

Title: Advanced Academic Writing in English: From Ph.D. Thesis to Research Outputs

Semester: Spring 2015

Duration: 6 x 180 minutes

Time: Thursdays, 16:00-19:00 [19.02; 05.03; **26.03**; 02.04; 16.04; 30.04]

Location: Video Library

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

Proficiency in academic English is presaged on long-term commitment to practice and responding to the distinct challenges posed by the various documents requiring its use. Accordingly, this course builds on the foundational *Academic Writing in English*, inviting students to develop their English-language skills by applying them to important real life situations. Their capacity to generate professional-quality scholarly English will be facilitated by using their respective Ph.D. theses as a springboard from which to produce documents central to building an academic profile in the English-speaking world (and beyond): conference presentations, prospective chapter/article submissions, peer-reviews, calls-for-papers for edited volumes, and book proposals.

COURSE GOALS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students will develop their English-language scholarship skills by using their respective Ph.D. theses as the basis for the production of key documents central to scholarly development. By the end of the course, they are therefore expected to show that they can maximize the impact of their doctoral research, by using it as a springboard for a variety of scholarly endeavors. In addition to demonstrable progression toward the execution of economic, elegant, precise, argument-driven prose, students are expected to recalibrate their writing to the unique demands of documents central to English-language publishing. In particular, they are exhibit growing competencies in:

- The general development of professional-standard academic English

- The production of a clear and easy-to-follow written conference presentation
- The production of speaker- and audience-friendly presentation slides
- The production of a relevant and appealing proposal for a book chapter or article
- The production of a measured and instructive peer-review
- The production of an attention grabbing and appealing call for papers
- The production of a persuasive and informed book proposal

SESSION STRUCTURE

If the foundational seminar series *Academic Writing in English* necessitated substantial instructor involvement alongside the exchanges of ideas, the more advanced nature of this course places an accent on learning-by-doing. As such, each session will pair a discussion of the general demands each document places on students, with seminar exercises intended to put their skills into action. Prior to each session, students will be assigned a task which will form the basis of the seminar exercise. No specific readings are set for this course as each task should entail students' locating and scrutinizing examples of the type of document they are being asked to produce.

SESSION 1 THE PHD THESIS: A MEANS AS WELL AS AN END 19 FEB

Sometimes we can lose sight of the fact that our Ph.D. research is not just the background work to produce a one-off manuscript and that the thesis itself is not merely a lengthy written submission. Crucially, this document and the research underpinning it furnish us with a springboard from which to establish a presence in the academic world. This massive project can serve as the basis or inspiration for myriad outputs. However, knowing how to utilize this project effectively demands something of a strategic approach, one made all the easier by having a solid sense of the structure of this manuscript, the significance of its individual elements, and their use value in the academic world at large.

Preparatory Exercise:

Prepare a powerpoint slide show of about **ten to fifteen minutes** in length in which you break

down the structure of your thesis – whether this is provisional or already set in stone – and your reasons for organizing or considering organizing the thesis in this way.

Submissions: There is no need to submit your slides.

SESSION 2 CONFERENCE PAPERS I: RECITED PRESENTATIONS 05 MAR

Most theses – irrespective of whether they are organized around themes or as a chronological history – can also be seen as potentially comprising several short papers; papers which will usually be given a trial run as conference papers. Whether we approach them as a means of testing out our ideas or of promoting forthcoming publications, conference presentations are a key part of research dissemination. By and large, there are two approaches to delivering conference papers, both with their own pros and cons: reciting a written paper, and delivering a semi-adlibbed lecturette around a slideshow. In this session, students will focus on the former, developing an understanding of how to capitalize on this approach’s structure, precision, and detail, while avoiding the pitfalls of incomprehensibility, tediousness, and ultimately losing one’s audience.

Preparatory Exercise:

Produce a script for a **fifteen-minute-long** paper you can recite at a conference of your choosing (actual or fictive).

Submissions: Please **DO NOT** submit this document

SESSION 3 CONFERENCE PAPERS II: SEMI-ADLIBBED LECTURETTES 26 MAR

If the recited conference paper promises security and precision, albeit oftentimes at the cost of intelligibility, some of the most memorable presentations involve a speaker adlibbing around bullet points. What this approach might lose in control and detail, it can make up for in dynamism, flexibility, and engagement. Accordingly, in this session, students will consider how best to approach this intimidating but potentially rewarding form of delivery. In particular, they

will think about how we might balance lively improvisation with the security of a well structured slideshow.

Preparatory Exercise:

Produce a series of slides around which you will adlib the **fifteen-minute-long** presentation you read out in the previous session.

Submissions: Please **DO NOT** submit your slides

SESSION 4

CHAPTER/ARTICLE SUBMISSION PROPOSALS

02 APR

We can do a lot worse than consider the conference papers spun off from our theses as essays in the making. However, while the essay remains the preeminent format in Anglophone academia, there are a number of different paths we can take to ensuring our essays see the light of day. Calls for proposals to themed volumes represent an increasingly common way of publishing such works. Typically, editors do not request full length essays but instead simply wish to get a sense of what a contributor will offer. Accordingly, in this session, students will draft a submission proposal. In so doing, they will glean insights into how we can maximize our chances of being accepted for inclusion in these important venues. This session will also thinking about how to write peer-reviews.

Preparatory Exercise:

Prepare a proposal for a chapter you would like to submit for consideration in a fictive volume entitled “East-Central European Cinema: New Histories”.

Submissions: Please email me your manuscript by **Midnight Sunday 29 March**

SESSION 5

CALLS-FOR-PAPERS

16 APR

In addition to using our theses as the basis for published essays, the research driving this work provides us with the opportunity to inspire a range of scholars to contribute to our general subject

area. By putting together editing volumes ourselves we also increase our control of the publish-or-perish culture pervading Anglophone academia, and position ourselves as an important voice in our chosen niche. Whether themed journal issues or book-length collections, such volumes must fulfill academic and practical needs. Accordingly, in this session, students will consider how to put together a call for papers which is likely to resonate with prospective contributors and publishers alike, and how we might best consider the proposals that come our way.

Preparatory Exercise:

Write a call for papers, soliciting contributions to an edited volume you might edit alone or co-edit with a colleague.

Submissions: Please email me your manuscript by **Midnight Sunday 12 April**

SESSION 6

BOOK PROPOSALS

30 APR

The Ph.D. thesis can – perhaps should – form the basis for what most academics would agree is the centrepiece of any publications portfolio: a scholarly monograph. Securing a publisher for such a project can be a long and frustrating process, sometimes lasting years; but it does not have to be this way. Accordingly, in this session, students will consider how to produce book proposals that stand the best possible chances of being accepted, thereby maximizing the use-value of a manuscript which lends itself supremely well to adaptation to the monograph format.

Preparatory Exercise:

Propose your thesis as a book, using the application form of an English-language publisher of your choosing.

Submissions: Please email me your manuscript by **Midnight Sunday 26 April**