E10. 2138 Writing Empirical Research:
Education, Behavioral, Health, Humanities and Social Science Professions

**Instructor:** Elizabeth Norman PhD, Professor  
**Email:** Elizabeth.Norman@nyu.edu

**Time:** Tuesday 4:55-6:35  
**Location:** 246 Greene St.  
Room 301

**Telephone info:** (212) 998-5412  
**Office hours:** By appointment 246 Greene St, 3R

**Co-requisites:** E10.2002 (Statistics for the Behavioral and Social Sciences), E10.2132 (Principles of Empirical Research) and E10.2180 (Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry) or equivalent.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will help students strengthen the writing competencies they need to produce quantitative and qualitative method dissertations that will convey research findings in a clear, objective style. Course content will position students to begin contributing writings in their scholarly communities. Sequenced assignments will address various writing forms and allow students feedback on their work.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Learn how-to read their writing, as others will.
2. Recognize the importance of editing, rewriting.
3. Compose arguments and articulate ideas at the sentence and paragraph level.
4. Understand why writing often fails to convey research findings.
5. Use effective prose to convey empirical evidence.

**COURSE FORMAT:**

The course includes discussions, in-class workshops, out-of-class reading and writing assignments. Students are expected to complete all assignments on time and to attend all class sessions.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

A thesaurus and dictionary of your choice.


Two recent Steinhardt dissertations will provide the basis for weekly readings, explications and discussions. They can be found on Blackboard under PDF dissertations.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**


**RECOMMENDED WEBSITES:**


http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

**GRADING:**

Class participation 10%
Abstract 15%
Thesis/Question/Lit 20%
Empiric summary 25%
Conclusion Essay 30%

**WEEKLY STUDENT LEADERS:**

Each student will be responsible for a 10-minute grammar presentation and leading the class in explicating the weekly dissertation readings. Student leaders need to contact me the Friday before class to let me know how they will organize their presentations. I am available anytime on email to answer questions.

*Keep it simple and be creative. Keep to the time limit. Make sure you engage the class during your presentation.*
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

We will workshop all student papers. These papers are draft assignments that you will rewrite for the following week. You must post your work on the Discussion Forum as an attachment by 12 noon on the Monday before class. Every student is expected to read and post their comments on every paper on Blackboard Discussion forum. I hope for a lively discussion, and for each student to receive a lot of feedback on his/her work.

*Double space all assignments.

*See Work shopping Papers on Blackboard (under assignment tab).

* We need line numbers to edit (line 1 line 2 etc).
  1. If you have a MAC: choose "document" in the "format" menu; choose the "layout" tab; click "line numbers"; click the "add line numbering" box
  2. If you use Word: Go to Page Layout and click the line numbers tab.

During the workshops, one student (called student editor) will be responsible for leading the discussion on another student paper (called writer).

The final assignment will be turned into me as a hard copy. I will return them with comments.

There are three phases to each assignment: A posted draft, the in-class workshop, and a final copy.

Assignments:
1. Write a 250 word abstract based on your own research or writing, or re-write an abstract from someone in your field. Be prepared to justify your content and writing.
   Draft: Sept 21, Workshop Sept. 28, Final: October 5
   Also see Abstract exemplars on Blackboard under the "assignments tab". And two PDF files on Abstracts on Blackboard under the Reading Writing, Editing etc tab.

   Required reading: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html)
   Boothe_Craft, p. 211-212.

2. Complete the statement of purpose on the Discussion Board. Due October 5.

3. Construct a working thesis statement or research question followed by a review of four published or unpublished studies-- two supporting and two differing from your statement or question. Make sure you synthesize this review (do not write Study #1 and summarize it.) 400-600 words
   Draft: October 12, Work shop: October 19, Final: October 26
CLASS SCHEDULE


Writing competency: The canon of the sentence.

Reading:
1. “Becoming a prolific writer” in Reading, Writing, Editing etc tab (Blackboard)

Assignment: Bring a 500 -1000 word paper that you consider your best-written work next week. This assignment will not be graded, but will provide a starting point to measure your writing competency.

Week 2. September 14 Writing to be read. A writing plan.

Writing competency: phrases and clauses.
Syntax: Nouns and pronouns

Reading:
2. "Writing the Abstract", "The Abstract" and "Common errors in explication" in Reading, Writing, Editing etc tab.
3. 2 Dissertation Abstracts in dissertations tab.
Week 3. September 21. Writing concise, clear research questions and statements of purpose.

*Writing competency: proofreading, active and passive voice.*

*Syntax: Verbs (Tense, agreement).*

**Reading:**
1. “Editing/workshop guidelines” and Editing-reading-writing” in Reading, Writing, Editing etc tab

**Writing assignment #1 due:** Draft of an abstract.

**Week 4. September 28. Work shopping abstracts.**

**Week 5. October 5. Writing sound, convincing arguments.*

*Writing competency: compound, complex sentences.*

*Syntax: Participles, Conjunctions*

**Reading:**
2. Williams *Style,* Lesson Six “Emphasis” p. 66-78
3. Dissertation—Assessing the Neighborhood Chapter II, With Science Chapter I

**Writing assignment #1 due:** Abstract

Blackboard: Complete the statement of purpose posted on the Discussion Board

**Week 6. October 12. Writing: The difference between reason and evidence.*

*Writing competency: constructing time and place in a sentence.*

*Syntax: Commas (comma splices)*

**Reading:**
2. Dissertation With Science Chapter II. Assessing the Neighborhood Chapter IV

**Writing assignment #2 due:** Draft of Thesis/Question and literature review.

Week 8: October 26. Writing: Presenting quantitative/qualitative data
Writing competency: metaphors, similes.
Syntax: Adjectives (use and position in sentence)

Reading:
2. Williams Style, Lessons Seven “Concision” p. 79-90.
3. Dissertation: With Science Chapter III, Assessing the Neighborhood, Chapter V.

Writing assignment #2 due: Thesis/Question and literature review.

Week 9: November 2 Outlining and Revising.
Syntax: Adverbs (use and position in sentences)

Reading:
1. "Revising Your Dissertation” and “Final Draft checklist” in Reading, Writing, Editing etc tab
3. Williams Style, Lessons Eight “Shape” p. 91-113. (review)
4. Dissertation—With Science Chapters VII and VIII

No writing assignment

Week 10: November 9 The Ethics of Writing


Writing assignment #3 due: Draft summary of research findings.
Week 11: November 16. Work shopping summary of research findings.

Week 12. November 23. Framing a discussion, summary and conclusion.  
*Building the sections of a paper: organization, constructing the end of an essay.*

**Reading:**
3. Dissertation With Science  Chapters 111-V, pp. 57 -126

**Writing assignment #3 due:** Summary of research findings


**Writing assignment #4 due:** Draft of conclusion essay

Week 14. December 7th  *Work shopping conclusion essay.*

**Final Assignment Due:** December 14. Post on Blackboard.

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