CETL 8721 — Academic Writing
Spring 2012 — Clough Commons 323 — Tuesday 4:35 - 5:55

“Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.”
— Aristotle, *Rhetoric*

*Instructor Information*

Dr. David Lawrence  
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Office Phone: 404.385.7357  
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 1:00 - 2:30; and by appointment

Prerequisites — Admission by permit only.

Credits: This is a one credit hour seminar granting a satisfactory/unsatisfactory final grade.

*Course Goals*

Through examination of writing samples and practice, participants learn techniques for enhancing proposal, thesis, and dissertation preparation as well as methods for evaluating writing as future instructors and thesis directors.

In CETL 8721, we will discuss the dominant genres and expectations of academic communication always with a focus on practical application. Participants will improve on the basic skills of the writing process, learn to create and revise texts suited for academic audiences, and work collaboratively in small writing support groups. Additionally, we will discuss strategies for navigating special academic communication situations like thesis/dissertation defenses, committee meetings, and other professional communication scenarios.

Students participating actively in the course will be able to:

• analyze communication situations and audiences in academic settings.
• collect and analyze information required by those situations and audiences.
• use principles of rhetoric and document design to clearly communicate content to specific situations and audiences.
• apply rhetorical concepts and principles to adapt content for various academic speaking situations.
• identify and apply rhetorical patterns in academic writing.

*Required Texts*

• Additional handouts and materials will be provided in class and via T-Square.

*Assignments & Evaluation*

Because this course is designed to complement your professional training, there are no “graded” assignments. Each participant is expected to participate fully in order to receive the “satisfactory” grade at the end of the semester. If a participant feels that he/she cannot meet the expectations of the course, I suggest an immediate withdrawal so that other people on the waiting list for the course may be accommodated.

All assignments must be completed to receive a “Satisfactory” grade for the course.
Attendance

In the professional world, employers expect employees to be at work, and to be there on time. Each participant should approach this seminar with the same standards of attendance. Each participant is responsible for finding out what he/she missed, learning the material and completing all assignments. **If you miss more than three class meetings, you will be assigned a grade of unsatisfactory.**

Conferences / Individual Writing Projects

Each participant should plan to meet privately with the instructor at least twice during the semester to discuss his/her specific writing projects. I will provide individualized feedback on one writing project per student in the class. We communicate about your project both in person and electronically.

Disability Services

Any student who feels that he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours. The ADAPTS Office provides services to students with disabilities to assure access to all facets of the Georgia Tech community. The ADAPTS Office offers evaluation of students with disabilities, referral, adaptive technology, information on accommodations, interpreter services for Tech students, and testing facilities.

The Communication Center

The Communication Center is located in Clough Commons, Suite 447. It is an excellent resource for any student (undergraduate or graduate) who wants help with a communication-related project. You can visit the center for help at any stage of the process for any project in any discipline. The knowledgeable and friendly tutors are available to help you develop and revise your projects. They are not available to “fix” your projects. Please do not ask the tutors to proofread or edit your projects. For information on making an appointment please visit this website: [http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/make-appointment](http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/content/make-appointment). If you need assistance with the appointment system, you can call 404-385-3612 or stop by the center. All services are free and confidential.

Overview of Assignments

Preproposal

Purpose

The preproposal gives you the opportunity to begin to focus your project for yourself which, in turn, will help you articulate the project to other audiences, especially prospective committee members. The preproposal has also been sometimes called the "shop around" proposal as it is often used for securing one's committee.

The preproposal contains the following elements:

- Research Question / Problem
- Research Design
  - Data
  - Method(s) of data collection
  - Method(s) of data analysis
- Categories of literature to cover in the literature review
- Reasons why the study is significant

Instructions – Writing

- use double-spacing
- use headings and sub-headings for each element of the document
• use a 10, 11, or 12 point font size
• bring four copies to class for our peer review sessions
• the length of the document should be between 2 - 4 pages

Curriculum Vitae and / or Resume

Cover Letter

Teaching Statement

Research Statement

Course Schedule (tentative)

10 January
• Course Overview - What will we cover in this course?
• What is rhetorical theory and why should I care?
• Introductions
• Assignment: Write a short (~250 - 400 word) biography of yourself. Imagine this biography will appear on your department’s website.

17 January
• Graduate Studies, Engineering and Communication Skills
• What communication skills do engineering faculty/employers expect?
• Readings

24 January
• What is a preproposal?
• What elements comprise a preproposal?
• Readings
  • Foss, Sonja and William Waters. “Writing a Thesis / Dissertation: Transitioning from Reporter to Scholar.”

31 January
• What’s the Difference Between a Curriculum Vitae and Resume?
• Crafting a CV and Cover Letter

7 February
• How do authors structure academic writing?
• What is the IMRaD and DSB structures of writing?
• Organizational Structures for Academic Writing
• Readings
  • Socolofsky, Scott. “How to write a research journal article in engineering and science.”
• Assignment
  • **Bring Section 1 of Preproposal to Class**

14 February
• How do rhetorical patterns and *topoi* assist in writing?
• Readings
  • Rhetorical Patterns Handout

• Assignment
  • **Bring CV / Resume and Cover Letter to class**

21 February
• How do I write about what others say?
  • Readings
    • Graff and Birkenstein, pp. 1-51
  • Assignment
    • **Bring Section 1 and 2 of Preproposal to Class**

28 February
• How do I write about what I think?
  • What is an argument?
  • Readings
    • Graff and Birkenstein, pp. 55-101

6 March
• How do I write to hold the reader’s interest?
  • Readings
    • Graff and Birkenstein, pp. 105-192
  • Assignment
    • **Bring Section 1, 2 and 3 of Preproposal to Class**

13 March
• How do I craft a compelling introduction?
  • What do I include in the methods section?

27 March
• What is the purpose of a literature review?
  • Readings
  • Assignment
    • **Bring Completed Preproposal to Class**

3 April
• How do I craft a research statement?

10 April
• How do I craft a teaching statement?
  • Assignment
    • **Bring one-page research statement to class**

17 April
• Craft an Abstract
  • Readings
    • Koopman, Philip. “How to Write an Abstract.” URL: [http://www.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html](http://www.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html)
  • Assignment
    • **Bring one-page teaching statement to class**

24 April
• End of Term Reflections
  • How can we improve CETL-8721?