

**SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION IN PSYCHOLOGY: PSYC02**  
Winter Session, 2007

Instructor: Prof Suzanne Erb  
Office: S-531  
Office hours: Wed 2:30-4:30 pm.

Teaching Assistants: Lisa Collimore, Igor Juricevic, Tharsni Kankesan, and Diane Mangalindan

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**Course description**

The course deals with how we communicate in psychology and why. The differences between scientific and non-scientific approaches to behaviour are stressed, and their implications for communication are discussed. The focus is on improving the student's ability to obtain and organize information and to communicate it clearly and critically, using the conventions of the discipline.

Skills acquired in this course are important to success in upper level courses, particularly for independent research courses and the thesis. Students will be reading the primary research literature, requiring the interpretation of research data.

**Required Texts**

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Gelfand, H., & Walker, C.J. (2001). *Mastering APA Style* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Stanovich, K. (2004). *How to think straight about psychology* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.

**Course Components and Evaluation**

APA Style: Students will work toward mastery of APA style by doing the exercises and practice tests for the two units in "Mastering APA Style": the Term Paper Unit and the Research Report unit. A mastery test will be given for each unit and an opportunity will be given to re-write one or both tests. These tests will be written during tutorial times. Observation of style will also be a key criterion in evaluation of all written assignments.

In-Class Demand Writing Assignments: Over the course of the term, two writing assignments will be given during regular lecture time. The nature of each assignment will be described in advance and will involve a written response to a piece of text. The text, however, will not be provided in advance of the class scheduled for the assignment.

Major Writing Assignment: Each student will conduct a careful review of the primary literature to determine whether a commonly held belief or assumption in some aspect of psychology has been verified experimentally or, alternatively, has been exposed as a myth. The review and analysis of the literature will culminate in a maximum 10-page written report, adhering to the conventions of APA style. More details on the assignment are presented in a supplementary handout.

Oral Presentation: Students will make short, 15-min oral presentations in their tutorial. The presentations will focus on one of the empirical articles to be used in the major writing assignment and are to be presented within the framework of the belief or assumption under study. More details on the assignment are given in a supplementary handout.

Final Examination: An examination of 1.5 hours will be scheduled during the final exam period, relating to the text by Stanovich and on the first lecture. An additional hour will be provided for students wishing to attempt a second writing of the Research Report Mastery Test.

*Breakdown of evaluation*

	(Percentage of final grade)
APA style: Term Paper Mastery Test <sup>1</sup>	10
APA style: Research Report Mastery Test <sup>1</sup>	10
In-class demand writing assignments (12 each)	24
Oral presentation	7
Tutorial participation	2
Class participation in small-group discussions	2
Major writing assignment (see handout for breakdown)	25
Final examination	20

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<sup>1</sup> "Items Correct" Score /10

26 or below	0
27-35	1 point per additional item correct
36 or more	10

If a student elects to re-write either test, the higher of the two scores for that test will be counted toward the final grade.

## Policy on Extensions and Make-Ups

In-class Writing Assignments and Mastery Tests: Four components of the course evaluation will be completed during scheduled class times; two during regular lecture hours (in-class writing assignments) and two during tutorial hours (mastery tests). There will be one “make-up” scheduled for each component, but only students providing proper medical documentation will have the opportunity to write the make-up.

Classroom Presentations: If proper medical documentation is provided, the presentation may be rescheduled, as class time permits. Such changes in scheduling will be carried out at the discretion of the tutorial leader.

Major Writing Assignment: If proper medical documentation is provided, short extensions may be granted by your tutorial leader on the outline and draft. If no extension has been granted in advance, 1 point per day will be deducted. The final paper is due on the last day of classes in the winter session (April 9). In accordance with University regulations, no term work will be accepted after this date.

## Summary of Important Dates:

*N.B. In addition to the major dates and deadlines listed here, there are several smaller tasks you must complete in preparation for various tutorials (see Schedule of Tutorials below and listen for more specific instructions and reminders in tutorials). Also, you must pace yourself to complete the familiarization tests, exercises, and practice tests in advance of the Mastery Tests.*

January 31	In-class demand writing assignment I (during lecture time)
February 5	Final draft of in-class writing assignment due (submit in tutorial)
February 14	Outline for major writing assignment due (to be submitted in class)
February 26	Term paper mastery test (during tutorial time)
February 28	In-class writing assignment II (during lecture time)
March 5	Final draft of in-class writing assignment II due (submit in tutorial)
March 5, 12, 19	Oral presentations
March 19	Draft of major writing assignment due (submit in tutorial)
March 26	Term Paper Mastery Test Re-take (during tutorial time)
April 2	Research Paper Mastery Test (during tutorial time)

## Schedule of Lectures

January 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An introduction to course: Review of syllabus</li><li>• What does Scientific Communication in Psychology encompass?</li><li>• Why learn APA?</li></ul>
January 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stanovich, Chapter 1</li><li>• Types of manuscripts; Content and organization of a manuscript.</li></ul>
January 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading critically and carefully (with Dr. Nancy Johnston, Writing Clinic, UTSC)</li><li>• Preparation for in-class writing assignment</li></ul>
January 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>In-class writing assignment I</b></li></ul>
February 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abstracts and outlines</li><li>• Writing style and structure I: Paragraphs; Sentences</li></ul>
February 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing style and structure II: Words; Punctuation</li><li>• Tips on giving effective oral presentations</li><li>• Preparation for in-class writing assignment</li></ul>
February 21	<b>READING WEEK (no tutorial)</b>
February 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>In-class writing assignment II</b></li></ul>
March 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ethics of research and writing</li></ul>
March 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research reports: Numbers and statistics; Figures and tables</li></ul>
March 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stanovich, Ch. 2 &amp; 3</li></ul>
March 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stanovich, Ch. 4, 5, 6</li></ul>
April 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stanovich, Ch. 7, 8, 9</li></ul>

## Schedule of Tutorials

January 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No tutorial</li> </ul>
January 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library workshop</li> </ul>
January 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of major writing assignment, "Mastering APA" text, and scheduling of oral presentations.</li> </ul>
January 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to discuss topic choice for major writing assignment; bring a hard copy of a literature review that you have conducted (i.e., list of citations from the primary literature) so that you can discuss the feasibility of pursuing your topic of choice.</li> <li>• Scheduling of oral presentations</li> </ul>
February 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand in final draft of in-class writing assignment I.</li> <li>• Final approval of topics for major writing assignment.</li> <li>• Bring a hard copy of an empirical article for oral presentation, to be approved by T.A.</li> </ul>
February 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture on References and Citations in first hour</li> <li>• T.A. will be available for individual consultation in second hour.</li> <li>• Final approval to be given on articles for oral presentations (mandatory for students whose articles were not already approved).</li> </ul>
February 19	<b>READING WEEK (no tutorial)</b>
February 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand in outline</li> <li>• <i>Term Paper Mastery Test</i>, 1 hour</li> </ul>
March 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand in final draft of in-class writing assignment II.</li> <li>• Oral presentations</li> </ul>
March 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral presentations</li> </ul>
March 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect drafts for major writing assignments</li> <li>• Oral presentations</li> </ul>
March 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Term Paper Mastery Test re-take</i> (optional)</li> </ul>
April 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Research Report Mastery Test</i></li> </ul>

## TURNITIN

Students will be required to submit all writing to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their work to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

All assignments (in-class writing assignments and major writing assignment) must be submitted to Turnitin.com by the last day of classes (April 9, 2007).

Additional information:

- An account has been set up for this class, called "PSYC02 – Scientific Communication "
- The **login** is 1761445 and the **password** is writing.
- Please refer to the PDF file posted on the course webpage for instructions on accessing the account and submitting your papers.