RWS 508W: Scientific Writing   Fall 2024

You don't succeed as a scientist by getting papers *published*. You succeed by getting them *cited*. … Success, therefore, comes not from writing, but from writing effectively.

-Joshua Schimel, *Writing Science*

COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Linn Bekins, PhD Please refer to me as "Professor Bekins" or "Linn."	**Email:** lbekins@sdsu.edu; 619-980-2714 *Note: Expect a response within ==24 hours for emails== sent during the work week (i.e., Mon 9 am - Fri 4pm).*
Office location: Zoom and 107 Storm Hall West	**Zoom Office hours**: Wednesday 10am-1 pm. Please email for an appointment. Propose alternative day/time if you cannot make these hours.
Class Location: SDSU, Canvas, Zoom Section 1: SH 113	**Appointment signup**: Email me to make an appt.
Mode of Delivery: Hybrid (F2F class & online); schedule denotes mode of delivery each week. Calsses are F2F unless noted as "online." If you miss a F2F class, the content will not necessarily be posted online.	**Academic support services:** Writing Center and Math Learning Center--are available on the Student Affairs' Academic Success website. See also Counseling and Psychological Services.

SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Week (Number: Mon date)	Topic/ Mode of Delivery	Due (Major Assignments Only)
Week 1/2: Aug 26	Introduction to Science Writing Classroom	No class Sept 2: Labor Day
Week 3: 9 Sept	Analytical Thinking: Science and Rhetoric Classroom	Student Profile, Style Guide & Syllabus Quizzes, Thinking about Writing prompt
Week 4: 16 Sept	Journals as Rhetorical Spaces Research Article as Genre	Public Health Communication
Week 5: 23 Sept	Swales Moves and Targeting Audience	Journal Analysis
Week 6: 30 Sept	Research: Part 1 **Online**	Swales Moves
Week 7: 7 Oct	Research: Part 1 (continued)	Initial Writing Plan

Week (Number: Mon date)	Topic/ Mode of Delivery	Due (Major Assignments Only)
Week 8: 14 Oct	Research: Part 2	Annotated Bibliography
Week 9: 21 Oct	Writing the Methods Section **Online**	Topic and Potential Titles Methods draft
Week 10: 28 Oct	Writing the Results & Introduction Sections	Introduction draft
Week 11: 4 Nov	Writing the Discussion Section	Results Draft
Week 12: 12 Nov	Veteran's Day Holiday	
Week 13: 18 Nov	Remediation	Discussion draft Extra Credit assignment
Week 14: 25 Nov	Revision **Online**	Indiv. appts with Linn
Week 15: 2 Dec	Editing	Indiv. appts with Linn Remediation
Week 16: 9 Dec	Course Wrap Up	Final Paper and Attachments Wrap Up

GETTING STARTED

Course Materials

What	Required/ Optional	Where	Why
Books			
RWS 508W Linn Bekins Scientific Writing Course Reader	Required	SDSU Bookstore *Note: Print copies can be purchased for 10% more and take a day to order.*	Contains readings for homework
Williams JM, Bizup J. Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace. Fifth Edition. Boston, M.A.: Pearson; 2015. (Or another edition)	Optional	Online booksellers	Provides general writing advice. Focused on sentence-level and paragraph-level writing issues.

What	Required/ Optional	Where	Why
Books			
Schimel J. Writing Science: How to Write Papers that Get Cited and Proposals that Get Funded. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press; 2012.	Optional	Online booksellers	Provides science writing advice. Focused on writing scientific articles and grant proposals.
Technology			
A computer (or mobile device) with an internet connection	Required		This is a hybrid course
Word processing (e.g., Word)	Required	Available online	This is a writing course
Citation management software (e.g., Endnote, Mendeley, Zotero)	Optional *Strongly encouraged*	Available online	Keeping track of citations, notes on papers

The following are available at no additional cost to students (or free by default):

- Microsoft Office: https://it.sdsu.edu/sdsuid/services.aspx (SDSU ID required)
- Endnote https://edoras.sdsu.edu/~download/endnote.html (SDSU ID required)
- Mendeley: https://www.mendeley.com (free by default)
- Zotero: https://www.zotero.org (free by default)

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description

Rhetoric and Writing Studies 508W is designed to help upper-level students develop the writing skills needed for effective scientific communication in both academia and the workplace. We address the rhetorical nature of science communication and how this shapes science writing in different contexts and to different audiences. Together, we will analyze how empirical research is conveyed through multiple modalities: healthcare materials, websites, medical package inserts, popular culture, peer-reviewed journal articles. We will practice writing clearly, effectively, analytically, and persuasively. Assignments include, but are not limited to, rhetorical analyses, an annotated bibliography, and a research report.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze and evaluate** a variety of science communication texts, including how they engage their audience and what conventions are employed.
2. **Apply** rhetorical principles appropriate to different purposes and goals within different genres of science writing.
3. **Research and analyze** a chosen topic, then communicate results in concise, analytical, and multimodal texts.
4. **Adapt and remediate** content to communicate scientific concepts to different genres and rhetorical situations.
5. **Develop and adapt** a writing and revision plan for a major research and writing project.
6. **Compose** a persuasive scientific report in the IMRAD format that clearly and concisely establishes a research argument supported by citations.

Course Design

This course includes three types of assignments: participation assignments, major assignments, and a final paper. Additional information about each assignment will be provided when the assignment is introduced in class.

Participation assignments: These assignments will be graded on a credit/no credit basis.

Major assignments: These assignments will be graded on a point scale. Brief descriptions of each assignment are provided below.

1. Public Health Communication: Public health communication is an important and oft-politicized form of science communication. Describe the argument made by Dietram Scheufele in his article "Science communication as political communication," and consider how this impacts modern public health communication.
2. Journal Analysis: Select one research journal in your field, either print or electronic, for closer study. Examine several issues of this journal and read the instructions for authors and other editorial information posted on the journal's website. Write a 2-page rhetorical analysis in which you discuss basic elements of communication used in this journal.
3. Swales Moves: Read the introduction to the study by Shahin, Dassen, and Halfens titled, "Pressure Ulcer Prevalence and Incidence in Intensive Care Patients: A Literature Review." Use Swales Moves to identify the three basic moves in this introduction. In addition, identify any clear signals (e.g., words, phrases, changes in syntax) included in the text that help the reader detect these rhetorical moves.
4. Annotated Bibliography: Prepare an annotated bibliography of at least 8 published peer reviewed research articles (primary sources). Preferably, these will be research articles you have identified as potential references for your final paper. State how you will use each in your paper. However, you are not required to cite all articles in your final paper.
5. Topic for Final Paper: Write a 1-page paper that presents the topic for your final paper and briefly discuss how/why this topic interests you.
6. Remediation: Remediate the content from your final paper into another format (e.g., an abstract, a brief plain language summary, or a scientific poster)

7. <u>Final Paper</u>: Compose an IMRAD-formatted research article. The report must be 8-10 pages in length (not counting graphics), reference at least 8 citations, *use citation format of your field*, and include a table of contents.
8. <u>Final Paper Attachments:</u> Complete the assignment information worksheet, the self-assessment, and the final writing plan. These give me context for grading your paper.

Grading

Assignment Values:

Assignment	Points
Graded Assignments	50 total
Public Health Communication	5
Journal Analysis	5
Swales Moves	5
Annotated Bibliography	10
Topic and Potential Titles	10
Remediation	10
Final Paper Attachments	5
Participation Assignments	10 @ 1 pt each
Final Paper	40
TOTAL	**100**
Extra credit	*1 each; maximum 10*

Grade Scale: Course grades are based on a total point system, in which "a point is a point, is a point." There is no normative curving.

A = 94 -100%	B- = 80 - 82%	D+= 68 - 69%
A- = 90 - 93%	C+= 78 - 79%	D = 64 - 67%
B+ = 88 - 89%	C = 74 - 77%	D- = 60 - 64%
B = 84 - 87%	C- = 70 - 73%	F = ≤ 59%

Extra Credit: You may earn a maximum of 10 extra credit points, even if more than 10 points are available.

Credit/No Credit Option: You may take RWS 508W for Credit/No Credit. If you choose this option, you must complete all graded assignments and earn the equivalent of at least a C to pass the class.

SDSU's stance on AI: Students should not use generative AI applications in this course except as approved by the instructor. Any use of generative AI outside of

Universal* Assignment Requirements: This course is a 500-level writing course, which means that it is expected to be professional and correct when it is first submitted.

In all your work, I expect you to *minimally*:
- Include an introduction, body, and conclusion
- Cite **all** sources, including URLs, used in the document (AMA, APA, MLA format)
- Follow the indicated template (e.g., 1.5 spacing, flush left)
- Spell-check and grammar-check the document
- Write in complete sentences
- Organize content into coherent and connected paragraphs, rather than a disconnected series of answers to posed questions.

These universal requirements are <u>on top of</u> the specific directions for the assignment.

* Note: Any exceptions will be explicitly stated in the assignment instructions.

I reserve the right not to **grade or consider for revision** any assignments that do not meet the above criteria.

Revision: You may revise **one** assignment; however, you may not revise the final paper or its attachments.

Late Submissions? The short answer is No. The pace of our work demands timely submission of all assignments, so that you can move on to the next assignment and I can provide feedback and get your work graded in a reasonable time frame. *However*, I recognize that you may face extenuating circumstances due to the life events. Please contact me to discuss your situation**.**

Satisfying the SDSU Upper Division Writing Requirement: You must earn a grade of at least a C (≥ 74 points) in order to satisfy the SDSU Upper Division Writing Requirement. Students receiving less than 74 points will receive three units for the course but will be required to take RWS 508W again until a grade of C or higher is earned.

Diversity and Inclusion

I believe that diverse voices fundamentally enrich all aspects of life, including and especially academics and the classroom. People bring all dimensions of their identity to communities they join, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class, and religion. The past and present of academics, including science and rhetoric, disproportionately records the voices the privileged, particularly rich, white, cisgender men. This overrepresentation creates a lens that, overtly or covertly, biases the material. I acknowledge that many materials in this class were written by white men. I am working on finding materials that represent a broader range of voices. Diverse thoughts and opinions allow us to ask better

questions, come to better answers, and imagine broader possibilities, which are essential to progress in any academic field.

It is very important to me that we create a safe and inclusive learning environment for everyone. **I expect myself and all students to be respectful of each other in all interactions.**

I strive to be inclusive of everyone, particularly because my behavior sets a tone for the class. I know this is a work in progress. I acknowledge that my words and actions may cause unintentional harm. I recognize that unintentional harm **is still harm**. I am grateful to those who take the time to tell me when my actions are harmful to them or others. That is emotional labor that often goes unacknowledged. Alerting me to my or another's behavior will not damage your grade in any way.

Consider the following:

- Please indicate your pronouns on Canvas (available under Account□Profile□Settings) if this is important to you.
- Alert me if anything is impacting your class performance so that I can be a better resource for you.
- Please let me know if I or another student has been disrespectful to you or someone else. These reports will be considered confidential.
- Know that if you are uncomfortable talking to me, you are welcome to talk to the department chair, Dr. Kathryn Valentine
- There are additional resources at Inclusive SDSU (https://diversity.sdsu.edu/initiatives/inclusive)
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IMPORTANT ONLINE PROCEDURES

Please follow the steps outlined below before and throughout the course:

1. **Learn how to use Canvas**. This entire course is supported through Canvas. Take time to familiarize yourself with the course design, especially the Announcements page, Modules, Grades, and Inbox. For an orientation to Canvas or for Canvas help, go to: http://its.sdsu.edu/Canvas/student/.

2. **Check Announcements on Canvas often**. In an online course, it is essential to take active responsibility for staying informed. I will regularly post Weekly Updates on Sundays, with reminders of the work due, as well as new or updated information, as needed. For 1 point of extra credit, go to the "Test" assignment and enter "I read the syllabus" as your answer by Date Indicated in Assignments. In addition, if something comes up that needs to be communicated to everyone, I will post an announcement whenever necessary.

3. **Set up your Notifications.** You must be able to receive notifications via Canvas. Therefore, please make sure that your email address within the system is correct. You can also receive notifications via text message. Go to Account->Notifications in Canvas to set up your notification preferences.

4. **Download necessary software & set up your computer**.

   - Plan to upload either Microsoft Word documents (.doc or .docx) or PDF files. If you compose using Google Docs or Pages software, please convert to a PDF file or Word doc before submitting. Note: As an SDSU student, you have access to free Microsoft Office software.

   - Do not use Pages for any assignment submissions.

   - Do not use Safari as your browser; use either Chrome or Firefox.

5. **Prepare your computer and yourself ahead of time for online office sessions using Zoom.**

   - Test your connection using zoom.us/test.

   - Find the link to our sessions on the Canvas menu titled Zoom. Note that there is a link to our live session there, which you can click on to join the session.

   - If you wish to participate via a mobile device, download the ZOOM Cloud Meetings app from the Google Play or Apple iTunes App Store, launch the app and click "Join a Meeting." Enter the **Meeting ID 619 594 2211**, then click "Join."

   - All sessions will be recorded so that you can watch or review them at another time. Please see the Course Structure & Schedule section below for details on the role of the live sessions in our course.

6. **Make sure you have working speakers**, **headphones, or ear buds** so that you can hear lectures & office hour discussions. On campus, the library has headphones available to check out in the 24/7 Study Area (located on the second floor). You will need your Red ID to check these out.

7. **Online Learning Modalities.** Whenever we meet online, you will be asked to watch one or more short videos on the course content (See "Topics" in Schedule) for the week and complete a writing activity. Interactive online discussions occur regularly and are listed in Assignments as "Participation."

8. **Be patient & calm if technology challenges occur:** Your patience and timely feedback will be valuable and appreciated!

   - Browsers sometimes are inconsistently incompatible with some software, which can be remedied by switching to a different browser. Start with Chrome or Firefox as your best bets for avoiding problems.

   - Please be assured that if problems occur due to SDSU, Canvas or Turnitin server issues, you will not be penalized. Should you run into such a situation, please send me a screenshot of the error message you receive as soon as possible, so I can work on a solution.

   - On the other hand, you are responsible for your own computing needs: Problems that you experience as a result of your own computer or Wi-Fi issues

do not constitute an acceptable excuse for non-completion of work. In an online course, it is implicit that you must be equipped to participate in all requirements within the online platform.

▪ You can get help from the **Computing Hub Help Desk**; call (619) 594-3189; email hub@sdsu.edu; website https://library.sdsu.edu/computers-technology

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accommodations: If you are a student with a disability and are in need of accommodations for this class, please contact Student Ability Success Center at (619) 594-6473 as soon as possible. Please know accommodations are not retroactive, and I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Ability Success Center.

Student Privacy and Intellectual Property: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) mandates the protection of student information, including contact information, grades, and graded assignments. I will use Canvas to communicate with you, and I will not post grades or leave graded assignments in public places. Students will be notified at the time of an assignment if copies of student work will be retained beyond the end of the semester or used as examples for future students or the wider public. Students maintain intellectual property rights to work products they create as part of this course unless they are formally notified otherwise.

Religious observances: According to the University Policy File, students should notify the instructors of affected courses of planned absences for religious observances by the end of the second week of classes.

Student email addresses: Students are provided with an SDSU Gmail account for their official use. This SDSU email address will be used for all communications. Per university policy, students are responsible for checking their official university email once per day, please see Student Official Email Address Use Policy here.

Academic Honesty: The University adheres to a strict policy prohibiting cheating and plagiarism. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- copying, in part or in whole, from another's test or other examination;
- obtaining copies of a test, an examination, or other course material without the permission of the instructor;
- collaborating with another or others in work to be presented without the permission of the instructor;
- falsifying records, laboratory work, or other course data;
- submitting work previously presented in another course, if contrary to the rules of the course;
- altering or interfering with grading procedures;
- assisting another student in any of the above;

- using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work);
- copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own;
- using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit;
- replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases.

The California State University system requires instructors to report all instances of academic misconduct to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities. Academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary review by the University and may lead to probation, suspension, or expulsion. Instructors may also, at their discretion, penalize student grades on any assignment or assessment discovered to have been produced in an academically dishonest manner.

Resources for students: A complete list of all academic support services--including the Writing Center and Math Learning Center--is available on the Student Affairs' Academic Success website. Counseling and Psychological Services (619-594-5220) offers confidential counseling services by licensed therapists; you can Live Chat with a counselor at http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/cps/therapist-consultation.aspx between 4:00pm and 10:00pm, or call San Diego Access and Crisis 24-hour Hotline at (888) 724-7240.

Sexual violence / Title IX mandated reporting: As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I am a mandated reporter in my role as an SDSU employee. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep the information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual violence on SDSU's campus with the Title IX coordinator, Jessica Rentto 619-594-6017. She (or her designee) will contact you to let you know about accommodations and support services at SDSU and possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you. Know that you will not be forced to share information you do not wish to disclose and your level of involvement will be your choice. If you do not want the Title IX Officer notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus and in the community. They can connect you with support services and discuss options for pursuing a University or criminal investigation. Sexual Violence Victim Advocate 619-594-0210 or Counseling and Psychological Services 619-594-5220, psycserv@sdsu.edu. For more information regarding your university rights and options as a survivor of sexual misconduct or sexual violence, please visit titleix.sdsu.edu or sdsutalks.sdsu.edu.

Classroom Conduct Standards: SDSU students are expected to abide by the terms of the Student Conduct Code in classrooms and other instructional settings. Prohibited conduct includes:

- Willful, material and substantial disruption or obstruction of a University-related activity, or any on-campus activity.

- Participating in an activity that substantially and materially disrupts the normal operations of the University or infringes on the rights of members of the University community.
- Unauthorized recording, dissemination, or publication (including on websites or social media) of lectures or other course materials.
- Conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person within or related to the University community, including
    1. physical abuse, threats, intimidation, or harassment.
    2. sexual misconduct.

Violation of these standards will result in referral to appropriate campus authorities.

Medical-related absences: Students are instructed to contact their professor/instructor/coach in the event they need to miss class, etc. due to an illness, injury or emergency. All decisions about the impact of an absence, as well as any arrangements for making up work, rest with the instructors. Student Health Services (SHS) generally does not provide medical excuses for short-term absences due to illness or injury. When a medical-related absence persists beyond five days, SHS will work with students to provide appropriate documentation. When a student is hospitalized or has a serious, ongoing illness or injury, SHS will, at the student's request and with the student's consent, communicate with the student's instructors via the Vice President for Student Affairs and may communicate with the student's Assistant Dean and/or the Student Ability Success Center.

SDSU Economic Crisis Response Team: If you or a friend are experiencing food or housing insecurity, technology concerns, or any unforeseen financial crisis, it is easy to get help! Visit sdsu.edu/ecrt for more information or to submit a request for assistance. They are fast and helpful; don't wait to reach out.

SDSU's Economic Crisis Response Team (ECRT) aims to bridge the gap in resources for students experiencing immediate food, housing, or unforeseen financial crises that impacts student success. Using a holistic approach to well-being, ECRT supports students through crisis by leveraging a campus-wide collaboration that utilizes on and off-campus partnerships and provides direct referrals based on each student's unique circumstances. ECRT empowers students to identify and access long term, sustainable solutions in an effort to successfully graduate from SDSU. Within 24 to 72 hours of submitting a referral, students are contacted by the ECRT Coordinator and are quickly connected to the appropriate resources and services.

For students who need assistance accessing technology for their classes, visit our ECRT website (sdsu.edu/ecrt) to be connected with the SDSU library's technology checkout program. The technology checkout program is available to both SDSU and Imperial Valley students.