

Doctoral Core III: Academic Writing for Publication

DCP 7981

three credits

syllabus

Fall 2025

Wednesdays, 9:35am-12:35pm

location: FAC 208

Margaret Portillo, PhD, FIDEC

Email: mportill@ufl.edu

Office: ARC 256

Office Hours: WF 3:30-4:30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course offers a field-tested academic publishing process that can support doctoral students in the fields of design, construction, and planning. Doctoral Core III employs a systematic and practical approach for journal publishing that also can facilitate dissertation writing, and other forms of scholarly dissemination. Students work iteratively in preparing a manuscript for a peer-review journal and additionally explore other avenues of academic writing. The seminar focuses on the journal article but also examines academic writing necessary for completing a dissertation or crafting a bio sketch, a conference abstract, a research proposal, or a grant report. Topics include writing plan creation; journal selection considerations; academic writing strategies and tools; ethical AI usage; manuscript review insights, including editor and reviewer interactions. By the end of the semester, students will develop and submit a journal-quality manuscript, drawing on an enhanced mindset and new skills for achieving academic writing success.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, DCP students will be to:

- Develop effective writing habits and processes supporting academic publishing.
- Understand the defining qualities and expectations for articles in peer-reviewed journals.
- Increase awareness of other types of scholarly writing and related dissemination.
- Strengthen academic writing with complementary verbal and visual communication.
- Evaluate academic writing quality using self-evaluation and peer review processes.
- Conduct a well-crafted literature review and compelling argument.
- Complete a substantive journal-ready manuscript through a multi-stage process.

Prerequisites

- DCP 7911: Advanced Design, Construction and Planning Research 1 **and**
- Access to unpublished data from an approved pilot or completed study, or develop an advanced research agenda and literature base that meets the DCP 7981 manuscript requirement.

Required Text

Belcher, W.L. (2019). *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success* (2nd edition), Chicago: University of Chicago Press. NOTE: We will be using the 2019 2nd edition, *not* the first edition printed in 2009.

Required Readings

Other required readings and articles are found on the syllabus and Canvas. Throughout the semester, students will locate other key journal articles and resources throughout the semester use in their own writing and for other assignments.

Assignments and Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on the assignments and seminar engagement as follows:

- | | | |
|---|-----|-------------------|
| 1. Participation, Preparedness, and Attendance: | 20% | Ongoing |
| 2. Article Analysis and Plan of Work: | 10% | Due: September 10 |
| 3. Abstract and Outline: | 10% | Due: September 24 |
| 4. Companion Abstract and Visuals: | 10% | Due: October 8 |
| 5. First Draft and Presentation: | 10% | Due: October 29 |
| 6. Second Draft and Presentation: | 10% | Due: November 12 |
| 7. Submission-ready Manuscript: | 30% | Due: December 10 |

Detailed assignment sheets will be uploaded to Canvas.

Late assignments will be marked down 10% of the total grade if not turned in by the deadline, and then deducted an additional 10% for every late day (including weekends).

Missed class and *work* should be communicated and documented immediately by the student to the instructor who will determine whether the situation constitutes an excused absence or not, following UF guidance: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Under special approved circumstances, the terms of making up missed work will be set by the instructor.

DCP 7981 employs the following grading scale: **A (≥ 94.0), A- (≥ 90.0), B+ (≥ 87.0), B (≥ 83.0),**

B- (≥ 80.0), C+ (≥ 77.0), C (≥ 73.0), C- (≥ 70.0), D+ (≥ 67.0), D (≥ 63.0), D- (≥ 60.0), and E (<60.0), where

A=4.0, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3.0, B-=2.67, C+=2.33, C=2.0, C-=1.67, D+=1.33, D=1.0, D-=0.67, E=0.0.

Course Policies & Information

Class Format

DCP 7981 centers on the pedagogy and practice of academic writing. This seminar integrates learning and doing. The class structure includes focused presentations, active discussions, and organized writing group activities. Students should plan to follow a disciplined writing schedule and task completion plan. Graded assignments involve apply pedagogical models, best practices in academia, and relevant scholarship to complete course deliverables that relate to the student's research. For additional support, office hours are offered in person or can be scheduled via Zoom.

Active participation is key to being successful in the seminar. Prepare for each class. Thoroughly read the assigned materials and allow time for reflecting on the issues raised before each class. Be prepared for critical thinking and analysis. Be conversant on the assigned articles, chapters, and Belcher's workbook. Students also regularly share their own seminar exercises and evolving manuscript as well as lead discussions upon occasion. Indeed, active participation is essential to the seminar and its learning goals. As such, you are expected to fully engage during every class session.

Attendance Policy

Attendance during class time is required. Readings and tasks listed for each week should be completed prior to class.

Email

For emails relating to the seminar, use Canvas to email me at **mportill@ufl.edu** and add "DCP 7981" to the subject line. I will do my best to respond as promptly as possible but cannot always do this immediately. Under normal circumstances, expect my response within 1-2 business days.

Canvas

It is your responsibility to regularly check on this course's Canvas site for course readings, assignment instructions, important announcements, etc. All written work and other tasks must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise specified during class. Grades will be posted via Canvas.

Writing Integrity

All DCP 7981 assignments need to be your own work, illustrating clear and concise writing to effectively communicates research findings and arguments.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers that may relate to the learning objectives for this course and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the campus Disability Resource Center during the first few weeks of the semester by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. The DCR accommodation letter will be sent to the instructor who can become aware of and support the student's approved accommodations.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to complete course evaluate and provide respectful feedback on the quality of instruction online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to offer feedback in a professional manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluer.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

University Honesty Policy

The Honor Pledge binds students uphold the following ethics: “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. All work submitted for credit by UF students requires or implies the pledge: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting student privacy with regards to grades earned in courses. For more information: <http://registrar.ufl.edu/catalog0910/policies/regulationferpa.html>

Campus Resources for Safety, Protection and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you, a friend, or classmate is in distress, contact umatter@ufl.edu or 392-1575 to initiate appropriate follow-up and support with a U Matter, We Care team member.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc> or 392-1575 and, for emergency situations, call the **University of Florida Police Department:** 392-1111 or 9-1-1.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, please contact: 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), [or http://www.police.ufl.edu/](http://www.police.ufl.edu/).

Tips for class success

1. Do not wait to read the assigned sections in the Belcher workbook until the night before class, because the book has daily tasks you must complete and bring to seminar.
2. Always bring your writing workbook and something to write with to class, ideally laptop/tablet and paper/pen/pencil.
3. Bring the week's completed printouts and Belcher's workbook to every class. So, opt to print a hard copy of the assignment to class OR bring your device and stylus ready to edit the document (not tracking changes or typing). The point is to easily mark-up and share suggestions with classmates. *Marking up these documents by hand (either with a stylus, pencil, or pen) is an essential part of the process.*
4. If you prefer to not write directly in your workbook, find or create equivalent forms found in the workbook, such as the weekly calendars.
5. If you ever finish a group exercise in class early, turn to revising your article. Your goal should be to apply best practices from each class to push your manuscript forward.
6. Note that this seminar should be a trusted confidential place for all. We each need to be responsive to constructive criticism and continuous improvement. Others' work is not open for discussion outside seminar. The comments and work you hear and see in class must remain protected. Writers, even doctoral students, must feel safe at every stage of the process, from sharing rough drafts as well as polished work.
7. For those who may complete submission-ready manuscripts early and want to send it to a journal before the end of class, go for it. However, do touch bases with the instructor before doing so and continue coming to all seminar sessions for continued learning, participation, and task completion.

Additional Readings

- **How to consider AI and ethics:**
<https://theconversation.com/can-academics-use-ai-to-write-journal-papers-what-the-guidelines-say-258824>
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40593-024-00425-x>
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1373>
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e673/a0c0c92bdda78376714d5b46eb26bec36905.pdf>
- **How to thrive as a graduate writer:**
<https://explorationsofstyle.com/>
- **How to read academic articles:**
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/4-steps-to-help-your-students-read-like-scientists>
- **How to write a scholarly abstract:**
<https://www.lisedunetwork.com/a-step-by-step-guide-to-writing-an-effective-abstract-for-your-research-paper/>
- **How to think about research collaboration in academic writing and beyond:**
<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/a-brief-guide-to-research-collaboration-for-the-young-scholar>
- **How to structure and outline an academic paper:**
<https://medium.com/advice-and-help-in-authoring-a-phd-or-non-fiction/how-to-write-paragraphs-80781e2f3054>
- **How to write a research proposal or grant:** <https://theprofessorisin.com/2011/07/05/dr-karens-foolproof-grant-template/>
- **How to make better visuals:**
<https://www.storytellingwithdata.com/>
Format data for impact: <https://lockedata.github.io/Data-Literacy/DataVisualisation.html>
Export high resolution images for publishing: <https://markantoniou.blogspot.com/2009/11/create-high-resolution-300dpi-images.html>
- **How to manage reviewer comments:**
<https://www.manuscriptedit.com/scholar-hangout/responding-to-reviewer-comments/>
<https://helenkara.com/2018/05/31/>

DCP 7981 Course Schedule: Doctoral Core 3: Academic Writing for Publication

WEEK	DATE	DUE	THEME	Workbook Pages ¹
1	AUG 27		Course Overview	
2	SEP 4	Article Analysis	Introduction	1-13;
3	SEP 10	Selected Paper	Designing Your Writing Plan	14-59
4	SEP 17	Argument	Advancing Your Argument	60-89
5	SEP 24	Abstract	Abstracting Your Article	90-109
6	OCT 1	Journal Selection	Selecting a Journal	110-149
7	OCT 8	Literature Review	Refining Works Cited	150-189
8	OCT 15	Relevance	Making Significant Claims	190-215
9	OCT 22	Seven Slides	Analyzing Your Evidence	216-237
10	OCT 29	1st Draft	Presenting Your Evidence	238-255
11	NOV 5	Outline	Strengthening Your Structure	256-279
12	NOV 12	Title	Introduction and Conclusion	280-307
13	NOV 19	2 nd Draft	Editing	308-329
14	NOV 26		---Thanksgiving Holiday---	
15	DEC 3	Track Changes	Submitting Revising and Resubmitting	330- 389
16	DEC 10	Final Draft	Right On	

¹ Belcher, Wendy Laura (2019). *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success (2nd edition)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.