

# Scientific writing and presentations

Fall 2013

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CONS608G / MEES608G / BIOL608R

Instructor: Keryn Gedan

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Office: BPS 4216

Office hours: by appointment

**Course meeting:** Thurs. 3:00-4:30pm, BPS 1208

**Course overview:** This seminar is a space for friendly peer reviews. We will exchange abstracts and share presentations and provide one another with constructive feedback. Additionally, we will do in-class writing exercises and discuss the qualities of good writing and presentations. Through practice and iterative revisions, your writing and presentations will improve markedly!

**Course objectives:**

For students to be able to write a scientific abstract and scientific presentations for submission at an academic conference.

**Textbook:** Schimel, J. 2012. *Writing Science: How to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded*. Oxford University Press

**Grading:**

30% Attendance

50% 5 Assignments (Abstracts 1, Abstract 2, Poster, Graphs, PPT presentation)

20% Feedback provided to your peers – this will be peer evaluated

**Schedule and deadlines:**

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment – due in class
(0)	9/5	<b>Jewish new year – NO CLASS</b>		
1	9/12	What makes good writing?	<b>BEFORE CLASS:</b> Schimel Ch. 1	
2	9/19	Writing abstracts	Schimel Ch. 2-3	Abstracts 1: data paper, review paper
3	9/26	Writing about your own work	Schimel Ch. 4-6	Abstract 2: your own work
4	10/3	Re-writing your own work	Schimel Ch. 7-9	Revise Abstract 2
5	10/10	Palatable posters	Schimel 10-12	Poster
6	10/17	Revising posters	Schimel	Revise poster

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			13-15	
7	10/24	What makes a perfect ppt?	Schimmel 16-18	Powerpoint outline
8	10/31	Figures & graphs		Figures and graphs
9	11/7	Presentations 1.1A		Powerpoint presentations – Group 1
10	11/14	Presentations 1.1B		Powerpoint presentations – Group 2
11	11/21	Presentations 1.2		Revised ppts in pairs
12	11/28	<b>THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS</b>		
13	12/5	Presentations 1.3A		Revised ppts – Group 1
14	12/12	Presentations 1.3B		Revised ppts – Group 2

**Abstracts 1:** From the provided reading list, choose: 1) a review paper, 2) a data paper. Do not read the paper's abstract before doing the assignment! After reading papers *except the abstract*, write your own abstracts to summarize each the paper. Word limit: 250 words per article. You may read the abstract after you finish writing if you like.

**Abstract 2:** Write an abstract that describes a piece of scholarly work that you have done or are doing. If you are not currently working on anything, select something that you worked hard on in the past, such as an undergraduate thesis project or major research paper. Summarize the work in a 250 word abstract. Your target is an international conference (i.e. a broad audience within your field).

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## Helpful writing acronyms

**S**: Simple  
**U**: Unexpected  
**C**: Concrete  
**C**: Credible  
**E**: Emotional  
**S**: Stories

### Narrative

#### OCAR:

**O**: Opening  
**C**: Challenge  
**A**: Action  
**R**: Resolution

#### ABCDE:

**A**: Action  
**B**: Background  
**D**: Development  
**C**: Climax  
**E**: Ending

#### LDR:

**L**: Lead  
**D**: Development  
**R**: Resolution