

ATMS 473
Scientific Writing
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: W 2:45 – 4:00, TR 1:45 – 3:00 and 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 theses in a clear, concise, and fluid fashion. We will learn about rules and templates specific to the Atmospheric Sciences, including articles in journals.

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 : 10619
Days and Time : T R 10:50 am – 12:10 pm
Building / Room : RBH 239 (Robinson Hall)

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

Website : Moodle
Prerequisites : Junior or Senior standing

Grading Information

For this class, you will be evaluated in three areas: a series of 10 writing assignments, a final “portfolio” and portfolio presentation, and class attendance and participation.

Ten (10) writing assignments 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. Most will be based on the “5 paragraph” structure (1 Intro paragraph, 3 main body paragraphs, 1 conclusion) so they will not be very long. Each exercise will be evaluated by your peer group and then revised. On some exercises you will have the opportunity to create a third draft of your writing.

Your best eight (8) assignments will count towards your final grade. Each exercise is worth 100 points total. Details on how assignments will be evaluated will be discussed in class.

For the final project, you will be asked to compile and write about a personal portfolio. The portfolio will be comprised of several writings of your choice, selected from assignments throughout the semester. More information about the portfolio will be handed out in class. You will present your portfolio work to the rest of class during the final exam period. The portfolio will count 200 points towards your final grade.

Finally, good attendance and participation (especially in the peer review groups) is expected. Excessive absences will result in point deductions from individual assignments. Furthermore, attendance and participation may be used to decide borderline grade cases at the end of the semester.

Grading Scale

There are 1000 points available in this class. Your final grade will be based on the following scale:

920 – 1000 points	A
900 – 919 points	A-
880 – 899 points	B+
820 – 879 points	B
800 – 819 points	B-
780 – 799 points	C+
720 – 779 points	C
700 – 719 points	C-
680 – 699 points	D+
600 – 679 points	D
< 600 points	F

Make Up Policy

Since the schedule of assignments will generally be established well ahead of their due date, you are expected to submit your writing drafts (either electronically or paper) by the due dates. Moodle will not allow late submission of assignments.

If you miss the online deadline, I may accept an assignment up to 24 hours late with a 33% penalty. *Assignments more than 24 hours late will not be accepted under any circumstances.* If you put assignments in my mailbox, please find another faculty member to date/time stamp it. My mailbox is outside of my office in room 236 RBH.

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

Please see the class Moodle website for a detailed schedule of topics and assignments.
Portfolio Presentations: Thursday, December 11, 11:30 am – 2:00 pm, RBH 239