

GRADUATE WRITING WORKSHOP

ASTRO 597: WINTER 2020

Julianne Dalcanton
Astronomy

MY GOALS FOR YOU

Make writing
easier,
clearer,
effective,
and something that won't make you sad

WRITING IS A LEARNABLE SKILL

Like all skills, you improve with
knowledge,
instruction,
& practice

PHILOSOPHY

Provide *concrete* instruction & coaching in

- Mechanics of writing (*grammar, paper structure, etc*)
- Developing good habits
- Structuring writing for maximum effectiveness

COURSE STRUCTURE

- Meets 1x a week
- 1.5 hrs
- Pass-fail
- Weekly assignments

ASSIGNMENTS

- Weekly to encourage regular writing.
- Focused on applying week's lesson to writing up your own research *as you're doing it*
- Due in class. Turn in what you have even if you didn't quite finish.
- Time commitment? Writing for your paper/proposal should be in short (<15min) daily chunks. Editing your work should be <30 min. Some other exercises might take as much as an hour, but that won't be typical. Readings should take <30 min but could be skipped if you're short on time.

REQUIREMENT FOR PASSING

2 Credit

- Attend >70% of class sessions (barring illness or equivalent)
- Turn in >70% of weekly assignments
- Assignments should be >70% complete

1 Credit

- Attend >70% of class sessions (barring illness or equivalent)
- Try to do readings

No requirements around “quality”, only “are you writing?”

CREDIT LEVEL

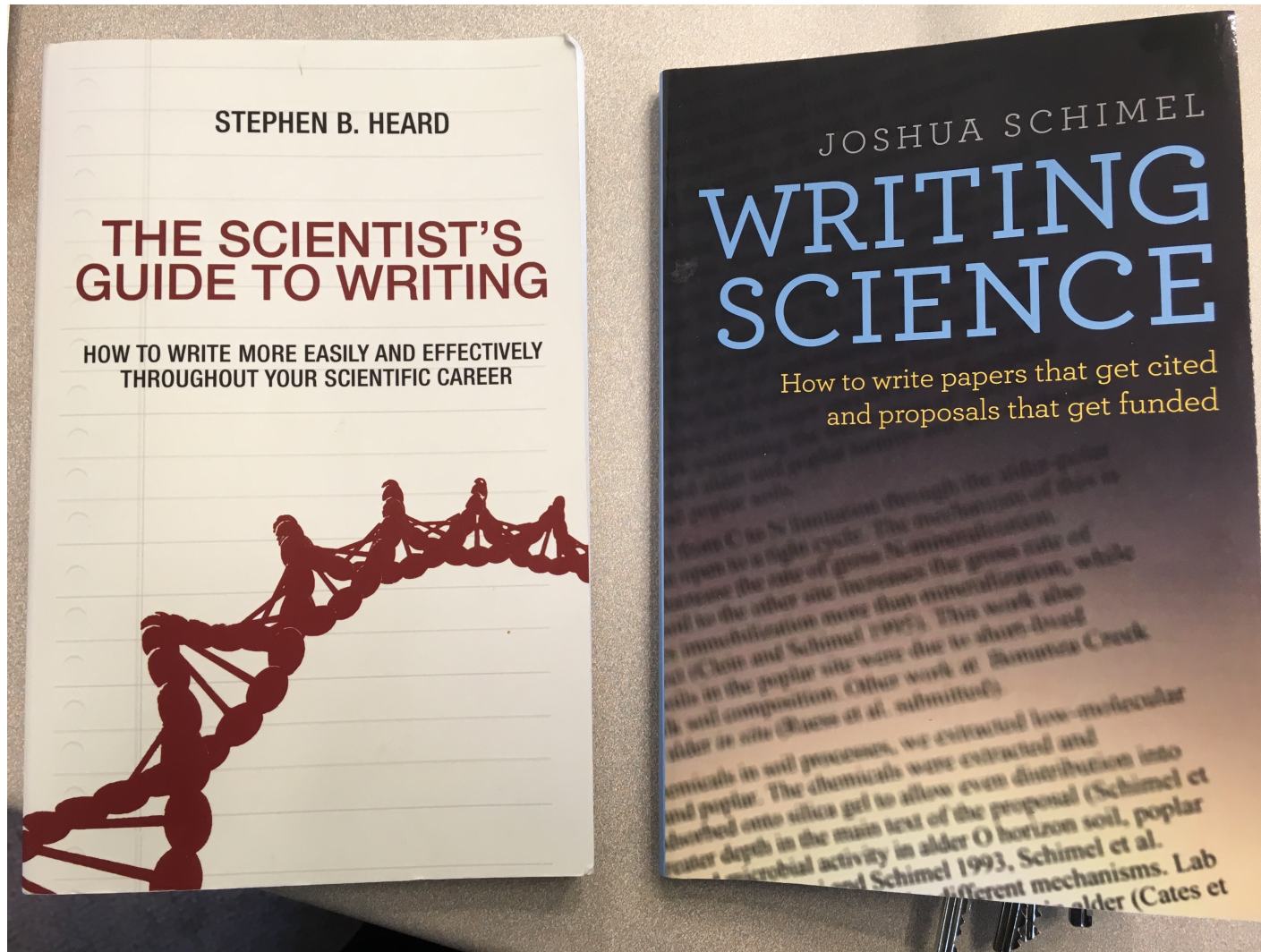
2 Credit

- Appropriate if you have at least 3 months of involvement in a research project
- Will get you a lot of feedback and specific help/advice

1 Credit

- Appropriate if you are in the very earliest stages of a project, are vastly overcommitted, or mostly want a refresher on skills
- “The Bob Ross Option”

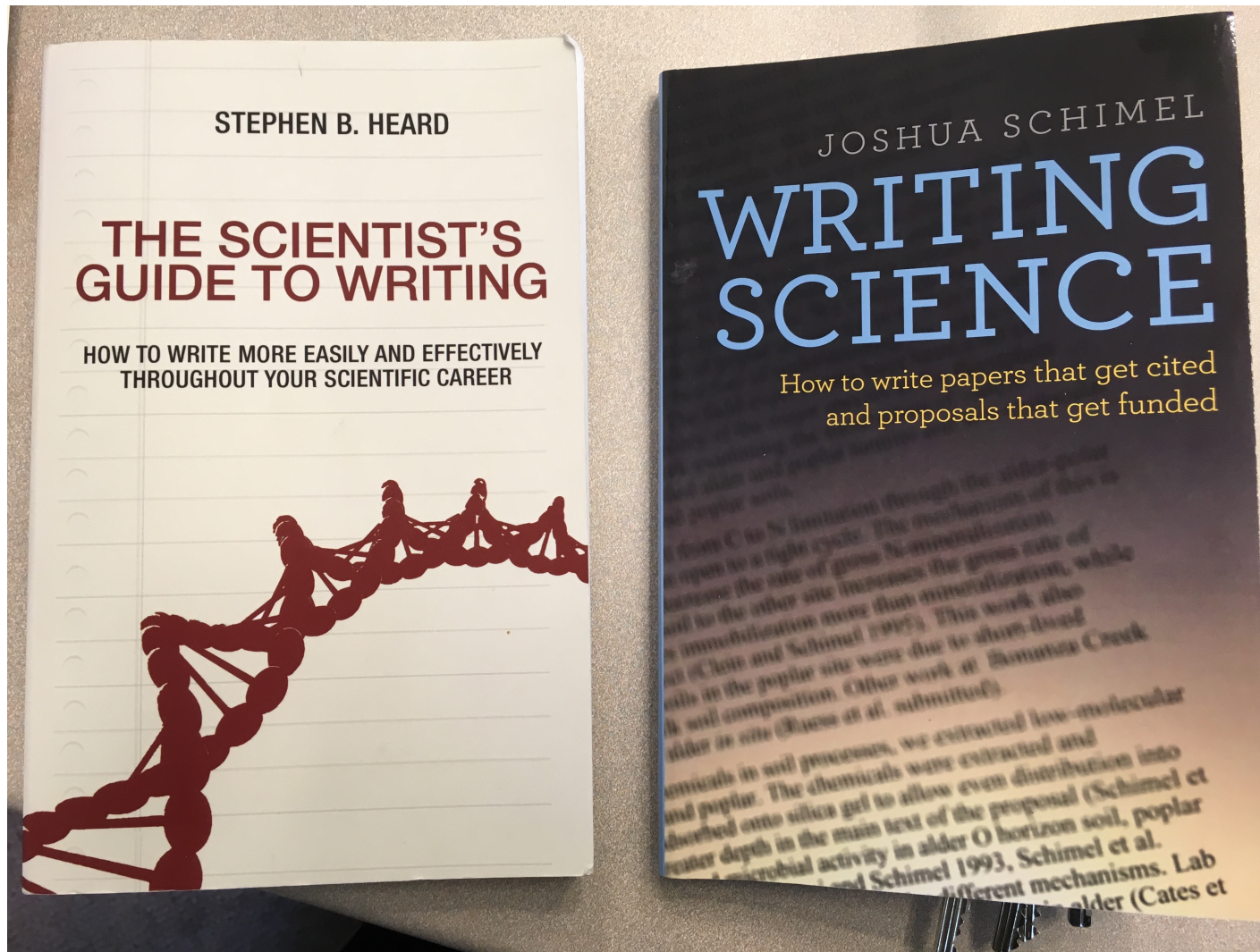
TEXTS



Easier to read.
Better for beginners.
Covers the writing process.

A bit turgid.
Concrete advice for
proposals.

TEXTS



I will pass out handouts of relevant chapters
& supplement with additional articles

CLASSTIME STRUCTURE

- ~ 1/3 on process/psychology/philosophy
- ~ 1/3 skill building (editing at sentence, paragraph, section level)
- ~ 1/3 practicing new skills (demo, pair-share editing, group editing)

Balance shifts to later two as class progressed

TOPICS BECOME HIGH-LEVEL AS COURSE PROGRESSES

- Placing your work in context
- Identifying compelling frameworks

These are critical skills for choosing research directions,
but are rarely explicitly taught.

Writing is a forum for discussing research strategy.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 <i>Jan 6</i>	Why write? Making sentences better. Grammar overview. Using commas for meaning.
Week 2 <i>Jan 13</i>	Obstacles to writing. Prioritizing writing time. More punctuation for meaning. Parallelism. Precision.
Week 3 <i>Jan 20</i>	<i>Martin Luther King Jr Day. No class</i>
Week 4 <i>Jan 27</i>	Getting to a first draft. Conveying intent through sentence structure.
Week 5 <i>Feb 3</i>	Improving your edit process. Active vs passive voice. Writing effective paragraphs.

Week 6 <i>Feb 10</i>	Using habits to hack your writing process. Effective outlining to assess structure.
Week 7 <i>Feb 17</i>	<i>President's Day. No Class</i>
Week 8 <i>Feb 24</i>	Dealing with external edits. Finding your story. Words I hate. Misused words.
Week 9 <i>Mar 2</i>	"OCAR" structures. Matching scope to resolution. Framing effective challenges. Story arcs.
Week 10 <i>Mar 9</i>	The structure of papers. Papers versus proposals.

I have additional material on writing proposals. Additional class during finals week?

COURSE MATERIALS

<https://github.com/jdalcanton/Scientific-Writing-Workshop>