SO/PS306: Writing for Social Sciences ONLINE
Spring 1 2008

Instructor Contact Information
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Course Description
Course emphasizes translating social science jargon and research findings into clear and appropriate language for a variety of common consumers of social science results, including professional, practitioner, and lay audiences. Topics also include APA style, conducting a literature review and evaluating sources, balanced and complete presentation, and professional authorial voice. Common forms of social science writing, such as research proposals, data summaries, and research reports and introduced. 3 credits

Prerequisites
Prior to taking this course, you must have successfully completed SO141 or PS101 (or other introductory social science course); in addition, SO220 is recommended.

Overview and Course Goals
Writing for the Social Sciences introduces and explains the norms of social science writing and includes a thorough grounding in APA style. Successful completion of this course requires an understanding that good writing requires re-writing and takes a particular audience into account. To facilitate this understanding, multiple drafts and common forms of social scientific writing (i.e., reports and proposals) are built into the course curriculum.

Throughout this course, we will be exploring "writing as thinking." As such, you will learn to "translate" social scientific research for other audiences (i.e., lay people and practitioners). In addition, since good reading and thinking habits are essential to good writing, this course also includes a strong critical thinking component as you will be encouraged to critically *read* sources, evaluate them, and incorporate them into your own work.

Core Learning Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
1. Demonstrate competency with APA style.
2. Describe the roles of evidence and theory in social science writing, and differentiate this from mere opinion.
3. Conduct a literature review of original social science research reports or articles.
4. Translate social scientific findings for designated audiences.
5. Assess and edit social scientific writing.
6. Demonstrate an ability to write for designated venues and lengths.
7. Formulate balanced and well-supported arguments using social science findings.

Required Texts/Materials

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association.*
Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
ISBN 13: 9781557987914

American Psychological Association (2001). *Mastering APA style: Student's workbook and training guide,*
Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
ISBN: 1557988919

Strunk W. & White E.B. (2000). *The elements of style.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
ISBN: 020530902X

Order Texts at: http://direct.mbsbooks.com/park.htm

Student Responsibilities

You are expected to:

- Read the Course Home page, Course Syllabus, Instructor Office, Course Schedule, and Course Overview. It is also recommended that you print out this information for your reference.
- Complete the Course Tour in the Help and Resource page.
- Post an introduction about yourself in the Introductions page.
- Read each Weekly Home page. Complete the assigned readings, learning activities, and assessments each week according to the class schedule.
- Read your Park email regularly while you are taking this course.
- Comply with all University policies and procedures.

Attendance

I am required to keep attendance records and report absences throughout the term. Excused absences can be granted for medical reasons, school sponsored activities, and employment-related demands including temporary duty. You are responsible for completing all missed work. If you fail to attend class for two consecutive weeks, without an approved excuse, you will be administratively withdrawn and notified via email that you have been withdrawn and a grade of "WH" will be recorded.

An attendance report of "P" (present) will be recorded if you have logged in to the Online classroom at least once during each week of the term. PLEASE NOTE: Recording of attendance is not equivalent to participation. Participation grades will be assigned according to the criteria in the Grading Policy section of the syllabus.

More details on the attendance policy can be found in the Park University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

Course Structure

Each week contains a Weekly Overview which contains the learning outcomes, activities, and assessments for that week. You should read and print out the Weekly Overview for each week.
Weekly structure of the course:

- This course is split into eight weekly units.
- The unit starts and ends on Sunday at midnight CST (CST is the Central Standard Time zone, the time zone of the Parkville Campus).
- Course Attendance requirements will require all students to log into the course at least once during each week.
- Course Participation requirements will require you to log in by Wednesday for an initial post and post to four more student comments at a minimum throughout the week.

Learning Activities

Weekly online lectures will focus on key concepts, examples and skills. The online lectures will include a combination of text, graphics, audio PowerPoint presentations, audio clips, and links to relevant resources. In addition, the lectures will include links to various activities that will allow you to interact with the course material.

Learning Assessments

Final Exam - The final exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions that focus on key concepts and skills relevant to professional writing in the social sciences.

Development Essays – Development essays will be integrated throughout the course to provide an opportunity to practice professional writing in a variety of contexts.

1. "One side" essay: Social science research often has political and policy–related implications. Develop the best case you can for side you agree with on your chosen topic. Support your positions with the best possible evidence and arguments you can find.
2. "The other side" essay: Develop the best case you can for the side you do <u>not</u> agree with. Again, support your positions with the best possible evidence and arguments you can find.
3. "Balanced presentation" essay: Build on what you have done in stages 1 and 2 by developing a dialogue between those two positions incorporating only their very best reasons and evidence.
4. Literature review of two articles: Select two articles presenting original research on your topic (from the approved lists) and write a careful evaluation and comparison of their methods, findings, and analyses.
5. Research summary for two audiences: Social science writing is often targeted at different audiences, each having their own language and level of technical competence. Incorporate material from the "balanced presentation" essay and the "literature review" essay for two audiences: the general lay audience and professionals/practitioners in the field that would use this research in their work.
6. "Executive summary" essay: Summarize all of the important points from your previous essays in a clear and easy to read format.

Discussion - Discussions will explore challenges in writing and strategies for being a more effective written communicator.

Peer Review – The peer review will provide an opportunity to read, critique and comment on the work of your peers. The review will require you to apply your understanding of professional writing to assist your peers in improving their writing.

Mastery Quizzes – Mastery quizzes will test your understanding of APA style. You may complete the quiz as many times as you like prior to the due date; only the highest grade prior to the due date will be recorded.

Core Learning Assessment – Professional Essay

You will continue with your controversial topic and write a critical summary of the associated research articles. The Core Assessment project is the culmination and combination of the weekly development essays. The Core Assessment essay requires you to develop a complete, balanced, well-articulated summary and critical evaluation of the related positions, associated research, and their implications for individuals and relevant social forms.

Your essay should be complete and conform to the dictates of APA style. All technical terms and procedures should be explained, justified, and translated into terms appropriate to the specified audience. Your essay will be graded on its clarity and readability, as well as on the soundness of your evidence and arguments.

Course Grading Policy

Grades will be determined by performance on a final exam, personal influence journal, social influence research project, and class participation. Points will be assigned as follows:

Final exam		100 points
Development essays	6@30 points each	180 points
Discussions	8@10 points each	80 points
Peer review	1@10 points each	10 points
Mastery quizzes	6@5 points each	30 points
Core assessment		100 points
Total available		*500 points*

Letter Grade Policy
Final course grades will be determined as follows:

A	90% and higher	448 points and higher
B	80% - 89%	398 – 447 points
C	70% - 79%	348 – 397 points
D	60% - 69%	298 – 347 points
F	59% and lower	297 points and lower

Late Assignments
Late work will only be accepted with written permission from the instructor.

Communication Modes

- **Course interaction** – You are responsible for checking email, monitoring online discussion threads, and reading all course announcements on a regular basis. I will use email, discussion threads, and/or announcements to communicate important course information.
  - **Email -** You should use email for private messages to me and other students. When sending email other than assignments, you must identify yourself fully by name and class in all email sent to me and/or other members of our class. I will check email frequently and will respond to course-related questions within 24-48 hours. Email is the preferred form of communication for private, course-related communications.
  - **Online threaded discussions** – Online discussions are public messages and all writings in this area will be viewable by the entire class or assigned group members.
  - **Announcements** - Announcements will be posted to remind you of important information or to highlight course activities. Announcements can be found at the top of the Course Home.
- **Submission of electronic assignments** - Create a back up file of every piece of work you submit for grading. This will ensure that a computer glitch or a glitch in cyberspace won't erase your efforts. When files are sent attached to an email, the files should be in either Microsoft Word, RTF, ASCII, txt, or PDF file formats.

Participation Standards

You are expected to actively participate in this course. All your Online communications need to be composed with fairness, honesty and tact. Spelling and grammar are very important in an Online course. What you put into an Online course reflects on your level of professionalism. For more information, see writing online at http://goto.intwg.com/ and netiquette at http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html.

Participation Rubric
All online discussions will adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Due Dates** - Initial responses due on Thursday by midnight; two peer replies (per discussion topic) due on Sunday by midnight. Peer replies should be substantial responses and/or insightful questions. Responses that simply state "I agree" or something similar to this will not be accepted. You must have a minimum of three posts per discussion topic: your initial response to the discussion question as well as two peer replies.
- **Grading** - Your discussion postings will be graded according to the quality of your response. In order to earn the full 10 points, your posting should be clear, complete, insightful and original; in addition, you must have high-quality peer replies. Responses that are incomplete, vague, lack-detail or repeat previous postings will receive reduced grades. Remember, you should always relate your postings to relevant professional issues. Postings are not simply your opinion; they involve your opinion but include an application to the relevant psychological and writing principles.

Online discussions will be graded according to the following rubric. Note that additional points will be subtracted for late submission or failure to complete peer replies.

9 - 10 points	Discussion is clear, relevant and insightful. Interactions go beyond a basic response to the question to provide a critical examination of the issue and/or stimulate critical thinking. Posts show a strong mastery of the content and promote ongoing dialogue. Writing follows professional and APA style guidelines.
7 – 8 points	Discussion is clear and relevant. Interactions convey the basic information and show strong content knowledge. Postings would benefit from incorporation of critical analysis and insight; need to expand on the reasoning and logic. Contains small errors in writing style or adherence to APA style.
4 – 6 points	Discussion addressed the main points but lacks explanation or elaboration. Interactions provide minimal information; need to include justification, support and additional content. Writing needs significant improvement to adhere to professional guidelines.
0 - 3 points	Discussion is vague, irrelevant or off-topic. Interactions are missing or fail to encourage continued dialogue. Writing does not utilize professional or APA style guidelines.

Student Resources

- **McAfee Memorial Library** - Online information, links, electronic databases and the Online catalog. Contact the library for further assistance via email or at 800-270-4347.
- **Park University Online Bookstore** - Select "Online Learning- Graduate," or "Online Learning - Undergraduate," and then click on the appropriate course code (ex. AC 201, PA 501) to see the list of required and optional texts for each course that you are enrolled in.
- **Advising** - Park University would like to assist you in achieving your educational goals. Your Campus Center Administrator can provide advising to you, please contact them for assistance. If you need contact information for your Campus Center, click here.
- **Online Tutoring Services** - Park University has arranged for Online students to receive five hours of free access to Online tutoring and academic support through Smarthinking. If you would like Online tutoring, please contact me to receive their recommendation and information on how to access the Online tutoring.
- **Career Counseling** - The Career Development Center (CDC) provides services for all stages of career development. The mission of the CDC is to provide the career planning tools to ensure a lifetime of career success.
- **Online Classroom Technical Support** - For technical assistance with the Online classroom, email helpdesk@parkonline.org or call the helpdesk at 866-301-PARK (7275). To see the **technical requirements** for Online courses, please visit the http://parkonline.org website: click on the "Technical Requirements" link, and click on "BROWSER Test" to see if your system is ready.
- **Park Helpdesk** - If you have forgotten your User ID or Password, or if you need assistance with your PirateMail account, please email helpdesk@park.edu or call 800-927-3024.

Course Schedule

There are 6 main activities in this course: 1) weekly discussions, 2) developmental essays, 3) peer review, 4) professional essay (core assessment), 5) mastery quizzes, and 6) a comprehensive final exam. The following provides a brief overview of each:

- *Discussion:*
  - o Discussions will explore challenges in writing and strategies for being a more effective written communicator.
- *Development Essays:*
  - o Development essays will be integrated throughout the course to provide an opportunity to practice professional writing in a variety of contexts.
    1. "One side" essay: Social science research often has political and policy–related implications. Develop the best case you can for side you agree with on your chosen topic. Support your positions with the best possible evidence and arguments you can find.
    2. "The other side" essay: Develop the best case you can for the side you do not agree with. Again, support your positions with the best possible evidence and arguments you can find.

3. "Balanced presentation" essay: Build on what you have done in stages 1 and 2 by developing a dialogue between those two positions incorporating only their very best reasons and evidence.
4. Literature review of two articles: Select two articles presenting original research on your topic (from the approved lists) and write a careful evaluation and comparison of their methods, findings, and analyses.
5. Research summary for two audiences: Social science writing is often targeted as different audiences, each having their own language and level of technical competence. Incorporate material from the "balanced presentation" essay and the "literature review" essay for two audiences: the general lay audience and professionals/practitioners in the field that would use this research in their work.
6. "Executive summary" essay: Summarize all of the important points from your previous essays in a clear and easy to read format.

- *Peer Review:*
  - The peer review will provide an opportunity to read, critique and comment on the work of your peers. The review will require you to apply your understanding of professional writing to assist your peers in improving their writing.
- *Mastery Quizzes:*
  - Mastery quizzes will test your understanding of APA style. You may complete the quiz as many times as you like prior to the due date; only the highest grade prior to the due date will be recorded.
- *Professional Essay (core assessment):*
  - You will choose from one of the available topics and write a critical summary of the associated research articles. The Core Assessment project is the culmination and combination of the weekly development essays. The Core Assessment essay requires you to develop a complete, balanced, well-articulated summary and critical evaluation of the related positions, associated research, and their implications for individuals and relevant social forms.
  - Your essay should be complete and conform to the dictates of APA style. All technical terms and procedures should be explained, justified, and translated into terms appropriate to the specified audience. Your essay will be graded on its clarity and readability, as well as on the soundness of your evidence and arguments.
- *Final Exam:*
  - The final exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions that focus on key concepts and skills relevant to professional writing in the social sciences.

The following overview provides some guidelines to assist you in planning your coursework and scheduling the major learning activities in the course:

Week	Readings	Due Thursday	Due Sunday
Week 1	o Strunk & White, Chapter 1 o Mastering APA Style, Chapter 1	• Initial response to discussion topic	• Personal introduction • Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*)
Week 2	o Strunk & White, Chapter 2 o APA Manual, Chapter 1	• Initial response to discussion topic	• Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*) • Developmental essay #1 *(30 points)* • Mastery Quiz *(5 points)*
Week 3	o Strunk & White, Chapter 3 o APA Manual, Chapter 2	• Initial response to discussion topic	• Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*) • Developmental essay #2 *(30 points)* • Mastery Quiz *(5 points)*
Week 4	o Strunk & White, Chapter 4 o APA Manual, Chapter 3	• Initial response to discussion topic	• Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*) • Developmental essay #3 *(30 points)* • Mastery Quiz *(5 points)*
Week 5	o Strunk & White, Chapter 5 o APA Manual, Chapter 4	• Initial response to discussion topic	• Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*) • Developmental essay #4 *(30 points)* • Peer Review *(10 points)* • Mastery Quiz *(5 points)*
Week 6	o APA Manual, Chapter 5	• Initial response to discussion topic	• Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*) • Developmental essay #5 *(30 points)* • Mastery Quiz *(5 points)*
Week 7		• Initial response to discussion topic	• Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*) • Developmental essay #6 *(30 points)* • Mastery Quiz *(5 points)*
Week 8		• Initial response to discussion topic • Core Assessment: Professional Essay *(100 points)*	• Peer responses to discussion (*10 points*) • Final Exam *(100 points)*

Park University

Vision Statement

Park University will be a renowned international leader in providing innovative educational opportunities for learners within the global society.

Mission Statement

The mission of Park University, a entrepreneurial institution of learning, is to provide access to academic excellence which will prepare learners to think critically, communicate effectively and engage in lifelong learning while serving a global community.