

## Psychology 392: Junior Writing – Spring 2018

### Section #03: Communication

<b>Class Time &amp; Location:</b>	10:00 – 11:15 am Tuesday & Thursdays Bartlett 121
<b>Teaching Associate (TO):</b>	Dan Vahaba
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:dvahaba@cns.umass.edu">dvahaba@cns.umass.edu</a>
<b>Office &amp; Office Hours:</b>	514 Tobin Hall I'm happy to meet with you anytime/day by appointment. To set up a time to meet, contact me via email or through here: <a href="https://dan-vahaba.youcanbook.me">https://dan-vahaba.youcanbook.me</a>
<b>Supervisors of all sections:</b>	Amanda Hamel, PhD
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:afhamel@umass.edu">afhamel@umass.edu</a>
<b>Office &amp; Appointments:</b>	11B Bartlett Hall Office hours by appointment
<b>Course Site:</b>	<a href="https://moodle.umass.edu/">https://moodle.umass.edu/</a>

### What is Junior Writing about?

Junior Writing is an innovative and award-winning University-wide program. In contrast with Freshman Writing, the goal is to provide you with writing experience within the context of your major. Whereas the Junior Writing programs in some departments focus on very specific kinds of writing (e.g., rhetoric, business memos, or technical manuals), Psychology students are unusually diverse in the career paths they take after graduation. Thus, we will focus on general writing skills that will be of use to everyone.

What will you write about? In Psychology, sections are taught by an advanced graduate student who is particularly committed to teaching. Each Teaching Associate (abbreviated "TO" to distinguish the title from "TA") selects a topic in the area of his or her expertise. The course thus has both writing goals (common to all sections) and content goals (unique to your section).

### How will this course help you succeed?

**Common Writing Goals:** Regardless of whether you are already a confident writer, by the end of the course we will help you to develop your skills in the following:

- Constructing effective, powerful sentences that aren't weighed down with extra words that don't help your cause.
- Connecting your ideas together so that they flow well.
- Organizing your paragraphs so that your reader better understands your intentions and follows your train of thought.
- Organizing a longer paper so that your reader is convinced by what you have to say.
- Giving effective feedback to your peers so that they can understand what you, as a reader, see in their writing.

**Section Topic Goals:** Throughout the semester, we will also go over how animals communicate. We'll focus on one of nature's most successful vocal communicators: songbirds! In particular, we'll go over how

songbirds learn to sing, and how “bird-brains” enable this complex and rare behavior. We’ll also touch on other animal communication strategies (e.g. foot-flagging frogs – YouTube it...!), and connect what is known about birds and other animals with parallels and divergences in human language learning, speech production, and neurobiology.

## What will you do in this course?

To get more comfortable with writing, you’ll write! That’s the unifying theme, but on any given day you might do a variety of things: you might listen to a short lecture or have a class discussion about some reading (especially early in the semester); you might discuss a fine point of writing; you might do some other activity. For each of the four papers (see below), you’ll spend one entire class and part of another in peer review. We will also go over short take-home “Writing Skills” assignments and have other discussions of grammar and style.

***The process of each paper from start to finish:*** To prepare for each paper, it’s crucial that you come to class to hear detailed explanations of what is expected and to practice the skills needed to write a successful paper. In addition, you can best prepare for the writing goals of each papers by doing the reading on the syllabus and the associated in-class and take-home assignments.

For each paper, you will participate in three forms of peer review.

- For **group peer reviews (#1)**, you must bring 4 copies of the paper. If you do not bring 4 copies to class, you will not receive credit for the group peer review. You will receive credit for participating in group peer review, and this cannot be made up if you miss a class. One of the copies of your paper will be provided to an **experienced peer reviewer (#2)**, a student recruited from this class in a previous semester, who will provide written comments.
- After you revise your paper based on comments from group peer review and your experienced reviewer, you will then participate in **one-on-one peer review (#3)**, where you will review a colleague’s paper in more detail and get comments in return. Your comments to your partner in one-on-one peer review will be submitted and graded for thoroughness and quality. For one-on-one peer review sessions, bring a clean copy of your paper for your reviewer. We will go through this process of peer review for one draft of Papers 1, 2 and 4 for two drafts of Paper 3, which is longer and more complex.

After the peer review process, you will submit a final revision. Your final revision should include a cover letter, written to your instructor. This cover letter should include:

(1) a summary of the corrections and suggestions made by your peers,

(2) a summary of how you have chosen to respond to the critiques (you may decide that you disagree with the critiques, and here is your chance to say why),

and (3) an identification of at any additional changes you made to the paper above and beyond what your peers suggested. The letter should be professional in tone.

**You must also submit a copy of your paper to TurnItIn, via the Moodle website.** Late final drafts receive a penalty of 5 points per day. **You must turn in both a hard copy and a copy via the website to avoid this penalty.** To ensure uniformity across sections, TO’s are not allowed to override this policy.

## What will you write about in this course?

While you'll do a little writing every time we meet, there are four bigger papers, ranging from 2-10 pages long. You will work on one paper until it is finished and then start the next.

This is not a scientific writing course, so we will *not* cover topics such as the structure of a scientific paper—that's covered in Methods. The papers build on each other and focus on slightly different skills. **Paper 1** will focus on using powerful words and sentences in descriptive writing. **Paper 2** will focus on how to write for a particular audience. **Paper 3** will be the development of an argument. These three papers will focus on some aspect related to the section's topic. In **Paper 4**, you'll take all those skills and direct them toward something you'll find very useful: preparing material for your next step after graduation.

In some papers, you may also be asked to focus on a technical aspect of writing. The purpose of these admittedly artificial requirements is to uncover problems or confusion that you may not know you have, and to put some ideas from the Writing Skills assignments into use.

### Summary of Major Papers (tentative descriptions)

	Description
<p><b>Paper #1:</b> Writing effective sentences Length: 2 – 2.5 pages</p> <p><b>Writing goals:</b> Choose accurate words that provide the reader a clear picture of what you are trying to describe, minimize wordiness, use correct grammar, and structure sentences effectively.</p>	<p>Vivid and informative descriptions are essential in any field. Observe an animal for 15 minutes, then clearly and objectively describe its behavior, and suggest a testable hypothesis for one of the observed behaviors.</p>
<p><b>Paper #2:</b> Writing for the public Length: 3 pages</p> <p><b>Writing goals:</b> Focus on adapting your writing style to your intended audience.</p>	<p>Translate a peer-reviewed journal article for a non-scientist (intellectual layperson). Change the tone to make it more interesting while being informative and maintaining accuracy.</p>
<p><b>Paper #3:</b> Constructing an argument Length: 8 pages</p> <p><b>Writing goals:</b> Focus on larger-scale organization and marshaling evidence to support a well-developed thesis.</p>	<p>Construct a cogent and testable research proposal. The key will be to develop a well-organized argument and make a case for why your study should be funded. Some library research will be necessary.</p>
<p><b>Paper #4:</b> Application essays/cover letters/résumés</p> <p><b>Writing goals:</b> Effectively present yourself to admissions committees and potential employers.</p>	<p>Write and get feedback on your application essay/cover letter/résumé for the next step in your career.</p>

### What materials will you need?

#### 1) Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing (Mignon Fogarty)

I find this book to be accessible and enjoyable as a writing guide/grammar reference, plus it has the added bonus of being funny and less snooty than Strunk & White. It's fairly inexpensive and is worth its weight in gold: <https://www.amazon.com/Grammar-Girls-Quick-Better-Writing/dp/0805088318>

- 2) **A style guide.** If you've kept the one from freshman writing (most likely EasyWriter or the Little Penguin Handbook), that's great. However, other guides are also excellent and can be substituted. If you own a different one, show it to me to make sure it is appropriate. We will sometimes ask you to bring your style guide to class.

## How will you and I evaluate your progress?

Here's a (brief) summary of the different sources of points. More details/information about each assignment will be made available as the semester progresses.

### Point sources:

- **Group peer review:** This is an in-class peer review. To get credit, you must bring 4 copies of your paper to review *and* your style manual, and you must actively participate in the review. There are two group peer reviews of Paper 3.
- **One-on-one peer review:** This is a more in-depth review of a single paper from one of your peers. Each review is graded out of 10, with 5 points for completing it, 7-8 points for adequate comments, and 9-10 points for superior comments.
- **Meeting with instructor:** for Paper 3, you will meet one-on-one with your instructor for individual feedback at an early stage of the writing process.
- **Final draft:** This is the final draft of your paper and is graded by your teaching associate. You may submit an optional rewrite for up to 15% of the points allocated to the assignment.
- **Writing Skills:** Junior Writing students begin the semester with a wide range of writing abilities: some are outstanding writers, and others need help with basic grammar. We have identified problems that many, but not all, students face with writing. As such, we developed a series of take-home writing exercises to address these problems. These are open-book assignments that can be completed by consulting your text, style manuals, or Internet resources. You may work in groups or ask questions of your teaching associate. You are responsible for downloading the assignments from Moodle and handing them in on time. The due dates are indicated on the schedule below. There are six writing exercises throughout the semester, each worth 10 points. The lowest grade of the six will be dropped.
- **Attendance and Participation:** This class will involve a lot of in-class group work and discussions. As such, your presence and participation are required. Attendance will either be intermittently assessed directly or through small in-class activities or writing tasks throughout the semester. While being in-class is important, participating and contributing to fruitful conversation will also be imperative. As such, it will be possible to lose points for lack of participation.
- **Extra Credit:** No extra credit is available in this course, including participation in Human Subjects studies. Attendance and turning assignments in on time is thus particularly important.

**Points possible:**

<b>Papers</b>	<b>Group Peer Review</b>	<b>1-on-1</b>	<b>Instructor Meeting</b>	<b>Final Paper</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Paper 1</i>	5	10	-	45	60
<i>Paper 2</i>	5	10	-	65	80
<i>Paper 3</i>	5	10	15	100	130
<i>Paper 4</i>	5	10	-	65	80
					<b>350</b>
<b>Writing skills</b>	10 x 6 assignments (lowest score dropped)				<b>50</b>
<b>In-class assignments &amp; participation</b>	(created for your section only)				<b>50</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>					<b>450</b>

**Grading scheme:**

94 – 100	A	80 – 82	B-	67 – 69	D+
90 – 93	A-	77 – 79	C+	63 – 66	D
87 – 89	B+	73 – 76	C	60 – 62	D-
83 – 86	B	70 – 72	C-	< 60	F

**What are the course policies & mechanics?**

**Attendance is mandatory:** You will be evaluated on your participation in peer review and in-class assignments. If you are absent, you cannot make up these points. If you have a long illness or an emergency, you should contact me **as soon as possible**. Please do not wait to contact me, as many options are then closed. I understand that emergencies come up, so if you do miss class, please follow up and contact me to let me know.

**The role of Prof. Hamel:** Prof. Hamel supervises all sections of this course and will visit your section. She is happy to meet with you to talk about your writing, your career goals, or the class. She is responsible for the overall structure of the course, including the course assignments, due dates, and point allocation. If you have problems logging into your Moodle site, contact both your TO and Prof. Hamel.

**Professional and academic integrity is required:** All students are expected to adhere scrupulously to the University policy concerning academic honesty, which is found in “Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities” at the following web site:

[http://www.umass.edu/honesty/sites/default/files/academic\\_honesty\\_policy\\_rev\\_sen\\_doc\\_no16-038a.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/honesty/sites/default/files/academic_honesty_policy_rev_sen_doc_no16-038a.pdf)

Plagiarism is representing someone else's work as your own. This includes copying information from any website without proper citation, copying someone else's paper, buying a paper, or letting someone copy your work. Plagiarism will be discussed in class and you will be expected to understand what constitutes plagiarism. You are expected to understand your sources sufficiently well to write your own paper *in your own words*. In general, **good writing means a minimal use of direct quotes**. Sources for the ideas that you have paraphrased must be cited. **Plagiarism also includes copying the words in a paper, even if the source of the material is cited.** In addition, plagiarism (as defined by the Code of Conduct) includes submitting work done for another course to this course without prior permission of your instructor.

All cases of plagiarism, regardless of the extent, will be referred immediately to the course coordinator. The *minimum* penalty is a zero on the assignment. The *maximum* penalty is a zero for the course. The

penalty will be decided by the course coordinator on a case-by-case basis. This penalty will be given both to a person who plagiarizes material and for anyone who allows his or her work to be copied. A report will be filed with the Academic Honesty Board.

**Disabilities, sports participation, and religious accommodations:** The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to making reasonable, effective and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help create a barrier-free campus. If you are in need of accommodation for a documented disability, register with Disability Services to have an accommodation letter sent to your faculty. It is your responsibility to initiate these services and to communicate with faculty ahead of time to manage accommodations in a timely manner. For more information, consult the Disability Services website at: <http://www.umass.edu/disability>

If you anticipate excused absences because of participation in sports or religious observances, please let your instructor know *ahead of time*. We will happily make accommodations, but we can be most effective in scheduling your work with plenty of notice.

## How will you succeed in this course?

- **Keep on top of your email.** I will communicate with you via email, and I expect that you will check it routinely, at least every day or two. To save paper, course assignments and other material will be posted on Moodle rather than distributed in class. There are public computer terminals available in the libraries and elsewhere on campus if you need one.
- **Ask if you have questions about the material.** I understand that students arrive in class with different levels of knowledge and interests. If you need more background or help, please ask!
- **Participate in class.** I strive for an informal, interactive class environment in which questions and discussion are routine, enjoyable and provocative. I ask that you:
  1. Take responsibility for participation. I expect you to be ready to discuss, ask questions, and to look alert (bring caffeine if you like). I understand that speaking up in class is more difficult for some people than others, so we'll make sure to have a variety of discussion formats ranging from the whole group to very small groups.
  2. **Do not to check your phone, or engage in other distracting behavior** while in class. It goes without saying that this is distracting to your fellow classmates, and disrespectful to me as the instructor.
- **Bring extra paper** to each class for in-class assignments, writing prompts, and other activities.
- **Don't procrastinate.** When we've asked students in previous semesters what they wish they had done differently in this class, they've said they wished they hadn't procrastinated. The workload is manageable in this class if you keep up. We've tried not to lump assignments all together!
- **Don't neglect your style manual and *Grammar Girl*.** We've selected these to be readable resources for you. You will need these to edit each other's papers, as well as your own. A good style manual is one of the books you should save after your college career.
- **Take peer review seriously.** The success of this course rests in large part on your attention to peer review. This is an incredibly valuable skill to learn, as most contexts in which you will write after you finish your degree incorporate peer review at some level—ask the Junior Writing TOs and professors about their reliance on peer review! We'll help you to develop your skills as a reviewer. You will be awarded points based on your participation in peer review, and these points can't be made up if you are absent.

- **Allow time for revising your papers *before* you bring them in for peer review.** Peer review will be most helpful to you if you've already got a draft that you feel to be reasonably complete. Revision is often most effective when you write something and then let it sit for a day or two, and then revisit it with fresh eyes.
- **Don't be troubled by comments on your work.** Some people like the number of comments they get on their writing in this class; other people are a little bothered by it, especially at first. We work from the philosophy that virtually all writing can be improved, and constructive comments are always worth considering. If you disagree with your peer comments, you don't have to accept the proposed changes—you just need to articulate why you disagree in your cover letter that you will include with your final draft.
- **Take lots of care with your final papers.** The final copies of the four papers that you hand in should be as close to perfect as you can make them, both in content and in presentation. In class, we'll review the expectations for each paper and clarify any confusion. Feel free to ask if your TO or the course coordinator will read a draft for you (but allow plenty of time). Carefully check your paper against the assignment so you can see what's expected—it's a shame to lose points by failing to meet length requirements or something similar.
- **Participate in class.** We strive for an informal, interactive class environment in which questions and

## Due Dates – Spring 2018

*Required:* Please bring your writing texts on any day with peer review.

**\*\*Course Schedule and Due dates:** The following is the course schedule and due dates for major assignments. These assignments and readings currently listed on the schedule **do not reflect** the **content** readings or assignments that will be assigned to a portion of the classes. Content-related readings will typically be short (~20 pages). I will always give you reasonable notice of readings and any short assignments that will be due that are not listed on the syllabus- but **be prepared to have additional work each week that is not listed yet.**

**DUE** = items due that day in-class; **READ** = assigned readings for the next class

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1	<b>Jan. 23</b> <i>READ:</i> Syllabus & Paper #1 assignment	<b>Jan. 25</b> <i>READ:</i> Grammar Girl – Intro & Chapter 1
2	<b>Jan. 30</b> <i>DUE:</i> Writing Skills #1	<b>Feb. 1</b> <i>DUE:</i> 4 copies of Paper #1 for Group Peer Review [Papers given to Experienced Peer Reviewer]
3	<b>Feb. 6</b> <i>DUE:</i> Writing Skills #2 [Outside reviews returned]	<b>Feb. 8</b> <i>DUE:</i> 1 revised copy of Paper #1 for One-on-One Peer Review <i>READ:</i> Grammar Girl – Chapters 2 & 3
4	<b>Feb. 13</b> <i>DUE:</i> Final Paper #1	<b>Feb. 15</b> <i>DUE:</i> Bring in article chosen for Paper #2
5	<b>Feb. 20</b> <i>DUE:</i> Writing Skills #3	<b>Feb. 22</b> <i>DUE:</i> 4 copies of Paper #2 for Group Peer Review [Papers given to Experienced Peer Reviewer] <i>READ:</i> Grammar Girl – Chapter 4

6	<b>Feb. 27</b> <i>DUE:</i> Writing Skills #4 [Outside reviews returned]	<b>Mar. 1</b> <i>DUE:</i> Optional rewrite of Paper #1
7	<b>Mar. 6</b> <i>DUE:</i> 1 revised copy of Paper #2 for One-on-One Peer Review	<b>Mar. 8</b> <i>DUE:</i> Final Paper #2 <i>READ:</i> Grammar Girl – Chapters 5 & 6
8	<b>Mar. 13</b> NO CLASS – Spring Recess	<b>Mar. 15</b> NO CLASS – Spring Recess
9	<b>Mar. 20</b> INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS – class does not meet	<b>Mar. 22</b> INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS – class does not meet
10	<b>Mar. 27</b> <i>DUE:</i> Writing Skills #5	<b>Mar. 29</b> <i>DUE:</i> 4 copies of full version of Paper #3 for Group Peer Review [Papers given to Experienced Peer Reviewer]
11	<b>Apr. 3</b> [Outside review  rned] <i>DUE:</i> Optional rewrite of Paper #2 <i>READ:</i> Grammar Girl – Chapter 7	<b>Apr. 5</b> <i>DUE:</i> 1 revised copy of full version of Paper #3 for One-on-One Peer Review
12	<b>Apr. 10</b> <i>DUE:</i> Final Paper #3 <i>READ:</i> Grammar Girl – Chapter 8	<b>Apr. 12</b> <i>Tentative:</i> Career Panel <i>DUE:</i> Writing Skills #6
13	<b>Apr. 17</b> NO CLASS – Monday schedule	<b>Apr. 19</b> <i>DUE:</i> 4 copies of Paper #4 for Group Peer Review [Papers given to Experienced Peer Reviewer]
14	<b>Apr. 24</b> [Outside reviews returned]	<b>Apr. 26</b> <i>DUE:</i> 1 copy of Paper #4 for One-on-One Peer Review
15	<b>May 1</b> <i>DUE:</i> Final paper #4 <i>DUE:</i> Optional rewrite of Paper #3	