



Academic Writing (Summer 2017)
Homi Bhabha Center for Science Education

Instructor:	Devasmita Chakraverty, Ph.D.
Email:	dc5na@virginia.edu
Class Location and Time:	Room # 217 (Monday – Friday, 10 am – 1 pm)
Office Hours	By appointment

Course Description

Scholarly writing is a highly essential and sought after skill to thrive in academia. It is a powerful mode of communicating ideas to a wide audience. Academic writing is more of a lifelong process than an outcome. Despite its importance, many do not have access to structured training in order to strengthen one’s writing skills. Those who have not had enough exposure to speaking and writing in English find themselves further behind the learning curve compared to their English-speaking peers. The key is to start writing early and avoid procrastination.

The purpose of this course is to support graduate students to write manuscripts for dissertations and publications. Specifically, this course will guide students through each section of a manuscript (e.g., abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, results, and discussion), explaining the critical features of each section. Students will work in a highly-interactive and hands-on environment, giving and getting feedback on their writing samples. Students will choose a writing project based on their interests that could be an empirical research article, a review of empirical or theoretical literature, a conference paper, or other forms of scholarly

writing. The instructor will make every effort to negotiate realistic goals with each student based on the current stage in their academic writing background.

In addition to writing for peer-reviewed journals, students will also learn about writing a vita, writing professional emails, writing for conferences, the different components of a job application (cover letter, research statement and teaching statement), and writing a dissertation proposal. This will help students who are at various stages of their PhD program. Academics never stop working on their writing. While the quality of ideas is important, the ability to communicate them clearly and persuasively is fundamental to academic success. The genres of academic writing are a little different from those that many of us encountered in high school and college. Academic writing challenges you to present an argument that is complex because it integrates information from diverse sources (which are often conflicting). There is no magic bullet for learning how to do this with grace and style; like most skills, academic writing is learned via practice, reflection, feedback, and more practice! The earlier and more consistently you attack the challenges of academic writing, the faster you will develop expertise. It is very easy to avoid writing regularly! However, avoidance can have disastrous consequences (and the failure to finish your dissertation on time), and it is valuable to set habits early that support regularity and persistence in writing.

Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Write within an academic genre following the conventions of their discipline (e.g., APA)
- Develop habits of academic writing
- Synthesize diverse literature within their chosen discipline
- Provide constructive feedback to peers
- Use constructive feedback to improve their own writing
- Present scholarship to their peers

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignments due in class
WEEK 1		
Class 1 June 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know each other • Introduction to academic writing • Rules of persuasive writing • Writing professional emails • Sharing our writing projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set goals and expectations for writing (to be done in class)
Class 2 June 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-writing, writing, and post-writing • Choosing a topic • Plagiarism: Things to know • Writing a vita 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a good vita online • Dissect your vita (including giving and getting feedback in class)
Class 3 June 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to peer-reviewed journal writing • Difference between conference proposal and peer-reviewed paper • Conference proposals (detailed discussion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an elevator speech • Present an idea in 10, 100, and 500 words
Class 4 June 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference proposals (detailed discussion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a professional email • Work on your writing project
Class 5 June 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap of everything learnt in week one (emails, vita, conference proposal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on your writing project
WEEK 2		
Class 6 June 26	EID- HOLIDAY NO CLASS	
Class 7 June 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections of a peer-reviewed paper • Abstract • Introduction • Literature review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and give feedback on your writing project (work in progress) • Continue to work on your writing project
Class 8 June 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods • Discussion • Conclusion • APA citations and references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss what would your webpage look like
Class 9 June 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of giving and getting feedback • Providing constructive feedback • Identifying a journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on your writing project

Class 10 June 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap of everything learnt in week two (sections of a peer-reviewed paper) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on your writing project
WEEK 3		
Class 11 July 3	NO CLASS	
Class 12 July 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover letter Research statement Teaching statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing a mock cover letter (and giving and getting feedback in class)
Class 13 July 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing a dissertation proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing a mock research statement (and giving and getting feedback in class)
Class 14 July 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting at conferences (paper presentations, round table discussions and poster presentations based on AERA format) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing a mock teaching statement (and giving and getting feedback in class)
Class 15 July 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap of everything learnt in class Future steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the key learnings in class Discuss future writing goals

About the Instructor

Devasmita Chakraverty, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of science education at Washington State University Spokane. Devasmita combines her interdisciplinary expertise to understand prevalent education trends and examine the experiences of the underrepresented groups (based on gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status) in science, especially with respect to their persistence or attrition in higher education. She also teaches a graduate-level course in survey development.

Website: <https://education.wsu.edu/devasmita-chakraverty/>