topic:** Writing for General Audiences, and Grammar Basics

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 8: STEM Journalism
- *Writing Science*: Chapter 9: Science Online
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapters 3 and 6, 7a, 8a-d, 10-13
- Week 2 Lecture: Getting Started with Grammar
- Week 2 Lecture: General Audiences

## Week 3 (January 19-23):

**Topic:** Writing with Power and Clarity, and Paragraphs

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 2: Building Experience and Confidence in Writing Science
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2
- Week 3 Lecture: Paragraphs
- Week 3 Lecture: Writing with Power and Clarity in the Sciences

## Week 4 (January 26-30):

**Topic:** Illustrations, Tables and Charts (for general audiences), and Verbs and the Active-Voice

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 3: “Writing” Redefined Multimodally
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapter 8 and 9
- Week 4 Lecture: Design for General Audiences
- Week 4 Lecture: Verbs and the Active Voice

### **Week 5 (February 2-6):**

**Topic:** Illustrations, Tables and Charts (for scientific audiences), and Commas  
**Readings:**

- Revisit *Writing Science*: Chapter 3
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapter 15
- Week 5 Lecture: Design for Scientific Audiences
- Week 5 Lecture: The Comma

**Assignment:** Assignment #1: Writing for Non-Scientists due by 5:30 on Friday, February 6

### **Week 6 (February 9-13):**

**Topic:** Research Proposals, and Creating an Annotated Bibliography, and Semicolons and Colons  
**Readings:**

- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapters 16 and 17
- Week 6 Lecture: Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies
- Week 6 Lecture: Semicolons and Colons

### **\*\*Winter Reading Break\*\***

### **Week 7 (February 23-27):**

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

**Readings:**

- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapters 32, 33 and 5
- Week 7 Lecture: Common Sentence Problems
- Week 7 Lecture: Research

**Assignment:** Assignment #2: Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due by 5:30 on Friday, February 27

### **Week 8 (March 2-6):**

**Topic:** Posters

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 10: Creating Posters and Infographics
- Week 8 Lecture: Posters
- Week 8 Lecture: Grammar Review

### **Week 9 (March 9-13):**

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

- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapters 14 and 34
- Week 9 Lecture: Persuasive Papers
- Week 9 Lecture: Documentation Styles

### **Week 10 (March 16-20):**

**Topic:** Writing a Review and Dealing with Sources Continued

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 7: Writing the Research Review
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapter 35
- Week 10 Lecture: Writing a Review
- Week 10 Lecture: Plagiarism

**Assignment:** Assignment #3: Poster due by 5:30 on Friday, March 20

### **Week 11 (March 23-27):**

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

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 11: Creating Oral-Visual Presentations
- Review course readings up to this point with a particular emphasis on those that are relevant to the Research Paper
- Week 11 Lecture: Presentations
- Week 11 Lecture: The Total Quality Management Approach to Writing

### **Week 12 (March 30-April 2):**

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

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 12: Writing Science with Style and Styles
- *Writing Science*: Chapter 13: Editing Sentences
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapter 25

### **Week 13 (April 6-9):**

**Topic:** Revising Strategies

**Readings:**

- Review the readings from Week 12, and focus on completing and revising Assignment #4

**Assignment:** Assignment #4: Research Paper due by 5:30 on Thursday, April 9 by 5:30pm

