

SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATION IN PSYCHOLOGY: PSYC02

Winter Session, 2009

Wednesdays, 12-2 pm, BV 340

Instructor: Prof Suzanne Erb

Office: S-531

Office hours: Tues 2:30-4:00 pm.

Teaching Assistants:

Lisa-Marie Collimore <lcollimore@oise.utoronto.ca> (Tutorial 1; MW-223)

Melanie Douglass <melanie.douglass@utoronto.ca> (Tutorial 2; MW-264)

Sherief Hammad <s.hammad@utoronto.ca> (Tutorial 3; HW-402)

Bobby Stojanoski <stojanoski@utsc.utoronto.ca> (Tutorial 4; HW-408)

Jennifer Gutsell <jennifer.nadine@gmail.com> (coordinating TA)

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* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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

Stanovich, K. (2004). *How to think straight about psychology* (7th 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 providing a written response to a piece of text.

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 lecture material and the text by Stanovich. 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 ¹	10
APA style: Research Report Mastery Test ¹	10
In-class demand writing assignments (12 each)	24
Oral presentation	8
Tutorial participation	3
Major writing assignment (see handout for breakdown)	25
Final examination	20

¹ "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” for the in-class writing assignments; the make-up will be written during my office hours in the following week. Students wishing to write the make-up must inform Prof Erb of their absence within 24 hours of the originally scheduled date for the assignment and present appropriate documentation (e.g., medical note) at the time of the make-up. *Because students have the opportunity to take each mastery test two times, there will be no make-ups scheduled for these tests.*

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. 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 3). 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 28	In-class demand writing assignment I (during lecture time)
February 2	Final draft of in-class writing assignment due (submit in tutorial)
February 11	Outline for major writing assignment due (to be submitted in class)
February 23	Term Paper Mastery Test (during tutorial time)
February 25	In-class writing assignment II (during lecture time)
March 2	Final draft of in-class writing assignment II due (submit in tutorial)
March 2, 9, 16	Oral presentations
March 23	Term Paper Mastery Test Re-take (during tutorial time)
March 30	Research Paper Mastery Test (during tutorial time)
April 3	Major writing assignment

Schedule of Lectures

January 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An introduction to course: Review of syllabus• What does Scientific Communication in Psychology encompass?• Why learn APA?
January 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stanovich, Chapter 1• Types of manuscripts; Content and organization of a manuscript.
January 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading critically and carefully (with Dr. Allyson Skene, Writing Clinic, UTSC)• Preparation for in-class writing assignment
January 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-class writing assignment I
February 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abstracts and outlines• Writing style and structure I: Paragraphs; Sentences
February 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing style and structure II: Words; Punctuation• Tips on giving effective oral presentations• Preparation for in-class writing assignment
February 18	<p style="text-align: center;">READING WEEK (no tutorial)</p>
February 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-class writing assignment II
March 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethics of research and writing
March 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stanovich, Ch. 2 & 3
March 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stanovich, Ch. 4, 5, 6
March 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stanovich, Ch. 7, 8, 9
April 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FILM

Schedule of Tutorials

January 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tutorial
January 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library workshop
January 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of major writing assignment, "Mastering APA" text, and scheduling of oral presentations.
January 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to discuss topic choice for major writing assignment; bring a hard copy of a literature search 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. • Scheduling of oral presentations
February 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand in final draft of in-class writing assignment I. • Final approval of topics for major writing assignment. • Bring a hard copy of an empirical article for oral presentation, to be approved by T.A.
February 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture on References and Citations in first hour • T.A. will be available for individual consultation in second hour. • Final approval to be given on articles for oral presentations (mandatory for students whose articles were not already approved).
February 16	READING WEEK (no tutorial)
February 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Term Paper Mastery Test</i>, 1 hour • Hand back outlines
March 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand in final draft of in-class writing assignment II. • Oral presentations
March 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral presentations
March 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral presentations
March 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Term Paper Mastery Test re-take</i> (optional)
March 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Research Report Mastery Test</i>