

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

**Instructor:** Elizabeth Norman PhD, Professor  
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**Time:** Monday 4:55-6:35 pm

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**Location:** Silver 506

**Office hours:** By appointment  
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**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.

Booth, W., Colomb, G., & Williams, J. (2008). The Craft of Research. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, J. (2008). Style: The Basic of Clarity and Grace. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Longman Publishers.

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

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Aaron, Jane E. (2006). The Little-Brown Essential Handbook for Writers. (5<sup>th</sup> Edition). New York: Longman Publishers.

### **RECOMMENDED WEBSITES:**

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/dissertation.html>

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

### **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 needs 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.

You can use the Aaron grammar book for your presentation. Two excellent on-line resources are: <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Writing/> and <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/index2.html>

### **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

Two copies of each draft assignment will be submitted for the student-editor and the professor to edit. These drafts will be reviewed in-class using a workshop approach. On the day of the workshop, bring copies of your writing for everyone in class.

\*Double space all assignments.

\*See Work shopping Guidelines and Strategies on Blackboard (under assignment tab).

\* If you have the software capability of inserting line numbers on your work: L1, L2, L3 etc. insert these markers as it will make editing and work shopping more efficient.

1. Analyze, edit, and re-write a dissertation abstract from one of the PDF Steinhardt dissertations posted on the course Blackboard site. You must provide justification for your editorial changes. Or write an abstract based on your research. Approximately 250 words.

Draft: Sept 15th, Workshop Sept. 22nd, Final: September 29

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>  
Boothe, Craft, p. 211-212.

2. 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 6th, Work shop: October 20th, Final: October 29th

Required reading: Booth, Craft, p. 49-67;77-80; 87-100.

Suggested reading: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature\\_review.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html)  
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/thesis.html>

3. Use statistical tables or qualitative data set from your own research or from a dissertation or published article in your field. Tell us the research question/hypothesis (or anything else we need to know to put the data in context) then, write a summary of these research findings. Quantitative summaries need to include the table or chart, qualitative summaries need brief information on the nature of the data. 400-600 words

On Blackboard (under the discussion tab) and before November 3rd, write a very brief summary of the data you plan to use. I want to pre-approve your idea before you start to write.

Draft: November 3rd, Work shop: November 10th, Final: November 17th

Suggested reading: Booth, Craft, p. 213-231.

4. Write a conclusion essay based on a previous paper(s) you have written during your doctoral coursework. Approximately 1000 words.

Draft: November 24th, Work shop: December 1st, Final: December 8th.

Required reading: Booth, Craft, p. 247.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### **Week 1. September 8. Writing a dissertation. Knowing what lies ahead.**

*Writing competency: The canon of the sentence.*

Reading:

1. Becoming a prolific writer (Blackboard document, under "writing,reading,editing etc" tab)
2. Booth Craft, "Prologue" and "Thinking in Print," p. 3-15, and "Checklist for Understanding Your Readers, p. 25-27.
3. Williams Style, Lesson One "Understanding Style" p.1-7, Lesson Three "Actions", p. 24-27.

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

### **Week 2. September 15. Writing to be read. A writing plan.**

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

Reading:

1. "Abstract exemplars" on Blackboard under the "assignments tab".
2. "Writing the Abstract" and "The Abstract" on Blackboard under the "Reading Writing, Editing etc tab."
3. "Common errors in explication" on Blackboard document under the "Reading Writing, Editing etc tab."
4. Booth, Craft, "Connecting with your Reader" p. 16-24; "Planning" 177-186; Abstracts" p. 211-212; "Titles", p.248.
5. 4 Dissertation Abstracts (Blackboard PDF)
6. Williams Style, Lesson Four "Characters, p. 37-52.

Writing assignment #1 due: Draft of a dissertation abstract (remember 2 copies needed)

### **Week 3. September 22. Work shopping abstracts.**

Reading: Review editing/workshop guidelines on Blackboard

### **Week 4. September 29. Writing concise, clear research questions and statements of purpose.**

*Writing competency: proofreading. Syntax: Verbs (Tense, agreement).*

Reading:

1. Booth, Craft, "From Topics to Questions" p. 35-48, "From Questions to Problems" p. 51-65.

2. Williams Style, Lesson Five “Cohesion and Coherence” p.55-65.
3. Dissertations 1 China (Blackboard PDF, Chapter 1, pp 15-21;24. Note--pages are PDF page numbers not dissertation page numbers)

Writing assignment due: Abstract

Blackboard assignment: Complete the Statement of Purpose on the Discussion Board.

**Week 5. October 6. Writing sound, convincing arguments.**

*Writing competency: compound, complex sentences.* Syntax: Participles, Conjunctions

Reading:

1. Booth, Craft, “Making Good Arguments,” p.105-119.
2. Williams Style, Lesson Six “Emphasis” p. 66-78
3. Dissertation #2 Student relationships, Chapter II p. 21-43 (PDF pages)
4. Dissertation #3, Chapter I, p. 14-29 (PDF pages).

Writing assignment due: Draft of Thesis/Question and literature review (see assignment #2)

**Week 6. Note:** No class on October 13. University closed for Columbus Day

**Week 7: October 20. Work shopping Thesis/Question and literature review.**

**Week 8: October 27. Writing: The difference between reason and evidence.**

*Writing competency: constructing time and place in a sentence. Active/passive voice.* Syntax: Commas (comma splices)

Reading:

1. Boothe, Craft, “Claims” p.127-137, “Assembling Reason and Evidence” p. 130-138; “Choosing Between Active and Passive”, p. 262-264.
2. Dissertation #4 Chapter IV pp. 64-127

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

**Week 9: November 3. Writing: Presenting quantitative/qualitative data**

*Writing competency: metaphors, similes.* Syntax: Adjectives (use and position in sentence)

Reading:

1. Booth, Craft, “Communicating Evidence Visually” p. 213-229, “Quote, Paraphrase and Summarize Appropriately”, p. 188-189 and 192-194.

2. Williams Style, Lessons Seven “Concision” p. 79-90.
3. Dissertation #2 Chapters III-IV pp. 45-106.

Writing assignment due: Draft summary of research findings (see assignment #3)

**Week 10: November 10 Workshopping summary of research findings.**

**Week 11: November 17 Outlining and Revising.**

*Writing competency: transitions, “opening attack” sentences, Cliches, Idiomatic expressions.* Syntax: Adverbs (use and position in sentences)

*Syntax:*

Reading:

1. Boothe, Craft, “Revising Your Organization and Argument” p. 203-210, “Revising Style: Telling Your Story Clearly” p.249-269.
2. Williams Style, Lessons Eight “Shape” p. 91-113.
3. Dissertation #1, Chapter V, pp. 197-239.
4. "Revising Your Dissertation." Blackboard (under Writing, Reading, Editing etc tab)

Writing assignment due: Assignment #3 summary of research findings

**Week 12. November 24 Framing a discussion, summary and conclusion.**

*Building the sections of a paper: organization, constructing the end of an essay.*

Reading:

1. Boothe, Craft, “Introductions and Conclusions”, p.232-248.
2. Williams Style, Lessons Nine “Elegance” p. 114-131.
3. Dissertation #3 Chapters 111-V, pp. 57 -126

Writing assignment due: Draft of conclusion essay (see assignment #4)

**NOTE:** Wednesday, November 26 – Classes meet on a Monday schedule BUT we will not have class.

**Week 13. December 1 Workshopping conclusion essay.**

**Week 14 December 8**

1. Boothe, Craft, “The Ethics of Research”, p.273-276.
2. Williams Style, Lessons Ten “The Ethics of Style” p. 132-151.

Writing assignment due: Assignment #4 Conclusion essay.