

MSE 6754 | Georgia Institute of Technology | Fall 2021

Tue & Thu 9:30 - 10:45 | D.M. Smith 203

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Office: 255 Love | Office hours by appointment

Fall 2021 COVID-19 Addendum

Although the pandemic is still with us, the course will meet in person. However, since situation may change, both the location (form) of our meetings and the content of the course may need to be modified.

Course Description

This course has two foci: (a) advanced skills in science writing and editing, and (b) skills needed for creating and delivering effective oral presentations. Students will learn the fundamentals of writing clear and concise scientific prose and apply them to texts—articles, thesis chapters, proposals—based on their own research.

Applying principles of effective editing, students will analyze documents and edit them for clarity and coherence. Students will also learn how to design effective slides to use in electronic presentations. Further, participants will create and deliver two presentations, one for non-technical audience and for technical audience of their peers. Finally, the course participants will become skilled at evaluating the presentations of others and providing them with constructive feedback. Both presentations will be recorded so that students can evaluate their own presentations and use the assessment to further improve their presentation skills.

Course Requirements

Students will need to actively participate in a number of classroom activities: in-class discussion, editing, writing, peer reviewing, workshops, and presenting. There will be in-class writing and editing exercises, in-class peer review of writing, editing, and presentations; homework in the form of short reading and editing assignments; a draft of a literature review (suitable as a portion of a dissertation proposal or chapter, article, or research proposal); two formal presentations with slides—one, the so-called Three-Minute Thesis (3MT), designed for a non-technical audience (3 min. + Q & A), another one crafted for a conference audience (10-15 min.); and written self-evaluations of oral presentations.

Each presentation will be recorded so that students can critique their own performance for their self-evaluation write-up. Students will be required to buy an SD HC I card (of at least 4 GB and rated class 10) to record their presentations. I use a SanDisk, SD HC I (10)—the camera name and model is Canon HD, VIXIA HF E 500.

Students will be required to keep before and after versions of their presentations and upload them to Canvas when they submit their self-evaluations.

All reading assignments are posted on Canvas as PDF files.

Grading

Though peer evaluations will be done on many assignments, the peer review score will not be considered when assigning the grade. Active participation, which includes all in-class activities or out of class assignments, including peer reviews, self- evaluations, and all formal assignments is part of your grade. All assignments (requiring Canvas submissions) will contribute equally to your final grade. There will be no final exam.

Electronic Devices in Class

This is a small interactive class during which you will be expected to be fully engaged in discussion. [Please bring laptops to class during the portion of the course focused on writing](#) as we will use a shared document in One Drive to collectively revise sentences or text excerpts. Please do not email, text, or otherwise do non-class activity on your devices.

Attendance

Attendance is required for all classes. Missing class means you miss assignments that may or may not be able to be made-up. Students who know that they will miss a class to attend a conference or out of town professional interview must inform me well before the date. Each *unexcused absence will lower a student's final grade by ½ a letter grade.* Excused absences require documentation and a student may only have 2 excused absences during a semester.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs. If needed, I will make classroom accommodations for students with documented disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>).

Help Create Resistance to Sexual Harassment

MSE is committed to a community that actively resists sexual and gender harassment. If you see or experience any of the following: sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault and stalking, resources are available:

- **Confidential VOICE Advocates** (www.voice.gatech.edu) can provide support 24/7 and explore resources and options. If after hours, call GTPD dispatcher at 404-894-2500 and ask to speak to the On-Call VOICE Advocate. You do not need to make a report nor provide any information other than your phone number for a VOICE advocate to contact you.

- Sexual violence or harassment can be reported directly to Georgia Tech’s **Title IX Coordinator**, James Newsome, (404) 385-5583 burnsnewsome@gatech.edu.

Faculty, Staff and TAs are mandatory reporters and are required to inform the Title IX Coordinator should they become aware that you or any student has experienced sexual violence or sexual harassment. **Website:** For more information about MSE CRSH, click the link: <https://www.mse.gatech.edu/values/crsh>

**The course rests on foundations originally designed by Dr. Lisa Rosenstein and Dr. Amanda Gable.*

Fall 2021 schedule:

Week 1

Tue, Aug. 24: Introducing the course, and ourselves.

Thu, Aug. 26: Writing in science

Read before class: "Writing in Science" & "Science Writing as Storytelling" (Schimel).

Nature Physics editorial "Elements of Style."

Week 2

Tue, Aug. 31: Clarity: Actions

Read before class: "Lesson 3: Actions" (Williams).

Thu, Sep. 2: Clarity: Characters

Read before class: "Lesson 4: Characters" (Williams).

Week 3

Tue, Sep. 7: Clarity: Cohesion and Coherence

Read before class: "Lesson 5: Cohesion and Coherence" (Williams).

Thu, Sep. 9: Clarity: Emphasis

Read before class: "Lesson 6: Emphasis" (Williams)

Week 4

Tue, Sep. 14: Peer feedback passage workshop.

Thu, Sep. 16: Present workshopped passages to the rest of class.

Week 5

Tue, Sep. 21: Making a Story Sticky

Read before class: Schimel, chapter 3

Thu, Sep. 23: Story Structure (OCAR)

Read before class: Schimel, chapter 4

Week 6

Tue, Sep. 28: The Opening

Read before class: Schimel, chapter 5

Thu, Sep. 30: The Funnel

Read before class: Schimel, chapter 6

Week 7

Tue, Oct. 5: Individual work at home, no class meeting: Draft (rewrite) ~400-600-word Introduction

Thu, Oct. 7: Peer-review & workshop your Introductions

Week 8

Tue, Oct. 12: FALL BREAK

Thu, Oct. 14: The Challenge

Read before class: Schimel, chapter 7

Week 9

Tue, Oct. 19: Resolution

Read before class: Schimel, chapter 9

Thu, Oct. 21: Internal Structure of an Article & Paragraphs

Read before class: Schimel, chapters 10 & 11

Week 10

Tue, Oct. 26: Lecture on effective oral presentations

Thu, Oct. 28: Draft your 3MT presentations: individual work at home, no class meeting.

Week 11

Tue, Nov. 2: Peer feedback workshop: 3MT

Thu, Nov. 4: 3MT Presentations: Group 1

Week 12

Tue, Nov. 9: 3MT Presentations: Group 2

Thu, Nov. 11: Draft your conference-style presentations: individual work at home, no class meeting.

Week 13

Tue, Nov. 16: Draft your conference-style presentations: individual work at home, no class meeting.

Thu, Nov. 18: Conference-style presentations: in-class peer feedback workshop.

Week 14

Thu, Nov. 23: Conference-style presentations: Group 1.

Thu, Nov. 24: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15

Tue, Nov. 29: Conference-style presentations: Group 2.

Thu, Dec. 2: Conference-style presentations: Group 3.

Week 16

Tue, Dec. 7: Unfinished business and/or end-of-semester reflections