

## CMST 7903: Research Writing in Communication Studies

Tuesday, 3:00 – 5:50

153 Coates Hall

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### Goals and Objectives

This seminar is intended to help you improve the writing and research skills you need to succeed in your graduate and post-graduate academic careers. Learning to effectively communicate your ideas in writing is an essential component of graduate education because it will be a significant part of your professional life. Learning some fundamental principles and practicing them on a regular basis is the best way to cultivate the skills needed to write successfully. Hence, the objectives of the seminar are to:

- Become better acquainted with the conventions of scholarly writing and publishing.
- Develop and refine a personalized writing habit.
- Gain proficiency with the practice of peer review.
- Understand the requirements of, and develop materials for, the academic job market.

### Required Texts

*Critical Questions: Invention, Creativity, and the Criticism of Discourse and Media*, edited by William L. Nothstine, Carole Blair, and Gary A. Copeland (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) [NBC]  
Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009)  
Kelsky, *The Professor is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your Ph. D. into a Job* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2015)  
Silvia, *How to Write a Lot* (Washington, D.C.: APA, 2007).

### Assignments and Evaluation

There are two major assignments in this seminar. Each assignment is comprised of several tasks, with due dates staggered throughout the semester (see schedule). Much of the work for each task will be done in class, so weekly attendance and in-class participation are prerequisites for earning full credit for either major assignment. That said, participation will also count for 10% of your final grade.

#### **Major Assignment 1: Revise a work-in-progress to submit for publication (70%).**

This assignment is comprised of the following tasks:

1. **Writing group facilitation.** You will be an active member of a writing group for most of the semester (and, ideally, beyond). As a writing group participant-facilitator you will do your part to keep the group engaged and accountable. Your group will meet at least once a week, and turn in a

weekly accountability sheet from February 23 onward. Your writing group report will contain the following information:

- a. **Date and location of meeting.**
  - b. **Nature of meeting** (e.g., “For this meeting, we reviewed X’s essay, and provided them with feedback on the essay. We also recapped our individual progress for the week, and created a plan for the following week).
  - c. **Indication of individual group member’s successes for the week, and a plan for success for the next week.**
2. **Development of a healthy research and writing routine.** Using some of the resources from the seminar, you will habituate a healthy research and writing routine that will help you to revise your essay to completion. You will also design a personal accountability device, and share your plans to implement this device with me on February 16.
3. **Revisions.** Soliciting, receiving, and incorporating the feedback of your peers is an important part of any healthy research and writing routine. You will receive feedback on your essay from me twice in the semester. Working with this and your writing group feedback, you will revise your essay and prepare it for submission to an academic journal. Revision and preparation for submission also includes the following:
  - a. **Writing conferences.** You will meet with me twice throughout the semester to discuss your essay. You are to schedule these meetings, and send me the most current draft of your essay, at least three days in advance.
  - b. **Abstract.** Early in the semester, you will produce an abstract, of the length specified by your target journal, for your work-in-progress. Toward the end of the semester, you will revise this abstract to more accurately reflect the contents of your revised essay.
  - c. **Cover letter.** Later in the semester, you will produce a one-page cover letter for your revised essay. This cover letter will summarize your argument, and highlight your argument’s novel contribution to the field.
  - d. **Summary of revisions report.** At the end of the semester, you will turn in a final version of your essay, including the abstract and cover letter. You will also turn in a short report detailing the revisions you made (and did not make) to the draft throughout the semester. It’s a good idea to create this document early in the semester, and to mark your revisions as you go.
4. **Model article outline and presentation.** Early in the seminar, you will identify a “model article” published in one of our field’s national journals, and then compose an outline of this article, paying special attention to its argumentative structure and its major “moves.” You will present your findings to the class.
5. **Critical Questions presentation.** You will select, and facilitate class discussion of, one of the assigned commentary + essay readings from *Critical Questions*. Each of the readings from *Critical Questions* includes a commentary from the author on the process of writing the article, as well as a representation of the article in finished form. For your presentation, you are to (1) provide a biographical narrative of the author’s career; (2) summarize the author’s argument in the finished article; and (3) facilitate class discussion about the two.

## Major Assignment 2: Produce professional-grade job market materials (20%).

This assignment is comprised of the following tasks:

1. **Curriculum Vitae: Write and revise.** A CV is usually the first, and often the only, job document that hiring committees will consider. In this seminar, we will dedicate time to revising and workshopping this vital document.
2. **Research statement: Write and revise.** Many departments will require a research statement as part of your application package. We will produce, revise, and workshop research statements in this class.
3. **Five-year plan: Write and revise.** Yep.

We may also spend time discussing and workshopping other job documents (such as teaching statements, evidence of teaching effectiveness, diversity statements, etc.), as necessary and time permitting.

### **TITLE IX & Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination based on the gender of students and employees of educational institutions that receive federal financial assistance.

In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, Louisiana State University (“LSU”) is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation. LSU prohibits sex discrimination and sexual misconduct. This policy applies to all persons without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Sex discrimination and sexual misconduct violate an individual’s fundamental rights and personal dignity. LSU considers sex discrimination and sexual misconduct in all of its forms to be serious offenses. This policy has been developed to reaffirm these principles and to provide recourse for individuals whose rights have been violated. This policy establishes a mechanism for determining when rights have been violated in employment, student life, campus support services, LSU programs and/or an academic environment.

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: If you have a disability that impacts your work in this class and for which you may require accommodation, please see a Coordinator in the Office for Disability Affairs (112 Johnston Hall). After you receive your accommodations letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.

## Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments Due
Jan. 19	Introduction to Course Project Selection & Abstracts Deconstructing “the Market”	Read: Belcher, Intro-Wk 1; Silvia, Ch. 1-2; Kelsky, pp. 3-30; NCA 2014 Academic Job Listings in Communication Report (M)
Jan. 26	Abstract Workshop Critical Invention	Read: Belcher, Wk 2; Silvia, Ch. 3; NBC, Chapters 1-2 Due: Abstract
Feb. 2	The Pomodoro Technique Critical Invention II	Read: Belcher, Wk 3; Cirillo, “The Pomodoro Technique”; NBC, Chapters 3-4 Due: Essay Draft w/ Abstract
Feb. 9	<b>Mardi Gras Holiday</b>	Develop Writing Routine
Feb. 16	Journal Talk Model Article Presentations Personal Accountability Plans Form Writing Groups	Read: Belcher, Wks 4 & 9; Silvia Ch. 4; NBC, pp. 96-117 Due: Model Article Outline; Personal Accountability Device Report
Feb. 23	Reviewing the Literature	Read: Belcher, Week 5; NBC, pp. 155-182; McKerrow, “Research in Rhetoric” Revisited” (M) Due: Writing Group Report #1
Mar. 1	Structure	Read: Belcher, Week 6; NBC, pp. 183-205; Chavez, “Beyond Inclusion” (M) Due: Writing Group Report #2
Mar. 8	Evidence	Read: Belcher, Week 7; NBC, pp. 206-232; Medhurst, “Looking Back on Our Scholarship” (M) Due: Writing Group Report #3
Mar. 15	Introductions and Conclusions	Read: Belcher, Week 8; NBC, pp. 258-280; Darsey, “Road- Tripping on Route 66” (M) Due: Writing Group Report #4
Mar. 22	<b>Spring Break</b>	
Mar. 29	The Research Statement	Read: Kelsky, Ch. 27; NBC, pp. 343-382 Due: Writing Group Report #5
Apr. 5	Style Sentences (Belcher diagnostic)	Read: Belcher, Week 10; NBC, pp. 383-416 Due: Research Statement; Writing Group Report #6
Apr. 12	Finishing Touches CV Workshop	Read: Belcher, Week 11; Kelsky, Chs. 7, 14-20, 24 Due: CV; Writing Group Report #7
Apr. 19	Sending Your Article The Cover Letter	Read: Belcher, Week 12; Kelsky, Ch. 4-12; Hume, “How to Plan Your Job Hunt” (M)

	The Five-Year Plan	Due: Writing Group Report #8
Apr. 26	Responding to Decisions Planning Ahead	Read: Belcher, Week X Due: Summary of Revisions Report; Five-Year Plan
May 3	TBD	