

Writing for Graduate Students

Required Text(s):

The Craft of Research, 3rd edition. (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. The text is available in electronic or hardcopy formats:

Amazon.com Kindle e-book (\$4.85 U.S.)

Amazon.ca paperback (\$9 - \$13 Cdn + taxes)

Chapters/Indigo paperback (\$13.64 Cdn + taxes)

If you're outside Canada or the U.S., you should be able to access an e-version through Amazon.com. The content is the same regardless of format.

Course Description and Objectives

This wholly online course highlights the distinct challenges and opportunities of writing at the Master's or PhD level. The course materials are designed to familiarize students and help them cope with the requirements of graduate-level (or professional) articles, reports, and theses.

Activities include weekly short-writing activities with feedback from the instructor and online discussions that encourage and facilitate peer feedback. The course covers planning, researching, and organizing writing projects; crafting reasonable and sound arguments; writing abstracts and literature reviews; incorporating research sources ethically to support claims; and making best use of the writing resources available for graduate students in various disciplines. The course also reviews basic elements of grammar and style.

The learning materials provided in this course include:

downloadable hand-outs (PDF) and slideshows (PPT)

direct URLs to recommended readings in the UBC Library database

links to a variety of non-UBC resources, from websites to podcasts

quizzes and/or other self-testing activities

short exercises and paragraphs

discussion forums for required posting of exercises, short pieces of writing, and comments to peers

comments and personalized feedback from your instructor in the discussion forums

Readings

Many of the learning materials and exercises in this course are drawn from [The Craft of Research, Third Edition](#) (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. Please try to get a copy of this text as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the course start-date.

As well, most modules include links to online articles that exemplify writing, research, or argumentative strategies. Since many different disciplinary backgrounds are represented in this class, these readings



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Extended Learning

target a generalist, post-secondary audience and cover a range of topics that affect our lives as thinkers and writers. At least one of the modules invites students to choose their own article or articles.

Please note: some of the links to online journal articles require login to the UBC Library system or another academic library. However, a choice of other articles on the same topic is offered for those who do not have access to a university or college library.

Coursework

Coursework consists of exercises and short writing activities which are shared within forums as postings open to all students; there are no "student-to-professor" assignments. Instructor feedback on activities is also posted in the forums. Students should think of the activities and feedback as part of class discussion: an opportunity for everyone to learn. For that reason, all activities/exercises and any general questions about the course should be posted to the appropriate course forum; coursework should not be emailed to the instructor.

Workload

Students are not required to log in at a set time each week. They may work at their own convenience, but should log in regularly and schedule 4 - 5 hours each week to review course materials and assigned reading, complete required activities and exercises, and contribute to weekly online discussion forums.

The amount of writing per week ranges from short exercises to a few paragraphs maximum; there are no essay- or report-style assignments.

Participation

At minimum, students must post once a week to a discussion forum (each module has its own forum with an associated topic). Some weeks, students will also be expected to comment or provide feedback on a peer's posting.

These postings are the equivalent of class discussion and a vital indicator of participation; therefore, they count toward course completion. If you need confirmation of course completion, you will need to have posted at least 80% of the required activities.

Offering Feedback

Students are expected to provide regular feedback to the submissions of other members of the class. This feedback may involve recognition of a particular strength of a piece of writing, a request for clarification, or a reflection on a statement made by another writer. Don't be afraid to be honest, but do provide the kind of positive and engaged response which you would like to receive. Focus on ideas whenever possible, and avoid searching for "errors" in a piece of writing.

Appropriate statements might begin with phrases such as, "I found X aspect of your submission very effective because . . .," "I wonder why you refer to X . . ." or "I appreciate your claim that Y, but . . ."

Assessment

Certificate Students

If you are a student in our professional communication certificate or our creative writing award of achievement, your assessment may differ from that of your classmates. Please note that part of that assessment will be a final portfolio that will require you to submit a piece of writing or other project from this class.

Assessment for the Course

All students are expected to participate in weekly discussion forums, both by submitting a written contribution and by responding to the work of other students. Although these submissions are not assigned a formal grade, the expectation is that they will be carefully completed, edited and proofread before submission.

Letters of Completion

In order to be eligible for a letter of completion, you will need to attend at least 80% of the classes (or the online equivalent) and complete the assignments. You can request a letter of completion by emailing us at writing.exl@ubc.ca after the course has finished.

Feedback

You can expect to receive individual instructor feedback for one (1) posting per module. This means a personal response approximately once each week. If you want to post more than one activity for a module, which you're welcome to do, please indicate which of your postings I should focus on for giving feedback. I will also post general responses to all the activity options in each module, as if I were talking about them in class.

If time allows, I'll provide feedback on a second posting, but one per module is the general rule.

NOTE: If you're looking for regular, frequent feedback on your writing, you may wish to consider working with a tutor in addition to taking this course. I'll be happy to recommend resources for finding a reliable tutor.

Course Schedule

Week One:

- Audience and purpose in academic writing
- Planning to write
- Grammar refresher
- Introduction to plain language and concise expression
- Written Assignment: Audience-Centred Writing – 2 short paragraphs

Week Two:

- Sentence-structure review
- Passive and active voice review
- Patterns of argumentation; developing a position and thesis statement
- Argument structure: introduction to the Toulmin model
- Written Assignment: Argumentation – Applying argumentative Strategies or the Toulmin method – paragraph response

Week Three:

- Evaluating sources
- Writing a summary and a paraphrase
- Integrating sources into an argument
- Written Assignment: Summarizing and Paraphrasing – 2 paragraphs

Week Four:

- Preparing an annotated bibliography
- Preparing and structuring a literature review
- Incorporating source material into argumentation
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Module 4 - 5 Written Assignments: Annotated Bibliography and Mini-Literature Review

Week Five:

- Preparing and structuring a research proposal
- Presenting and documenting evidence; understanding copyright
- Managing your time; staying sane Week Six:
- Resources for preparing a thesis or dissertation
- Structuring a formal research report
- Designing graphics, poster presentations, and PowerPoint materials
- Giving an oral presentation
- Revising and polishing drafts
- Final Discussion Forum -- sharing writing and providing peer feedback