

English 395: Writing for the Health Professions  
Fall 2017

Section 1301, TuTh 12:30pm-1:45pm, TWS 0224

Section 1402, TuTh 2:00pm-3:15pm, TWS 0224

Section 1501, TuTh 3:30pm-4:45pm, TWS 0223

**Instructor:** Kisa Lape

**Email:** [klape@umd.edu](mailto:klape@umd.edu)

Please follow these three guidelines when writing emails to me:

- Begin the subject line with “ENGL 395”
- Complete the subject line with a concise phrase describing your question or concern
- Appropriately address and sign your email by including my name at the beginning and your name at the end.

**Office:** 1230 Tawes Hall

Phone Number: 301-405-3762 (PWP Main Office)

**Office Hours:** TuTh 11:00-12:15pm; Tu 5:00-6:00pm, and by appointment

**Required Text [Textbooks are available at Barnes & Noble and BookHolders]**

Taylor, R.B. (2011). *Medical Writing: A Guide for Clinicians, Educators, and Researchers*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Springer.

Williams, J.M., & Bizup, J. (2014). *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.

**Course Description**

English 395 serves those students who are studying and preparing for careers in the health professions, from doctors, nurses, physicians assistants, and pharmacists to physical therapists, occupational therapists, and athletic trainers, to public health researchers and educators. These professionals need to make technical information available to those people who need it, whether those audiences be coworkers in the hospital or clinic, other experts in the field, government agencies and non-profit organizations, public policymakers, patients and their families, or the broader public. This advanced course in writing will give you the opportunity to identify and explore the discourse practices prized in your disciplinary, institutional, and professional communities—and help you to manage those discourse practices effectively in your own written work. In this way, you will learn and experiment with just some of the many writing strategies and tactics that medical and health professionals need in order to write successfully for their jobs.

**Course Goals and Learning Outcomes**

On completion of a Professional Writing course, students will be able to:

- Analyze a variety of professional rhetorical situations and produce appropriate texts in response.
- Understand the stages required to produce competent, professional writing through planning, drafting, revising, and editing.
- Identify and implement the appropriate research methods for each writing task.
- Practice the ethical use of sources and the conventions of citation appropriate to each genre.
- Write for the intended readers of a text, and design or adapt texts to audiences who may differ in their familiarity with the subject matter.

- Demonstrate competence in Standard Written English, including grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, coherence, and document design (including the use of the visual) and be able to use this knowledge to revise texts.
- Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

### Major Writing Assignments

1. Targeted Application Package (10%)
2. Literature Review (with annotated bibliography) (15%)
3. Health Education Materials (15%)
4. Grant Proposal (20%)
5. Public Health Campaign (with evaluation, and presentation) (20%)

### Additional Graded Work

1. Reflective essays (5%)
2. Homework, short writing assignments, and peer-review (5%)
3. Quizzes (5%)
4. Class Participation (5%)

## REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES: WRITTEN WORK

You must complete all assignments to pass this class. This means that you cannot stop doing work and showing up even if you get an A on each of the first four assignments. All papers must be typed and submitted electronically on Canvas by the assigned dates and times. Late papers will be subject to grade penalty, unless prior arrangements have been made. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourselves with the Canvas systems, but if you have questions, please be sure to ask early (for instance, I will grade and comment on your papers using Canvas; finding your grade is easy, but locating the comments is less intuitive). The Professional Writing Program requires that students compose a minimum of 25 pages of original writing; you may *not* submit papers you have written for other courses to fulfill a PWP assignment.

### Revision Policy

Revision is an important aspect of this course, and you will have the opportunity to revise weak assignments for higher grades. It is possible to revise two of the first three major assignments for a higher grade. In order to revise an assignment, you must have completed all of the preliminary work and participated in all peer reviews; additionally, you will need to submit a **Revision Request Memo** to me, detailing exactly what you plan to revise and how. All revisions must be significant, as opposed to merely making minor corrections and borderline improvements. Revision requests must be submitted within (10) days after the assignment has been graded and returned to you. Once the revision request has been approved, you will have an additional ten days to complete the revision.

### Snapshot of Major Graded Assignments

- **Targeted Application Package (10%):** This project prepares you for a critically important task for all juniors and seniors: promoting yourself for professional employment and/or post-graduate education and training (i.e., internship, graduate school, medical school). You will produce a package of documents to include either a cover letter/resume combination or a personal statement/resume combination.

- **Review Article (with Annotated Bibliography) (15%):** You will choose a topic (more specifically, a problem that needs to be solved) in health and medicine that interests you *and that has a potential audience and purpose that you can articulate clearly*. (Your primary audience will not be me.) In choosing a topic, it is important to choose a problem for which there is a potential solution; furthermore, it is equally important to thoroughly analyze and define the problem before trying to find the solution. The **annotated bibliography** (of at least 15 sources) and the **review article** are important steps in helping you to thoroughly understand the topic/problem you have chosen/identified. Your bibliography and review will consist of current research, knowledge, and opinion on the topic. **Your goal is to become the class content expert in your topic area.**
- **Health Education Materials (15%):** Once you have extensive knowledge in your topic area, you will translate your newfound expertise into a text written for non-specialized readers (i.e., not an expert in your topic), and its purpose is to educate a specific audience about some aspect of your topic. The first step in this process will draw directly on your research from the Review Article, and you will write a magazine or newspaper article that translates one of your sources/studies for a general audience. You will then further utilize your research to determine a way to offer further education to either patients or practitioners. Depending on your topic and your audience's needs, you will either create a technical description that describes a relevant concept or process to your readers, or you will compose a technical instruction set that teaches your readers how to perform an important task. You will learn how to determine a relevant aspect of your topic to write about; identify and analyze an audience that needs to read and make use of this information; select and design an appropriate genre and document type; and write in a way that presents complex technical concepts in a clear, logical manner.
- **Grant Proposal (20%):** You will compose a grant proposal that aims to gain financial support for a public health campaign that you will help to create for the Public Health Campaign. The purpose is to allow you to gain experience with designing a health communication campaign, writing a communication strategy, locating relevant grants, and putting together a grant proposal. Your grant proposal will explain why and how your public health campaign will be conducted. There are two key rhetorical goals for the grant proposal. First, you need to present a precise description of the problem that you want to address, with specific, fact-based reasons why there is a *need*. Second, you will want to describe a solution to the problem that is both visionary but also pragmatic. The grant proposal will require you to use all of the skills you will have developed throughout the semester.
- **Public Health Campaign (20%):** As a member of a group, your goal for this assignment is to create a range of texts that attempt to move people to action. You will plan, design, and compose **a minimum of FIVE** different texts across multiple types of media in order to persuade community members to change their way of thinking about a particular health issue and to persuade them to change their behaviors and institute healthier or safer practices. You will also be responsible for a report that describes the audience for each text and how each text will be implemented for its specific purpose. The final product for this assignment will earn 10%, and each member of the group will earn the same group grade. Individual contributions will also be assessed and graded—each member will write an individual end-of-project report—for the remaining 10%.

## Additional Graded Writing Assignments and Quizzes

- **Reflective Essays (5%):** At three different points throughout the semester (beginning, middle, and end), you will be asked to complete reflective writing exercises. These reflective essays will ask you to critically examine, review, and write about your learning and writing experiences in the course. Your reflective essays will be submitted via Canvas at the beginning, middle, and end of the course. The grading standards for reflective essays will be posted on Canvas.
- **Short writing assignments, homework, and peer review (5%):** In preparation for your major graded assignments, you may be asked to complete writing activities (pre-writing) that will aid in the drafting process and completion of the project. You will periodically be asked to participate in Discussion Board activities (in the event of class cancellation will count as both homework and class participation). Additional homework assignments will be assigned during class meetings (these may not appear on the course plan) as a way to continue and/or reinforce important class discussions.
- **Quizzes (5%):** There will be a minimum of ten quizzes this semester; the quizzes are designed to accomplish two goals: 1) to ensure that you are reading and understanding *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*, and 2) that you are paying attention and taking stock of what is happening during class time. (NOTE: Only the highest 8 quiz grades will count toward this grade.)

## Writing Project Standards

In this course, you will be held to the professional standards that prevail both throughout the university and within the field of professional writing and editing.

*Promptness:* In this course, as in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All *major writing projects* must be submitted to Canvas by the assigned time on the assigned date. Unless you have made arrangements with me in advance, major writing projects turned in late will be lowered one full letter grade for each day late (e.g., A becomes a B, B becomes a C, and so on).

*Development:* In all of the writing you do for this course, strive to compose “substantive” writing. You should make your argument and your purpose clear to readers, and where appropriate, provide convincing evidence, concrete details, and relevant examples.

*Rhetorical Strategy:* Throughout this course, you will be learning various rhetorical theories and techniques for persuading your audience, from composing effective *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* appeals to creating a specific sentence-level style and tone. Your formal writing projects should reflect your efforts to apply these theories through your planning, drafting, and revising process.

*Appearance:* All work should be neatly prepared on a computer using spacing and design techniques that are conventional for the genre. Whether it is a résumé, review of literature, fact sheet, grant application, newsletter, or print advertisement, your communication should exhibit appropriate format. *Documents without correct and appropriate headers, pagination, and other basic formatting will not be accepted for grading and marked one class period late.*

*Grammar, Spelling, Proofreading:* At work, even a single error in spelling, grammar, or proofreading can jeopardize the effectiveness of some communications. Grading will reflect the great seriousness with which these matters are frequently viewed in the working world. If you would like special assistance with any of these skills, I can recommend resources for extra help.

**Expectations:**

In addition to the requirements outlined above, you are expected to arrive on time and to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading and writing assignments on time; to help your classmates learn by your participation in class discussions and group activities; to spend at least six hours per week out of class for research, writing, and class preparation; and to be courteous and considerate.

**Conferences:**

Meet with me when you have questions about an assignment, when you would like to try out some ideas before a document is due, when you have questions about a comment, or when you want to know where you stand in the course. You should also see me to get help with particular writing-related problems. If you would like me to read and comment on a draft, you must come to office hours or make an appointment (at least 24 hours in advance of the due date) to see me. Finally, I am open to your suggestions for improving the course, so please discuss with me your ideas on how the course is going. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours and would like to meet with me, we can work together to find a convenient time for conferencing. There will be one required conference during the semester; the dates will be indicated on the Course Schedule.

**Undergraduate Writing Center:**

Please consider taking your ideas and your written work to the Writing Center, where trained peer tutors will consult with you about any piece at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in 1205 Tawes Hall. Their phone number is 301-405-3785.

Please visit the writing center website (<http://www.english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>) for information on registering and scheduling appointments.

**Grades:**

When grading each of your assignments, I will ask one overriding question: “Does this document do its job successfully?” The “job,” or purpose, of each document will be explained on the individual assignment descriptions I distribute to you during the semester, and we will spend ample time in class discussing how you can create a rhetorically successful text for each assignment. I will use the following criteria to evaluate your major writing projects:

A	<i>Exemplary work.</i> The text demonstrates originality, initiative, and rhetorical skill. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and formatted so that it is accessible and attractive; genre conventions are effectively used; mechanics and grammar are correct. The text is well edited, well written, well argued, and well documented and requires no additional revisions. It is obvious from the text that the author spent significant time on invention, drafting, correcting, peer review, and revision. <i>Any text with frank grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors cannot receive an A under any circumstances.</i>
B	<i>Good work.</i> The text generally succeeds in meeting its goals in terms of audience, purpose, and rhetorical skill without the need for further major revisions. The text may need some <i>minor</i> improvements in content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics.
C	<i>Satisfactory work.</i> The text is adequate in all respects, but requires some substantial revisions of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics; it may require further work in more than one area. For instance, central ideas may generally be apparent, but may often lack adequate

	explanations, rhetorical analysis, or documentation necessary for different audiences and purposes.
D	<i>Unsatisfactory work.</i> The text generally requires extensive revisions of content, presentation, writing style, and/or mechanics. The writer has encountered significant problems meeting goals of audience, purpose, and acquiring command of rhetorical principles.
F	<i>Failing work.</i> The text does not have enough information, does something other than is appropriate for a given situation, or contains major and pervasive problems in terms of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning. A failing grade is also assigned to plagiarized work.

Instructions for each assignment will be explained in assignment sheets distributed (via Canvas) during the semester.

## REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES: ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

### Participation (5%)

Effective class participation will require being prepared for class each day. On days when we have assigned readings from the one or both textbooks, you should have the appropriate text with you. If class is not held in a computer classroom, on days when we will be discussing readings from Canvas, you should print the readings and/or bring a laptop or e-reader (not a cell phone) to class with you (these devices can also be “checked out” from the library) so that you can follow discussion, point to pertinent passages, and participate effectively.

A note about Canvas: there is a Module corresponding to each week of class; you are strongly encouraged to explore and read these items, even if no readings are indicated on the Course Schedule.

Be courteous to your classmates and your instructor. If it becomes obvious that your attention is somewhere other than the class, your class participation grade will suffer. Behaviors that would not be acceptable in a professional working environment will not be acceptable in this class.

Repeated occurrences of arriving late or leaving early will affect your class-participation grade. If your schedule indicates that you will not have enough time to travel between this class and another, please consider adjusting your schedule appropriately.

### Attendance

You are expected to attend class every day, and in addition to having completed any assigned reading or writing, you should also have the textbook or other assigned reading (or notes on those readings) with you. An occasional absence is perhaps understandable, but habitual absence is inexcusable. *For any unexcused absence after **FOUR**, you will receive an F for “Class Participation,” and I will lower your **final grade** by one grade (e.g., A becomes an A-, A- becomes a B+, B+ becomes a B, and so on).*

I will follow the University of Maryland Faculty Senate’s policy on “excused absences” such that legitimate reasons for missing a class include regularly scheduled, University-approved curricular and extracurricular activities; medical illness; and religious observances.

### Missing Class Due to Illness

Regular attendance and participation in this class is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. However, in the event that you must miss a class due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

- For every medically necessary absence from class, you should make a reasonable effort to notify me in advance of the class. When returning to class, bring a note (a physical, paper note; not an email) identifying the date of and reason for your absence and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate.
- If you are absent more than two consecutive times for the same illness, upon returning to class, bring documentation signed by a health-care professional. Please note that this documentation should not disclose any details of your illness; it should only note that your illness prevented you from participating in class on the days noted.
- The University's full attendance policies can be found at: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

### Participation Grading in English 395

A	<i>Superior participation</i> shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions through her or his contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. Interaction and collaboration with peers is tactful, thorough, specific, and often provides other students with a new perspective or insight.
B	<i>Strong participation</i> demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. Interaction and collaboration with peers is tactful, specific, and helpful.
C	<i>Satisfactory participation</i> demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. Interaction and collaboration with peers is tactful and prompt.
D	<i>Weak participation</i> demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, or may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. Interaction and collaboration with peers may be lacking, disrespectful, or off-topic.
F	<i>Unacceptable participation</i> shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. The student has a pattern of missing class, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive

I will use the following grading scale to calculate your grade for each assignment and the course:

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
97%	93%	90%	87%	83%	80%	77%	73%	70%	67%	63%	60%	0%

### REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES: OTHER

## **Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge**

The University has a student administered Code of Academic Integrity and Honor Pledge, which prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without permission of both instructors, buying papers, handing in fraudulent documents, and forging signatures.

The policy on academic dishonesty is zero tolerance. As professional writers in a workshop course, the chief concern will be inappropriate use of the ideas and writing of others, or “recycling” material that you have written for another course. For this class, you must think your own thoughts and write your own words; all material produced for the course must be new. If I discover signs of academic dishonesty, I will refer the matter for investigation to the Student Honor Council. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity, the Student Honor Council, and general policies regarding these and other issues, please visit <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

**On each formal paper you turn in for a grade this semester, please include the following: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.” Including the statement on documents turned in electronically will be considered your electronic signature.**

## **Class Communication**

As upper-level college students, you’ve probably already experienced several different types of communication. In the electronic realm, for instance, you have realized that the emails you send to your friends and family contain a different level of formality than the ones you’ll send to potential employers and future co-workers.

In this class, we’ll practice becoming adept at communicating with each other in a professional manner. In other words, emails sent to your classmates and to me should use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, as well as proper salutations in the initial communication. I will attempt to answer in a timely manner, usually within 24 hours. Please include “ENGL395” and a short descriptive phrase in the subject line of your email. “Hi” or “question” are not descriptive phrases suitable for class emails.

Faculty and advisors use email to convey important information, and students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date, and must ensure that forwarding to another address functions properly. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding, and returned email are the responsibility of the student and do not constitute an excuse for missing announcements or deadlines.

## **Emergency Protocol**

In the event that the university closes for weather or emergency situation, class work will continue via Canvas.

## **Social Justice Statement**

The University of Maryland values the diversity of its student body and is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. I am committed to providing a classroom atmosphere that encourages equitable participation of all students regardless

of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Potential devaluation of students in the classroom that can occur by reference to demeaning stereotypes of any group and/or overlooking the contributions of a particular group to the topic under discussion is inappropriate. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin, and any perceived discrimination in the classroom will not be tolerated. Any suggestions as to how to foster and further a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Your learning in the class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

### **Disability Support**

Students with a documented disability should inform the instructor within the add-drop period if academic accommodations will be needed. Per policy, please meet with me in person to provide me with a copy of the Accommodations Letter and to obtain my signature on the Acknowledgment of Student Request form. We will plan together how accommodations will be implemented throughout the semester. To obtain the required Accommodation Letter, please contact Disability Support Service (DSS) at 301-314-7682 or [dissup@umd.edu](mailto:dissup@umd.edu).

### **Copyright Notice**

Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted. They may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor. Copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

### **Academic accommodations for students who experience sexual misconduct**

The University of Maryland is committed to providing support and resources, including academic accommodations, for students who experience sexual or relationship violence as defined by the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy. To report an incident and/or obtain an academic accommodation, contact the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct at 301-405- 1142. If you wish to speak confidentially, contact Campus Advocates Respond and Educate (CARE) to Stop Violence at 301-741- 3555. As responsible university employees, faculty are required to report any disclosure of sexual misconduct, i.e., they may not hold such disclosures in confidence. For more information: <http://www.umd.edu/ocrsm/>

### **Food insecurity and other resources**

Being a student while being food insecure or homeless can impact health, well-being, and academic performance. UMD has resources to help. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day is encouraged to visit the [UMD Campus Pantry](#), which is located in the Health Center. Any student who lacks a safe and stable place to live is urged to contact Brook Supple, Chief of Staff in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 301-314-8430 or <http://crisisfund.umd.edu/gethelp.html>. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable me to provide any additional support that I can.

### **Library Modules**

Throughout the semester, as need arises, additional assignments may be added to the syllabus. In particular, the folks in the library have kindly created modules designed specifically to help PWP students with their specialized research needs. When we begin our research component of the course (the Research Review Project), you may be assigned library modules, in addition to any work that is already listed on the Course Schedule. The modules will be available in Canvas, and you are strongly encouraged to explore this space throughout the semester.

**Acknowledgements:**

The grading rubrics in this syllabus were created by PWP professors Scott Wible, Michelle Von Euw, Walter Knorr, Marybeth Shea, and Lyra Hillard. Materials in this syllabus were adapted and adopted from past courses in order to ensure consistency between courses and curricula.