

ATMS 473
Seminar in Atmospheric Sciences
Topic: Writing Effective Scientific Papers
Fall 2007

Professor : Dr. Chris Hennon
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Office Hours: MW 10-11, TR 9:40 – 10:40 and other hours by appointment

Course Description

It is difficult enough to master the nuances of language when one is writing general papers for a class, job, or other purpose. It is an additional challenge to write an effective scientific paper; one in which you must effectively communicate complicated ideas and results to an audience who will not possess the same amount of knowledge and understanding.

The goal of this class is to teach you foundational strategies for scientific writing. This class will give you the building blocks that you will need to write well and communicate your ideas and thesis in a clear, concise, and fluid fashion. We will learn about rules and templates specific to the Atmospheric Sciences, including articles in journals. Periodically, speakers will present their views on their experiences with writing scientific documents.

Another goal of this class is to introduce effective ways of researching for your paper, from finding articles and books online to visiting your friendly neighborhood library. You will learn how to perform a literature review, parsing through many articles to find those most relevant to the question(s) at hand.

This class satisfies a writing intensive (WI) and informational literacy (IL) intensive requirement.

Class Information

Call Number : 10549
Days and Time : W F 2:45 – 4:00 pm (Wednesday class will dismiss at 3:25 pm)
Building / Room : RBH 238 (Robinson Hall)

Textbook : *The Craft of Scientific Writing* by Michael Alley (required)

Website : <http://facstaff.unca.edu/chenon/classes/atms473.html>
Prerequisites : Junior or Senior standing

Grading Information

For this class, you will be evaluated in three areas: weekly reading quizzes, semi-weekly exercises, and a final project.

Reading assignments will be given out almost every week. A short quiz will be given that will test your comprehension of the reading. They will generally be announced in the preceding class. Reading quizzes are worth **20%** of your final grade.

About 8 exercises will be given out during the semester. They will provide ways for you to put into practice what you have been learning in the text and during class. They will typically involve writing passages or sections of papers. Each exercise will be evaluated by me and by one or more of your peers. On some exercises you will have the opportunity to create a second or third draft of your writing. Exercises are worth **40%** of your grade.

For the final project, you will be given a set of data and a question to answer. Your goal will be to write a professional, scientific article using all of the skills and techniques that were learned during the semester (literature review, using figures, writing an abstract, citing references, etc.). Your project will be evaluated by me and by one or more of your peers, and you will have the opportunity to write more than one draft. Final projects will be presented during the Final Exam time. The final project is worth **40%** of your grade.

Finally, good attendance is expected and may be used to decide borderline grade cases.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

92 – 100%	A
90 – 91.9%	A-
88 – 89.9%	B+
82 – 87.9%	B
80 – 81.9%	B-
78 – 79.9%	C+
72 – 77.9%	C
70 – 71.9%	C-
68 – 69.9%	D+
60 – 67.9%	D
< 60%	F

Make Up Policy

Homework Exercises: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Assignments may be turned in up to 24 hours late for a 50% penalty. *Homework more than 24 hours late will not be accepted under any circumstances.* If you put homework in my mailbox, please find another faculty member to date/time stamp it. My mailbox is outside of my office in room 236 RBH.

Reading Quizzes: Reading quizzes are given only during class time on the announced days. Legitimate excuses accompanied by written documentation will be considered on a case by case basis.

Academic Dishonesty

If you use any form of cheating on an exam or assignment, you will be subject to procedures outlined in section 8.3 of the UNCA Faculty Handbook. Possible outcomes include receiving a zero for the exam or assignment, dismissal from the course, and/or suspension/dismissal from the university.

Class Schedule

Reading assignments for each week are given in the parentheses. Weekly topics will be incorporated into your semester project.

- Week 1 – Aug 20-24 – Course introduction, process of writing scientific docs / Speaker: Leith Tate (Ramsey Library) – “Finding Atmospheric Science Materials in the Library” (1-15)
- Week 2 – Aug 27-31 – Types of Sources / AMS Journals / Searching for Articles / Plagiarism
- Week 3 – Sep 3-7 – The literature review / Using references / AMS paper formatting
- Week 4 – Sep 10-14 – Speaker: UNCA Writing Center / Introduce semester project (16-27)
- Week 5 – Sep 17-21 – Structuring your paper / Beginning, Middle, End (27-51)
- Week 6 – Sep 24-28 – NO CLASS (Work on your project)
- Week 7 – Oct 1-5 – Writing Practice: Peer Review / Multiple Drafts / Grammar (257-267)
- Week 8 – Oct 8-12 -- Writing Practice: Being precise, clear, and forthright (73-102)
- Week 9 – Oct 15-19 – Writing Practice: Being familiar, concise, and fluid (110-137)
- Week 10 – Oct 22-26 – Speaker: NCDC (TBA) / Using Figures and tables (146-167)
- Week 11 – Oct 29-2 – In class work: Critiquing professional articles / Writing an abstract
- Week 12 – Nov 5-9 – Project work / Peer review
- Week 13 – Nov 12-16 – Project work / Peer review
- Week 14 – Nov 19-23 – NO CLASS (Thanksgiving) / First project draft due before break
- Week 15 – Nov 26-30 – Speaker (TBA) / Peer review of draft

Final Project Presentations: Wednesday, December 5, 3:00 – 5:30 pm, RBH 239

Final Project Draft is also due at 3:00 pm on December 5