

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Course Title</b> | <b>Ph.D. Seminar: Writing as a Professional</b>  |
| <b>Language</b>     | <b>English</b>   |
| <b>Instructor</b>   | <b>Richard Nowell (Richard_nowell@hotmail.com)</b>   |
| <b>Structure</b>    | <b>Six x Seminars (04.03.2021, 18.03.2021, 01.04.2021, 15.04.2021, 29.04.2021, 13.05.2021)</b> |
| <b>Semester</b>     | <b>Spring 2020</b>   |
| <b>Time</b>         | <b>Thursdays (with built-in breaks)</b>  |
| <b>Place</b>        | <b>C32</b>   |

### **DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF COURSE**

This course invites Ph.D. students to rethink their approaches to academic outputs through the early adoption of professional standards of development and execution. Students will focus on six fundamentals of their craft: 1) process-driven writing, 2) writing style, 3) organization, 4) argumentation and positioning, 5) editing, and 6) introductions and conclusions. Their introduction to the rigors of international academic publishing standards, will equip students with the thinking and skills needed maximize the impact and quality of their theses, and furnish them with transferable skills that will facilitate their production of world-leading outputs across their careers.

### **TARGETED LEARNING OUTCOMES OF COURSE**

By the end of this course, students are expected to demonstrate clear progression toward submitting an essay to a high-impact peer-reviewed journal or edited collection. In particular, they are expected to show growing competencies in:

- Process-driven approaches to academic outputs.
- The production of precise, economical, elegant prose
- The production of expertly structured scholarship
- The production of expertly structured paragraphs
- The adoption of practical editorial techniques
- The production of argument-driven scholarship
- The production of strategically positioned scholarship
- The production of introductions and conclusions showcasing key functions
- The production of professional quality abstracts likely to attract publishers

- Self-critique and peer-to-peer critique of academic outputs

## **TEACHING METHODS**

This course comprises six weekly seminars conducted in the English language. Each seminar will include a necessary but small amount of instructor-delivered content, which will outline the weekly topics in a manner geared to maximizing practical application and life-long learning. Sessions will, however, mainly consist of student-oriented learning: discussions, self-evaluation, peer-to-peer evaluation, and practical exercises. Great effort will be made to synthesize the weekly topics with students' career development in the sphere of academic publishing. Accordingly, students will work towards the production of an abstract for a proposed journal article or book chapter, one that will come to reflect the cornerstones of the course, with the aims of facilitating the production of the proposed output and securing publication for it.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **1. Participation (75 percent)**

Given the practical nature and student-oriented approach of this course, it is essential that students are actively involved in all session. Accordingly, the breadth, depth, and relevance of their contributions will be taken in to account as will be their willingness to engage in constructive peer-to-peer evaluation.

### **2. Final Abstract (25 percent)**

At the end of this course, students shall submit a “final” draft of the essay abstract they have been working on across the semester. This will be graded on the extent to which it reflects the qualities introduced across this course: clarity, precision, elegance, organization, argumentation, positioning.

Submission Date: TBC

## **SESSION 1**

## **WRITING-AS-PROCESS**

**04 March 2021**

If graduate students are to become professional academics, they must come to terms with the realities of producing professional standards of scholarship. And, while there is no magic formula, making this leap oftentimes involves rethinking how we produce our work. In this

session, students will consider the need to replace the largely private-event approach typical of undergraduate and early-postgraduate work with the semi-public process of embracing redrafting and the solicitation of feedback. In so doing, this session lays a firm foundation for subsequent sessions, in which students will consider this process step by step.

**Preparation:**

- Reading: Becker, “Chapter One: Freshman English for Graduate Students ... if We Start Off by Opening Up”, 1-25.
- Homework: Write a 250-word abstract of an essay or chapter you are writing or plan to write.

**Targeted Learning Outcome**

- To appreciate the extent to which transforming the production of academic outputs from private events to semi-public processes can maximize their quality and impact.

**SESSION 2**

**WRITING STYLE**

**18 March 2021**

It is insufficient for professional scholars merely to produce comprehensible work. Rather, it might behoove them to aspire to the production of prose that boasts three qualities: clarity, economy, and elegance. In this session, students will focus on the development of such a style by approaching writing as a reader-oriented exercise in communication strategy, one designed to maximizing the impact of their ideas by making them as accessible as possible.

**Preparation**

- Reading: Becker, “Chapter Two: Persona and Authority”, pp. 26–42.
- Abstracts: Revise your abstract by addressing any issues you have with it.

**Targeted Learning Outcomes**

- The adoption of techniques geared to the production of precise, elegant, economic prose
- An appreciation of why such qualities maximize the standard and impact of academic outputs.

High quality scholarship is presaged on the sound organization of ideas. Accordingly, in this session, students will approach structuring their work at the macro and micro levels. They will confront the challenges of how best to organize an output into sections, how best to organize those sections into paragraphs, and best how to organize those paragraphs into sentences (please note introduction and conclusions will be approached in a later session).

**Preparation**

- Reading: Becker, “Chapter Three: One Right Way”, 43-67.
- Abstracts: Revise your abstract to make it more elegant, precise, and economical.

**Targeted Learning Outcome**

- The adoption of techniques geared to the production of argument-driven paragraphing and reader-focused sectioning.
- An appreciation of why such qualities maximize the standard and impact of academic outputs.

The production of scholarly work is a process involving reflection, reconsideration, and revision. Accordingly, in this session, students consider how to edit their work, by soliciting the evaluations of trusted colleagues, responding to their own nagging doubts, asking tough questions of their work, and ultimately knowing when to stop.

**Preparation**

Reading: Becker, “Chapter Four: Editing by Ear”, 68-89.

Homework: Produce glossary of your 5 most important terms, each with five synonyms, and an explanation of the differences between each synonym.

**Targeted Learning Outcome**

- The adoption of editing regimes geared to generating reader-friendly outputs.

- An appreciation of why such a quality maximizes the standard and impact of academic outputs.

## **SESSION 5**

## **ARGUMENTATION & POSITIONING**

**29.04.2021**

If precise, elegant, economical well-organized prose is a pre-requisite of top-quality scholarship, contributing to knowledge is its *raison d'être*. Accordingly, in this session, students will consider how best to showcase argumentation and to positioning their arguments in relation to other work in the field.

### **Preparation**

- Reading: Becker, “Chapter Eight: Terrorized by the Literature”, 135-149.
- Homework: Revise your abstract by reducing it to 200-words without losing any key points

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes**

- The adoption of techniques that spotlight argumentation in academic outputs
- The adoption of techniques that position arguments in relation to their given field(s)
- An appreciation of why such qualities maximize the standard and impact of academic outputs.

## **SESSION 6**

## **INTRODUCTIONS & CONCLUSIONS**

**13 May 2021**

Introductions and conclusions are perhaps the most important, yet for many the most challenging, parts of academic outputs. Accordingly, in this session, students will consider six key functions introductions and conclusions might serve. In so doing, they will be invited not only to consider how crafting these components can marshal their research and simplify writing. They will also consider whether the proves of revising their abstracts across this course has already provided them with the backbone of the introduction and conclusion to their proposed essay.

### **Preparation**

- Homework: Revise your abstract to showcase its over-arching argument and its position within the field.

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes**

- The adoption of techniques geared to the production of introductions and conclusions that showcase six key functions
- An appreciation of why such qualities maximize the quality and impact of academic outputs.