

**WRITING 2131F Online:  
No Bones About It: Writing in the Sciences  
Fall 2020**

**SECTION: 650**

**PROFESSOR: Dr. Aaron Schneider**

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

**OFFICE: UC 2431 (note: I will not be in my office during the fall term)**

**OFFICE HOURS: Because this is an online course, I will not be holding regular office hours; however, I will be available to meet virtually at a variety of times during the week. Please email me to setup a meeting time that works. You can expect a reply within one working day.**

## **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*. Broadview Press: Peterborough, 2019.

Messenger, William E., Jande Bruyn, Judy Brown, and Ramona Montagnes. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*. Second Essentials Edition. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, 2017.

Writing 2131G Course Pack

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Rhetorical Analysis (Diagnostic Assignment)	500 words	0%
Writing for Non-Scientists	750 words	20%
Proposal and Annotated Bibliography	See assignment	10%
Poster	See assignment	15%
2 Quizzes (7.5% x 2)	NA	15%
Research Paper	2000 words	40%

Note: Assignment due dates are listed on the class schedule.

Note: Complete assignments will be posted on OWL.

**ATTENDANCE:**

This is an online course, and there is, therefore, no scheduled class, and no penalties for missing class. However, it is your responsibility to stay engaged with the course. A regular class requires you to attend class at least once and often twice a week. You should be logging on to our class' OWL site a bare minimum of this number of times a week, and, ideally, several more.

**SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS:**

All assignments should be submitted through the Assignments drop boxes on OWL by 5:30 pm on the Friday of the week the assignment is due.

Note: All assignments must be submitted as Microsoft Word files. As a Western student, you have access to this program through your Outlook site (the site you use for your Western email). The one exception to this is the Poster which must be submitted as a PowerPoint slide. Assignments that do not conform to these file types will receive a grade of 0%.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

Late assignments will be penalized 5% a day.

Do not

- fax assignments
- e-mail assignments

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

**EMAIL POLICY:**

I respond to email in one working day. You can email me at [aschnei4@uwo.ca](mailto:aschnei4@uwo.ca) or through OWL email. I do not respond to email on the weekend.

Please note that UWO Instructors can respond only to UWO e-mail addresses. Grades can be communicated only through the Mail aspect of Sakai (OWL), not through UWO e-mail.

### **Accommodation Policy**

**Note: the official Western Accommodation Policy appears below. This is in effect, but may be modified temporarily by the university during the academic year as conditions change.**

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Academic Consideration for Student Absence**

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors by email within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.**

### **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor

if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Studies Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that instructors do 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.

**Plagiarism:**

The University Senate requires that the following statement on plagiarism be included on all course syllabi:

“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 analyses 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 offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

When you give a speech, be prepared to give sources if questions are asked at the end of a speech. Using credible and cited sources is an important aspect of *ethos* in public speaking.

**Prerequisites:**

Unless you have either the prerequisites 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.

**Owl (Sakai)**

Assignments, when they are assigned, will be posted on our Sakai course site. Modifications to the schedule may occur from time to time, but students will be notified by e-mail if this occurs.

# Class Schedule

## Week 0 (Sept 9-11):

**Topic:** Brief Introduction to the Course

**Readings:**

- Familiarize yourself with the OWL site
- Start on Week 1 readings

## Week 1 (Sept 14-18):

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

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 1: Writing to Reach Readers
- Course Pack: “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 (Sept 21-25):

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

**Readings:**

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

**Assignment: Assignment #1: Rhetorical Analysis due by 5:30 on Friday**

## Week 3 (Sept 28-Oct 2):

**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 (Oct 5-9):**

**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 (Oct 12-16):**

**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 #2: Writing for Non-Scientists due by 5:30 on Friday**

#### **Week 6 (Oct 19-23):**

**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

**Assignments: Quiz #1**

#### **Week 7 (Oct 26-30):**

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

**Readings:**

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

**Assignment: Assignment #3: Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due by 5:30 on Friday**

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

### **Week 8 (Nov 9-13):**

**Topic:** Posters

**Readings:**

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

**Assignment: Quiz #2**

### **Week 9 (Nov 16-20):**

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

**Readings:**

- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapters 14 and 35
- Week 9 Lecture: Persuasive Papers
- Week 9 Lecture: Documentation Styles

### **Week 10 (Nov 23-27):**

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

**Readings:**

- *Writing Science*: Chapter 7: Writing the Research Review
- *Grammar Handbook*: Chapter 36
- Week 10 Lecture: Writing a Review
- Week 10 Lecture: Plagiarism

**Assignment: Assignment #4: Poster due by 5:30 on Friday**

### **Week 11 (Nov 30-Dec 4):**

**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 (Dec 7-9):**

**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 12 Lecture: Writing with Style and Review

**Assignment: Assignment #5: Research Paper due by 5:30 on Friday**