

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Ph.D. Seminar: Academic Composition</b>
<b>Language</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Richard Nowell</b>
<b>Contact</b>	<b>Richard_nowell@hotmail.com or 117259@mail.muni.cz)</b>
<b>Structure</b>	<b>Six x Seminars (22.02; 29.02; 07.03; 14.03; 21.03; 28;03)</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>Thursdays 14:00 – 16:50 (with break)</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Film Studies Library (building C, Arna Nováka 1, 3rd Floor)</b>

## **DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF COURSE**

This series of workshops 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) communication, 3) organization, 4) argumentation, and 5) editing, leading to the production of an audience-friendly conference presentation. Their introduction to the rigors of international academic 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 adoption of practical editorial techniques
- The production of argument-driven scholarship
- The production of strategically positioned scholarship
- The production of professional quality abstracts likely to attract publishers
- The production of professional quality conference presentations
- 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 Presentation – Abstract and Slides (25 percent)**

At the end of this course, students shall submit a “final” draft of the abstract they have been working on across the semester. And produce a PowerPoint presentation about this output. 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: TBA.

## **SESSION 1**

## **WRITING-AS-PROCESS**

**22 Feb 2024**

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:**

- Recommended Reading: Becker, “Chapter One: Freshman English for Graduate Students ... if We Start Off by Opening Up”, 1-25.
- Homework: Write a 200-250-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**

**COMMUNICATION**

**29 Feb 2024**

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**

- Recommended Reading: Becker, “Chapter Two: Persona and Authority”, pp. 26–42.
- Abstracts: Student One to Revise Their Abstract for Peer-to-Peer Review

**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.

**SESSION 3****ORGANIZATION****7 March 2024**

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. Students will also consider how best to compose introduction and conclusions.

**Preparation**

- Recommended Reading: Becker, “Chapter Three: One Right Way”, 43-67.
- Abstracts: Student Two to Revise Their Abstract for Peer-to-Peer Review

**Targeted Learning Outcome**

- The adoption of techniques geared to the production of argument-driven introductions, conclusions, sections, and paragraphs.
- An appreciation of why such qualities maximize the standard and impact of academic outputs.

**SESSION 4****ARGUMENTATION****14 March 2024**

If precise, elegant, economical well-organized prose is a pre-requisite of top-quality scholarship, contributing to knowledge is its *raison d’etre*. 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**

- Recommended Reading: Becker, “Chapter Eight: Terrorized by the Literature”, 135-149.
- Abstracts: Student Three to Revise Their Abstract for Peer-to-Peer Review

**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 5**

## **EDITING**

**21 March 2024**

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**

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

Homework: Student Four and Five to Revise their Abstracts for Peer-to-Peer Review.

### **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 6**

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

**28 March 2024**

This session will seek to marshal the various techniques introduced in previous sessions to a manageable academic output. Students will consider how process-driven work, sound communication, expert organization, well positioned argumentation, and necessary editing can be drawn upon in the production of a conference presentation. In so doing, they will start to consider how these qualities need to be calibrated to individual types of output.

### **Preparation**

- Produce a **short** PowerPoint presentation on your abstract topic.

### **Targeted Learning Outcomes**

- The adoption of techniques geared to the production of audience-friendly conference presentations.

- An appreciation of why such qualities maximize the quality and impact of academic outputs.