

Academic English Writing

Semester II, 2024-2025

Class #2: Tuesdays, 8:00-9:50am (二教 210)

Class #3: Tuesdays, 10:10-12:00pm (二教 210)

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Office Hours: Tue. & Thu. afternoons by appointment

Course Description & Objectives

Welcome to *Academic English Writing*! This course introduces students to the basics of academic writing in English. You will learn strategies and skills for communicating through writing and seeking out information through research. As you develop these abilities, they will serve you throughout college and your lifetime.

Writing is both an act of inquiry and communication. With that in mind, this course brings your attention to key features of academic writing (Sequence 1); to engage in conversations with the ideas of others (Sequence 2); and to critique and construct arguments or investigations (Sequence 3). Writing is also a process, and this course emphasizes planning, drafting, revising, and editing as essential practices in developing thoughtful arguments and effective communication. More importantly, this course emphasizes critical thinking, which involves a process of careful and engaged reading of texts in a variety of forms and the use of writing to explore, express, and argue about ideas in diverse contexts of communication.

Learning Outcomes

By reading assigned materials and preparing for class, participating actively in classroom tasks, and completing assignments, you will be able to:

- learn information-seeking skills and strategies within the context of the university.
- make effective use of information retrieved, organized, and synthesized from appropriate sources.
- present ideas and information clearly and logically to achieve a specific purpose.
- use appropriate academic style and conventions associated with particular communicative forms, genres, and disciplines.
- develop skills in visual communication and public speaking and enhance the ability to present research and ideas in a professional context.

Coursework

- **Short writing assignments**
- **Oral presentation** (more information will be provided in class)
- **Project portfolio**

There are two short writing assignments. These include summaries of research and an essay outline. Although usually not as structured as the longer writing projects, these short pieces should still be completed with care and attention.

You will be working on a major writing project throughout the semester. Some possible topics for writing will be offered. You are also free to find your own topics. A group of 3 students will work under the same topic, *but you will submit your individual paper and project portfolio, rather than a group one.*

A central philosophy and practice of this course is that writing is a process. Your learning depends on engaging in that process fully. As a process, writing requires planning, drafting, revising, and editing. As part of the process, you also must consider the purpose, audience, and effect of your writing. In this course, you can expect to write several drafts for your longer writing project, to discuss your writing with other readers, and to respond to the writings of others. In paying attention to this process as both writer and reader you will develop your ability to provide useful feedback and advice for others and for yourself.

Because the emphasis is on your development as a writer — something that cannot occur without trial and error — your work will be assessed in a variety of ways. You will not receive an individual letter or numerical grades on each draft. Instead, you will turn in a portfolio of your work at the end of the semester, which will be assessed as a whole. Your portfolio will receive a grade, which will take into account your development as a writer and your ability to meet course expectations, including the expectation that you will take part in writing workshops, participate consistently in other ways, and complete work on time.

For the required portfolio, you will collect your writings to submit for review and a grade. The content of the **portfolio** will typically include:

- Drafts of project essay
- Final version of project essay (1200 – 1500 words, excluding references)
- Writer's memo
- Project poster
- Any other relevant supporting documents (e.g., reading notes, brainstorm scratch paper, etc.)

More information and guidelines on the portfolio will be provided in class.

Assessment

- 1) Attendance & participation (20%)
- 2) Short writing assignments (20%)

- 3) Oral presentation (10%)
- 4) Project poster (10%)
- 5) Project portfolio (40%)

Writing Workshops & Peer Review

Research suggests that a sole instructor may not always be the best reader for student writings. All writers benefit from hearing the responses of trusted readers. In this class, we use writing workshops at all stages of the writing process to provide feedback on ideas, to generate and answer questions related to research, and to provide responses for drafts.

To develop as a writer, you need to practice writing for a variety of readers, especially readers who are not generally evaluating your work. That means you need to cultivate good intellectual relations with your classmates. You need to practice listening to others' readings of your work; you need, also, to practice giving the kind of thoughtful, honest, and constructive feedback that you want to receive as a writer.

On days when we are having a Writing Workshop, your presence is especially important. A missing student can affect his/her group adversely. Therefore, an absence on a workshop day or failure to participate in a workshop will severely affect your participation grade (5 points off).

Active Participation & Professionalism

I expect you to attend all classes and participate in the class discussions. According to the department's requirement, three absences without official notes are regarded as automatically failing the course. Please contact me in advance if you are unable to come to class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what was covered in class (see Accommodations below for more information).

Late Work

A deadline is a deadline. All work must be turned in on the date and time specified. Work turned in late, including short writing assignments and drafts, will NOT be accepted. You will do a lot of writing and revising in this course and a lot of work with your peers, which means that staying on schedule is especially important for everyone. Please speak with me right away if you are having trouble turning your work in on time.

Course materials

Instructor Provided Materials: There will be a variety of handouts and other materials that I have prepared and posted on TEACHING AND LEARNING@PKU (<https://course.pku.edu.cn/>). Please stay up-to-date on assignments, and preview the required material before class.

Course Schedule

The course is organized around three sequences with the following goals: 1) introducing academic writing; 2) engaging with the ideas of others; and 3) developing an effective argument.

Sequence 1: Introducing Academic Writing

Week 1	Feb. 18	Orientation to Academic Writing
Week 2	Feb. 25	Academic Writing: Key Features
Week 3	Mar. 4	Writing and Thinking Rhetorically (<i>Assignment 1</i>)
Week 4	Mar. 11	Looking for a Research Topic

Sequence 2: Engaging with the Ideas of Others

Week 5	Mar. 18	Working with Sources
Week 6	Mar. 25	The Art of Summarizing and Quoting (<i>Assignment 1 due</i>)
Week 7	Apr. 1	Library; Plagiarism (<i>Assignment 2</i>)
Week 8	Apr. 8	Citation; MLA Style

Sequence 3: Developing an Effective Argument

Week 9	Apr. 15	Argument; Outlining (<i>Assignment 2 due</i>)
Week 10	Apr. 22	Integrating Evidence in Body Paragraphs
Week 11	Apr. 29	Writing Workshop 1: Peer Review (<i>First draft due</i>)
Week 12	May 6	Holiday, no Class!
Week 13	May 13	Language: Coherence, Style and Sentence Skills
Week 14	May 20	Writing Workshop 2: Revising Your Essay (<i>Second draft due</i>)
Week 15	May 27	Oral Presentations
Week 16	June 3	Oral Presentations; Class Wrap-Up

FURTHER COURSE POLICIES, A-Z

These policies may sound overly formal, but they are written to state what it needs to create an optimal learning environment. It is easier to tell you what my expectations are upfront than having to negotiate things individually during the semester. That said, if, for a good reason, you need more flexibility, please talk to me as early as possible.

Academic integrity

I take academic misconduct seriously and will pursue disciplinary sanctions in line with the university protocol and other relevant regulations. By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in the community and each student is expected to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts. Such misconduct can result in

disciplinary actions such as failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, suspension, etc. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact me immediately.

Accommodations, deadline extensions, make-up exams etc.

If you need accommodations for religious observances or to participate in mandatory university-sponsored events, please talk to me as soon as possible. In the case of a severe illness or family emergency, I will assess the options for deadline extensions or make-up assignments. For all non-emergency cases, a deadline is a deadline. Oversleeping, feeling “under the weather,” scheduled trips, family celebrations, employment obligations, extra-curricular commitments, or submitting the wrong file in an online assignment do not fall into the category of “emergency”.

AI writing tools and AI writing detection

Within the course sequence, students develop their critical thinking and academic skills. As such, the general rule is that artificial intelligence (AI) tools may be used for assignments when express permission is given by the instructor. I believe that AI models can be positive forces that, when used responsibly, can support and enhance the writing process. Therefore, some assignments or class tasks may permit the use of AI writing / generative AI tools. In this case, the instructor will explicitly inform you of the exact type of permitted usages (brainstorming, revising, etc.). All uses of generative AI must be clearly acknowledged in a cover sheet for the assignment and the reference page. If you are not sure whether using AI tools in a particular way is appropriate or acceptable, ask your instructor.

Misuse of AI can include a variety of usages, including (but not limited to) the categories listed below:

- AI-Based Writing. Using an AI-based tool to write any part of an essay assignment and representing that work as your own.
- Text Manipulation. Taking content written by another and using a software tool with the intention of misleading plagiarism detection software, or to present it as your own.
- Non-English Text Translation. Taking content written in a language other than English (either by yourself or someone else), running it through a translating tool, and presenting that work as your own.
- Language Editing. Using an AI-based tool to proofread the writing for grammatical and other language use issues, unless explicitly allowed.
- Source misuse or misrepresentation. Using AI based tools to generate citations and references without verifying their accuracy, format or existence.

Your final paper must be submitted via Turnitin on TEACHING AND LEARNING@PKU, with a similarity index not exceeding 24% and AI detection scores below 20%. Remember that our goal as instructors is to help you learn how to generate your own ideas and to communicate them clearly and effectively in the target language (English). If/ when we restrict the use of AI tools, it is not because AI tools are ‘bad’; instead, it is because we want you to learn for yourself how to effectively communicate your own ideas.

Penalties for misuse of AI tools include:

- First instance of inappropriate use: 0% for the assignment. You may be given the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit.
- Second instance of inappropriate use: 0% for the assignment. There will be no opportunity to rewrite, and you may fail the course.

Communication: I enjoy chatting casually or discussing questions (related or not related to the course) with you! The best way to handle substantive issues is through an email or a face-to-face meeting. When you write an email to me, *please include your class number and your name, and use appropriate format.* For meetings, we can make an appointment to meet at a specific time and place.

Copyright: This syllabus and all lecture notes and materials are copyrighted. As a student in this course, you may take notes for your personal use only. You are prohibited from providing or selling notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without my written permission.

Deadline: Once again, a deadline is a deadline. Unless we have agreed on specific accommodations in advance or there is a true emergency (see Accommodations), *late submissions for any type of assignment are NOT accepted.*

Electronic devices: Cell phones, laptops, electronic tablets, and similar devices need to be off and stowed away during class, unless they are part of a class activity. Recording and taking pictures are prohibited. All class slides and materials are shared in a timely manner.

Remember: I am here to help you. But it is hard for me to do that if I do not know that you need help. So, please, when you have questions about the class, talk to me. If you think you are falling behind, talk to me. If you are experiencing adversity that is affecting your schoolwork, talk to me. I am trustworthy and I care about you. It is easier to solve problems when we work together.