

 <b>FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>NEW COURSE PROPOSAL</b> <b>Graduate Programs</b>		UGPC Approval _____ UFS Approval _____ SCNS Submittal _____ Confirmed _____ Banner Posted _____ Catalog _____
	<b>Department</b> Biological Science <b>College</b> Charles E. Schmidt College of Science <i>(To obtain a course number, contact erudolph@fau.edu)</i>		
<b>Prefix</b> EVS <b>Number</b> 6956	<i>(L = Lab Course; C = Combined Lecture/Lab; add if appropriate)</i> <b>Lab Code</b>	<b>Type of Course</b> Lecture	<b>Course Title</b> Writing Science for Ecologist
<b>Credits</b> <i>(Review Provost Memorandum)</i> 3	<b>Grading</b> <i>(Select One Option)</i> Regular <input checked="" type="radio"/> Sat/UnSat <input type="radio"/>	<b>Course Description</b> <i>(Syllabus must be attached; see Guidelines)</i> see attached syllabus	
<b>Effective Date</b> <i>(TERM &amp; YEAR)</i> Spring 2019			
<b>Prerequisites</b> None		<b>Corequisites</b> None	<b>Registration Controls</b> <i>(Major, College, Level)</i> Graduate Level
<i>Prerequisites, Corequisites and Registration Controls are enforced for all sections of course</i>			
<b>Minimum qualifications needed to teach course:</b> Member of the FAU graduate faculty and has a terminal degree in the subject area (or a closely related field.)		<b>List textbook information in syllabus or here</b> Schimel, J. 2012. Writing Science: How to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded. New York, New York: Oxford University Press	
<b>Faculty Contact/Email/Phone</b> Brian Benscoter/ Brian.Benscoter@fau.edu-954-236-1141		<b>List/Attach comments from departments affected by new course</b>	

<b>Approved by</b> Department Chair _____ College Curriculum Chair _____ College Dean _____ UGPC Chair _____ UGC Chair _____ Graduate College Dean _____ UFS President _____ Provost _____	<b>Date</b> 9-20-18 10-29-18 10-29-18
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Email this form and syllabus to [UGPC@fau.edu](mailto:UGPC@fau.edu) one week before the UGPC meeting.

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**OCT 30 2018**

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### Syllabus

Instructor & Email: Dr. Brian Bencoter, [Brian.Bencoter@fau.edu](mailto:Brian.Bencoter@fau.edu)  
 Office: Davie West 437  
 Phone: 954-236-1141 (office & voicemail)  
 Office Hours: 11am-1pm (TBD); or by appointment (*due to unexpected circumstances, instructor may not be available at scheduled times*)  
 Lectures: Tue. 2-4:50pm, Location TBD  
 Course Website: Course information, schedule, announcements, and handouts will be available through Google Drive

**Course Description:** Communicating science through writing is a key aspect of any career in ecology, environmental science, or natural resources. In this course, students will use a combination of instruction and practice to learn key techniques and hone their writing skills. Topics will range from grammatical structure to tailoring the written message for your audience. This writing-intensive course will use an iterative approach of writing, reviewing, editing, and revising within peer support groups to allow students to improve their written products as well as gain familiarity with the process of developing scientific documents (e.g., manuscripts, grant proposals, technical reports) in an increasingly collaborative field as well as the peer-review process used by primary literature journals.

**Course Objectives:** The goal of this course is improve student's skills in communicating science through writing.

Students completing the course should:

1. Understand the fundamental framework for effective written communication.
2. Develop editing and reviewing skills.
3. Improve their skills as a scientific writer.
4. Most importantly, learn how to use peer support to overcome writing challenges.

**Pre-Requisite:** None

**Co-Requisite:** None

**Credits:** 3 cr.

**Required Reading:**

Schimmel, J. 2012. Writing Science: How to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded. New York, New York: Oxford University Press

**Evaluation:** There will be no graded assignments, yet to receive full credit students are required to:

1. Attend the majority of class meetings
2. Participate in class discussions and activities
3. Make timely submissions of writing and reviewing assignments
4. Adequately participate in peer group activities, based on peer evaluations

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**Peer Evaluations:** The majority of the course activities will be conducted within peer groups. Peer group members will be randomly assigned by the instructor. Peer group activities target writing, critiquing, and revising of assignments within the groups. As such, group members are dependent upon each other for timely submission of writing products to review or critiques to be used for revisions. Therefore, peers will evaluate each other's level of engagement and participation in group assignments based on the scale below, which will be averaged for each assignment (or part thereof, when applicable). A minimum average evaluation of '3' is required for a passing participation grade. If you receive a participation evaluation below the minimum on 3 assignments, your final course grade will be decreased by one whole letter grade (e.g., from A to B); subsequent sub-minimum evaluations will result in an additional

whole letter grade reduction (i.e., from B to C for the 4<sup>th</sup> occurrence, C to D for the 5<sup>th</sup> occurrence, etc.). Any student receiving a sub-minimum evaluation grade on any assignment will need to meet with the instructor as soon as possible to explain the circumstances and discuss ways to improve for subsequent activities.

Peers will evaluate each other based on the timeliness of participation (e.g., Were assignments submitted by the deadline?) and the degree of engagement (e.g., Were written works suitably formatted and checked for obvious spelling or grammatical errors? Were critiques constructive and helpful?). The following scale will be used to evaluate each group member's participation in each stage of each activity:

Score	Criteria
4	<i>Good</i> : Product was provided on time and the quality was above average.
3	<i>Adequate</i> : Product was provided on time and the quality reflects concerted effort
2	<i>Sub-par</i> : Product was provided late and/or was of marginal quality
1	No product was provided

**\*A Note on Reviewing, Evaluating, and Working in Groups\***

Throughout the semester, you will be expected to review the work of others, have group discussions on the quality of writing products, and evaluate the participation of others in this peer-driven process. At all times, I expect everyone to be civil and courteous to others; this is meant to be a supportive environment for developing your skills as a writer and that environment will be maintained. Your critiques should be direct, constructive, and even-handed, with intent on identifying what was done well and what could be improved. Likewise, discussions in class will be civil and respectful and the comments of all members will be acknowledged whether you agree with them or not. It's fine (and typically helpful) if you disagree, so long as it is constructive discussion rather than dismissive argument that ensues. Peer groups are meant to be "self-regulating", both through the evaluation process and in moderating discourse. However, if things get out of hand, I will step in and if it becomes a persistent issue it may impact the participation grade for the repeat-offending party. Overall, keep this in mind: *The people you are critiquing and evaluating are also critiquing and evaluating you.*

**Activities:** In addition to the classroom discussions, there will be 5 types of activities used throughout the semester: *Literature Outline & Critique; Exercises from Text; Abstract Writing; Personal Writing Samples*. Several of these activities require students to select published papers. Below are some criteria for selecting papers.

1. The journal must have a 2016 ISI Impact Factor of 3 or greater.
2. The journal must be targeted at a broad ecology audience and must produce printed issues. Examples include *Ecology*, *Journal of Ecology*, *Oikos*, *Ecography*, and *Oecologia*. Specialty journals or online-only journals cannot be used. Also, do not use papers from broad-audience publications (e.g., Nature Publishing Group journals or Science), as they have a very different presentation format than "typical" scientific publications.
3. The paper must have been published in the last 3 years (2015-present).
4. The paper must be primary literature (not a review paper) and must be a full article (no short communications or rebuttal papers).
5. The paper must be at least 7 pages long. Please avoid papers greater than 17 printed pages (exceptions may be made for *in press* early-access manuscripts - consult instructor).

*Literature Outline & Critique.* In these weekly activities, each student will develop an outline for a published peer-reviewed paper (either provided by the instructor or selected by the peer group) and write a brief (<600 words) critique its effectiveness in communicating the science (What was done well? What was unclear or could have been improved?). All members of each peer group will outline the paper independently and then discuss the paper and their outlines in their peer groups the following week.

*Text Exercises.* Students will independently complete the exercises from Writing Science indicated on the course schedule and then discuss the exercises in their peer groups the following week.

*Personal Writing Samples & Peer Editing.* The purpose of this course is to empower students to accomplish their personal writing goals and to foster a community of support among peers. To that end, we will use the peer groups and the course time as a venue for soliciting constructive criticism on student's personal writing products (e.g., graduate proposal, thesis/dissertation, manuscripts, grant proposals, etc.). Each student will be required to submit a total of two (2) personal writing samples during Weeks 7-14

**Google Drive & Email:** Google Drive and your official FAU email address will be used throughout the semester to distribute information related to the class and for course-related announcements. It is the student's responsibility to frequently check both accounts; failure to do so may incur penalties.

**Class Participation and Attendance:** The majority of your evaluation in this course is based on participation, both during class and through peer-group activities. If you do not attend, you cannot participate, which will be reflected in your grade.

From the Office of the Provost:

*Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance.*

*Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student's responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.*

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please refrain from consuming food or beverages during class, as it may prove disruptive to other members of the class. **All cell phones, pagers, mp3 players, or other electronic devices must be powered off during class.** Disruptive or inappropriate conduct of any kind will not be tolerated. Determination of inappropriate conduct is solely the discretion of the instructor. Any conduct deemed unbecoming of the classroom will be addressed by the instructor and the offending person(s) may be asked to leave. Repeated or extreme inappropriate conduct may result in more serious disciplinary action. Threats, bullying, or similar actions toward students, faculty, or staff during or outside of class will be immediately reported to the University Police Department.

**Make-up or Late Assignments:** There will be no make-up or late assignments. Grades of “Incomplete” are reserved for students with an otherwise passing grade but have not completed all the required work due to documented exceptional circumstances: Determination of eligibility for a grade of “Incomplete” is solely at the discretion of the instructor and will only be issued for situations with clear cause.

**Religious Accommodations:** Students who wish to be excused from coursework, class activities or examinations must notify the instructor in advance of their intention to participate in religious observation and request an excused absence.

**Academic Integrity:** The scientific field is largely a self-regulating entity, centered on the integrity of the researcher to honestly and accurately conduct research and report scientific findings. Research institutions, corporations, and professional organizations develop specific codes of ethics to which their members are expected to abide. These ethical standards, both formal and informal, facilitate the scientific process and in most cases alleviate the need for exhaustive and time-consuming measures to maintain the integrity of scientific knowledge in the eyes of fellow scientists as well as the public.

*Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001. [https://www.fau.edu/ctl/4.001\\_Code\\_of\\_Academic\\_Integrity.pdf](https://www.fau.edu/ctl/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf)*

Any form of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, or theft) will not be tolerated. Any and all students suspected by the instructor of violating the Code of Academic Integrity will be given a grade of zero for the assignment and the matter will be turned over to the University for further action. In cases where plagiarism or other dishonest activities occur among enrolled students, all parties involved will receive a grade of zero regardless of their role. Repeated (>1) violations will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Students with Learning Challenges:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at [www.fau.edu/sas/](http://www.fau.edu/sas/).

#### **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center**

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offer improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

## Course Schedule\*

Week	Date	Discussion Topic	Reading	Activity Due	In-Class Activity
1	Jan 8	Course intro. and procedures			PG & PWS Assignments
2	Jan 15	Developing a story	Ch 1-4, 19-20	LOC #1	Discuss LOC #1
3	Jan 22	Opening and Challenge	Ch 5-7	Exercise 2.2 & LOC #2	Discuss LOC #2
4	Jan 29	Action and Resolution	Ch 8-9	Peer Review of Ex 2.2 & LOC #3	Discuss Ex 2.2 & LOC #3
5	Feb 5	Nuts and Bolts	Ch 10-12	Revision of Ex 2.2 & LOC #4	Discuss LOC #4
6	Feb 12	Flow and Energy	Ch 13-15	Review of Ex 2.2 & LOC #5	Discuss Ex 2.2 & LOC #5
7	Feb 19	Condensing and Abstracts	Ch 16	PWS #1	Abstract Exercise
8	Feb 26	Editing and Reviewing	Ch 17-18	PWS #2	PG-PWS #1
9	Mar 5	Spring Break – no class		No Class	No Class
10	Mar 12	Peer Editing		PWS #3	PG-PWS #2
11	Mar 19	Peer Editing		PWS #4	PG-PWS #3
12	Mar 26	Peer Editing		PWS #5	PG-PWS #4
13	Apr 2	Peer Editing		PWS #6	PG-PWS #5
14	Apr 9	Peer Editing			PG-PWS #6
15	Apr 16	Wrap-Up			TBD

**LOC** – Literature Outline & Critique

**PWS** – Personal Writing Sample

**PG** – Peer Group [Discussion]

\* Course schedule is tentative; material covered during a given week may vary based on the progression of the class.

Assigned readings are from the course text, Schimel's Writing Science. Readings should be completed **BEFORE** the date for which they are assigned. Additional readings from outside the text may be assigned; these will either be distributed in class and/or made available on Google Drive. At times, material for a lecture will be found in a chapter other than that listed. The student is responsible for all information in the textbook, assigned supplemental readings, or presented in lecture, regardless of whether indicated in the above schedule.

**Other Notable Dates:**

First day of classes	Jan. 5
Last day to drop/add courses	Jan. 11
Spring Break	Mar. 4-10
Last day for course withdrawal	Apr. 5
Reading Days	Apr. 23-24
Final Exams	Apr. 25-May 1