



2013

Syllabus: College of Natural Sciences, Junior Year Writing

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JUNIOR YEAR WRITING SYLLABUS
COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES
Sept. 03 – Dec. 6th, FALL 2013

NATSCI 397A - CNS Junior Year Writing: For Juniors & Seniors in Veterinary & Animal Science, Plant-Soil & Insect Sciences, Earth Sciences, and Environmental Conservation (including): Building & Construction Technology, Environmental Science, and Natural Resources Conservation.

COURSES MEET:

Lec 01 (34941) 10:10 – 11:25 AM,

Mon.: Library Tower Room 720, Wed: TBA

Lec 02 (34942) 11:15 AM- 12:30 PM,

Stockbridge Hall, Room 301

Lec 03 (34943) 1:00-2:15 PM,

Stockbridge Hall, Room 301

Lec 04 (34947) 12:20 – 1:35 PM.,

Mon.: Library Tower Room 1667, Wed: 211 Lederle Highrise

CLASSROOMS are *subject to change: Please check room designation.*

Instructor: **Deb McCutchen** <dmccutchen@cns.umass.edu>

OFFICE: 211 Lederle Highrise, TEL: 545-5448

OFFICE HOURS BY REQUEST: M/W: 2:00-3:00, T/TH: 2:30-3:30

Please schedule with the instructor in person or via email

TAS: **JOSEPH MASON** <jmason@english.umass.edu>

RACHEL BEESEN <rbeesen@art.umass.edu>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: NATSCI 397A is committed to the UMass Sustainability Curriculum Initiative.

CNS JYW is a multidisciplinary professional writing course. Every discipline comes complete with instructions on how to think, talk, and write in order to act like a member of that discipline and to recognize and comprehend others within that field. This writing course brings these distinctions to life by focusing on both formal and informal argumentative and technical writing for different genres and audiences. Writing intensive, the course presents the methods of inquiry, evidentiary procedures, genres, and text conventions that characterize the way scholars and professionals craft written texts. The course reinforces college-level vocabulary, critical analysis, and textual evidence and referencing strategies, and extends their application to specific concerns and practices within the disciplines encompassed by the College of Natural Sciences. To support students' research and referencing, the course reinforces and extends technology and information-based literacies introduced in previously required writing courses.

PREREQUISITES: ENG 112; basic computer literacy & Internet access.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

• **Natsci 397A JYW Course Packet, available at the Textbook Annex**

• **An APA stylebook.** Recommend: *The EasyWriter* with 2009 MLA and 2010 APA Updates: A P, Author: Andrea A. Lunsford, Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's, Edition: 4th, Year Published: 2009, Price: ~ \$20., ISBN 0312650310

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

STUDENTS WILL NEED WEEKLY ACCESS TO MOODLE AND OTHER ONLINE PLATFORMS, AS WELL AS:

- A pocket folder with your name, for submitting written work.
- A writer's notebook, preferably a ring-binder w/ divided sections for in-class & weekly reflective writing, research notes, essay drafts, vocabulary list, and handouts.
- A portable drive or disc *exclusively* for this course.
- A college-level dictionary & access to the UMass Library online

TURNITIN: Please be aware that assignments may be submitted to Turnitin by the instructor for the purpose of checking for possible plagiarism -- **& by students to check for accidental plagiarism.** Submitted assignments will be included in the UMass Amherst dedicated database of assignments at Turnitin and used solely for the purpose of checking for possible plagiarism during the grading process during this term and in the future.

STUDENT JOURNAL: [HTTP://BLOGS.UMASS.EDU/IRLCNS/](http://blogs.umass.edu/irlcns/)



IN REAL LIFE: POINTS OF VIEW IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

To earn a passing grade in this course, each student will demonstrate basic proficiency in the following areas:

Reading/Critical Analysis

- Demonstrate through class reading assignments and discussion, an understanding of strategies for reading and interpreting texts in a variety of academic areas
- Illustrate through reading activities and subsequent writing assignments basic comprehension of fundamental rhetorical strategies as they apply to diverse disciplines, genres & audiences

Writing/Research

- Demonstrate in written assignments comprehension of writing as a form of professional communication with the student writer as “speaker” and readers as “listeners”
- Apply academic writing process skills by joining a community of writers in the classroom through discussion, peer editing, revision, and in-class writing
- Demonstrate the ability to apply and to evaluate acceptable standards for quality academic writing and editing using APA documentation style
- Evaluate and synthesize source material into research writing in a manner that avoids plagiarism by drawing upon attributive phrases, summary, paraphrase, direct quotations, in-text citations & bibliography

Speaking/Presentation

- Practice basic knowledge, comprehension, and application of public speaking skills through oral presentations of written work.
- Demonstrate ability to evaluate public speaking skills of other students in class discussion and during feedback.

Information Technology

- Demonstrate ability to utilize Course Guides and operate databases and indexes for conducting collegiate research.
- Familiarity with RefWorks & Word Press
- Engagement with discipline-related sustainability issues & their local and global implications
- Employ online discussion (UMAIL, MOODLE, GOOGLE DOCS, WORD PRESS) to communicate effectively, peer review, collaborate, write and edit
- Civic Contribution: May include public discussion, posters, publication (via an online student journal), volunteer, interviews, surveys, proposals.

METHOD OF DETERMINING FINAL GRADE:

The final course grade is developed through an assessment of the quality of the writing assignments produced, engagement in the writing process (demonstrated through process letters, the cycle of drafts and revisions and participation in non-graded assignments and peer reviews), ability to communicate effectively orally, and participation in the course, including class attendance, participation in peer review and feedback (online and in-class), activity in online discussions and assignments and completion of online reading responses. Because work is not graded on a numerical scale, and grading writing is inherently subjective, there are no points given per assignment. However, the following course components are roughly weighted in assessing the final letter grade:

Class Participation & Low Stakes Writing Assignments..... 25%

ATTENDANCE & Discussion in class & online,
Peer Editing, & Interaction,
Text Analysis, Quick Writes, Journals,
Vocabulary Lists, Formal Emails,
Worksheets, Quizzes, Learning Assessment, *etc.*

(Some, but not all, of the above may be required in the final portfolio and/or revised for extra credit to help offset some absences -- in reasonable cases. Consult the instructor regarding this.)

High Stakes Writing:

- Personal Statement..... 10%
- Formal Cover Letter & Resume (graded separately)..... 20%
- Annotated Bibliography..... 15%
- Oral Presentations..... 10%
- Collaborative Research Essay/Interviews..... 20%

ROUGH DRAFTS may be submitted online for feedback, at the Lecturer’s discretion. Final drafts should always be submitted, unmarked, in hardcopy (paper), unless otherwise requested, in a POCKET FOLDER w/name & Lecture number on the outside.

FINAL MATERIALS will be submitted at the end of the course as a Professional Portfolio with a table of contents and Final Process Letter. All final, clean copies of papers should be carefully titled and dated, APA style, followed by any previously graded drafts, then any final revisions of previous papers, extra credit pieces and published professional examples (models for the Research Essay) included, in that order. ONE piece of “best writing” may be submitted for our Online Class Publication. All materials must be typed, double-spaced, single-sided, in Times or Times New Roman, 12pt.

ATTENDANCE/LATE WORK: Students are expected to attend ALL classes. If an emergency requires a student to be absent or late, she must contact the professor before the next class *and come to that subsequent class fully prepared*: **Weekly Class Reviews & Handouts** are often available via the MOODLE online classroom. Normally, a loss of half to a full grade will start to accrue for each miss after the first two missed classes whatever the excuse. Please save these “free misses” for emergencies and normally excused absences. Excuses are not required for these misses, and will not help student grades if used after the free misses accrue. Tardiness, or leaving class early, may be treated as absences and will be factored into the final grade.

Please note: *The 25% Class Participation portion of the grade will necessarily be affected no matter what the reason for the absence – since participation cannot happen in absentia.*

PAPER REWRITE POLICY: It is expected that students will revise each Unit assignment at least three times. High Stakes writing is expected to be revised/copyedited/proofread using peer review and tutoring help, for a polished final product, before handing in for a grade. After getting a grade with instructor feedback, students have the right to revise all final papers **once more** for a higher grade. Therefore, it is more advantageous to hand in on time and get feedback for revision, than to hang on to imperfect or incomplete work and hand in late. Late papers will lose points, and students may not get instructor & TA feedback in a timely manner.

WRITING TUTORS: Students are strongly encouraged to seek the assistance of writing tutors from the Writing Center located in the Learning Commons (on the lower level of the W.E.B. DuBois Library). Writing tutors help students’ facility with their writing process, including brainstorming topics, developing drafts, proofreading and editing.

The Writing Center hours are posted online. Students are seen on a walk-in basis, or can make appointments by clicking on “WCOonline.” Please bring your written assignments and drafts to your tutoring sessions and *own* your editing process by articulating what you want the tutor to focus on when addressing your work. For information & hours go to:
<http://www.umass.edu/writingcenter/>

LIBRARIAN ASSISTANCE:

NAKA ISHII, OUR CNS REFERENCE LIBRARIAN from the Integrated Sciences & Engineering Library in Lederle, will provide assistance to students and peer groups needing help brainstorming topics, narrowing theses, and finding and referencing sources. Classes will meet in the computer labs to review and learn Research Database use and RefWorks. Links to customized subject guides (listing professional resources for our classes), will be available on Moodle. To contact the Librarian for individual help see the Moodle links or email:

Naka Ishii <nishii@library.umass.edu>

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the University’s Academic Honesty Policy: “Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst” <www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/#policy>. With evidence of a student’s failing to adhere to the Academic Honesty Policy, the instructor may assign the student a grade of “F” for that assignment, an “F” for the course, or refer the matter directly to the Disciplinary Board. Turnitin may be utilized within these classes.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities who wish to request academic accommodations should contact the Office of Student Disability Services, 231 Whitmore Administration Building, (413) 545-0892 (V/TTY), ds@educ.umass.edu

DISCLAIMER: The instructor reserves the right to change the course topics listed in the schedule or the order in which the topics are covered at her discretion. Students are hereby advised that select copies of their work in this class may be retained by the professor or the College for educational or administrative purposes, or for submission to the Writing Program’s Best Essay Contest, Student Writing Anthology, or the online Student Journal.

GRADING RUBRIC: To establish expectations and continuity about what constitutes A and B work, consider the following: An ‘A’ is reserved for truly exceptional work, and a ‘B’ is almost as good. The rubric below also holds true for classroom effort.

THE A ESSAY: The A essay fulfills the assignment – and does so in a fresh, mature manner, using purposeful language that leads to greater knowledge. The essay effectively meets the needs of the rhetorical situation in terms of establishing the writer’s stance, attention to audience, purpose for writing, and sensitivity to context. When appropriate to the assignment, the writer demonstrates expertise in employing their own credibility (ethos), getting across their message logically (logos) and identifying and communicating well with their audience (pathos).

The topic itself is clearly defined, focused and supported. The essay has a clear thesis that is supported with specific (and appropriate) evidence, examples, and details. Any outside sources of information are used carefully and cited appropriately. The valid reasoning within the essay demonstrates good judgment and an awareness of the topic’s complexities.

The organization is appropriate for the purpose and subject of the essay. The introduction establishes a context, purpose and audience for writing and contains a focused thesis statement. The following paragraphs are controlled by (explicit or implicit) topic sentences; they are well developed; and they progress logically from the ideas and sentences that precede them. If appropriate, headings and subheadings are used. The conclusion moves beyond a mere restatement of the introduction, offering implications for new understanding of the significance of the topic. The prose is clear, readable, and sometimes memorable. It contains few surface errors, none of which seriously undermine the overall effectiveness of the paper for educated readers. It demonstrates fluency in style (variation of sentence and paragraph lengths, interesting vocabulary), and understanding of genre requirements appropriate to the individual writer’s discipline and goals of the assignment.

THE B ESSAY: The assignment has been followed and fulfilled. The essay establishes the writer’s stance and demonstrates a clear sense of audience, purpose and context.

The topic is fairly well defined, focused, and supported. The thesis statement is adequate (but could be sharper), especially for the quality of supporting evidence the writer has used. Reasoning and support are thorough and more than adequate. The writer demonstrates thoughtful awareness of complexity and other points of view.

The B essay has an effective introduction and conclusion. The order of information is logical, and the reader can follow it because of well-chosen transitions and (explicit or implicit) topic sentences. Paragraph divisions are logical, and the paragraphs use enough specific detail to satisfy the reader.

The prose is clear and readable. Sentence structure is appropriate for educated readers, including the appropriate use of subordination, emphasis varied sentences and modifiers. Few sentence-level errors (comma splices, fragments, fused sentences) appear. Vocabulary is precise and appropriate; punctuation, usage, and spelling conform to the conventions of Standardized American English.

THE C ESSAY: The assignment has been followed, and the essay demonstrates a measure of response to the rhetorical situation, in so far as the essay demonstrates some sense of audience and purpose. The topic is defined only generally; the thesis statement is also general. The supporting evidence, gathered honestly and used responsibly, is, nevertheless, often obvious and easily accessible. The writer demonstrates little awareness of the topic’s complexity or other points of view; therefore, the C essay usually exhibits minor imperfections or inconsistencies in development, organization, and reasoning.

The organization is fairly clear. The reader could outline the presentation, despite the occasional lack of topic sentences. Paragraphs have adequate development and are divided appropriately. Transitions may be mechanical, but they foster coherence. The expression is competent. Sentence structure is relatively simple, relying on simple and compound sentences. The paper is generally free of sentence-level errors; word choice is correct though limited. The essay contains errors in spelling, usage and punctuation that reveal lack of editing or unfamiliarity with the conventions of Standardized American English.

THE D ESSAY: The D essay attempts to follow the assignment, but demonstrates little awareness of the rhetorical situation in terms of the writer’s stance, audience, purpose, & context. For example, the essay might over- or under-estimate (or ignore) the audience’s prior knowledge, assumptions, or beliefs. The writer may have little sense of purpose.

The essay may not have any thesis statement, or, at best, a flawed one. Obvious evidence may be missing, and irrelevant evidence may be present. Whatever the status of the evidence, it is inadequately interpreted and rests on an insufficient understanding of the rhetorical situation. Or it may rely too heavily on evidence from published sources without adding original analysis. Organization is simply deficient: introductions or conclusions are not clearly marked or functional; paragraphs are neither coherently developed nor arranged; topic sentences are consistently missing, murky, or inappropriate; transitions are missing or flawed. The D essay may have numerous and consistent errors in spelling, usage, and punctuation that reveal unfamiliarity with the conventions editing, proofreading and/or of Standardized American English.

THE F ESSAY: The F essay is inappropriate in terms of the purpose of the assignment and the rhetorical situation. If the essay relates vaguely to the assignment, it has no clear purpose or direction.

The essay falls seriously short of the minimum length requirements, and therefore is insufficiently developed and does not go beyond the obvious.

The F essay is plagued by more than one of the organizational deficiencies of a D essay. Numerous and consistent errors of spelling, usage, and punctuation hinder communication.