

# Writing for Professional Publications

HSC5956 | 3 Credits | Spring 2024

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## Course Info

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**INSTRUCTOR** Liana S.E. Hone, MS, MPH, PhD  
Office: Florida Gym 75  
Office Phone: (352) 294-0547  
Email: lhone@ufl.edu  
Preferred Method of Contact: **Canvas**

**OFFICE HOURS** By Appointment

**LOCATION** Online UF Canvas

**TIME** Online, Asynchronous

## DESCRIPTION

Procedures and practices in scholarly writing for health-related professional publications, including topic selection, literature searches, internet applications, documentation, manuscript preparation, reasons for rejection, and legal and ethical considerations.

## PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

This course has no prerequisites, but reviewing the recommended materials is strongly encouraged.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

**Hoffman, A.** (2018). Writing in the biological sciences: A comprehensive resource for scientific communication. Oxford University Press.

**Silvia, P. J.** (2015). Write it up: Practical strategies for writing and publishing journal articles. American Psychological Association.

## RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Graff, G., Birkenstein, C., & Durst, R. (2018). They say, I say. The moves that matter in academic writing. WW Norton & Company.

Silvia, P. J. (2007). How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing. American Psychological Association.

Zinsser, W. (2006). On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction. New York, NY.

## OVERVIEW

The course will focus on the application of the following critical steps to scholarly writing in health-related professional publications: Topic selection, literature searches, note taking and outlining, manuscript preparation,

aspects of manuscript submission other than the writing itself, including journal outlet selection, and drafting a cover letter, informal and formal critique, informal and formal revision, reasons why manuscripts get accepted and rejected for publication, commenting on others' writing both formally and informally, along with legal and ethical considerations. The course will cover two types of professional publication: (1) systematic/scoping literature review and (2) report of empirical research findings. If you are a PhD student, the goal is to produce a manuscript that is at least close to ready for submission for publication in a scholarly journal. This goal is both ambitious and reachable!

## FORMAT

All lectures will be prerecorded. There will be weekly Power Hours, and all MS students must attend one per month (four total over the semester), whereas all PhD students must attend four per month (12 total over the semester). The recorded lectures will be stored in a cloud accessible through Canvas. Our meetings will be highly interactive, with a mixture of lectures, discussions, and "workshop" sessions where you work in pairs or small groups to critique each other's writing with my help. You are expected to view prerecorded lectures and complete required reading prior to our Power Hours.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to successfully:

1. Select a topic for academic writing and hone it into a more specific topic.
2. Conduct effective literature searches using multiple methods at initial and subsequent stages.
3. Develop effective note-taking techniques for documenting literature search results and for ideas regarding manuscript structure and content.
4. Differentiate two types of publication: Systematic/scoping literature reviews and reports of empirical research findings.
5. Prepare an initial draft of a manuscript.
6. Respond to informal critiques from collaborators and revise an initial manuscript draft accordingly.
7. Master aspects of manuscript submission other than paper writing, including journal selection and cover letter writing.
8. Respond to formal critiques from reviewers and revise a manuscript accordingly.
9. Understand reasons why manuscripts are accepted and rejected for publication.
10. Comment effectively on others' writing, both informally and formally.
11. Write with consideration for relevant legal and ethical considerations.

## DEVELOPMENTAL NOTES

This course was developed by Dr. Megan McVay and Dr. Robert Leeman and adapted by Dr. Liana Hone for online MS students and residential PhD students.

## Requirements (100%)

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### PARTICIPATION/ATTENDANCE (10%)

While I will not be taking attendance per se, there will be a course participation component to your grade. You will find it challenging to excel in this course if you do not attend Power Hours. There will be regular Power Hours, and all MS students must attend one per month (four total over the semester), whereas all PhD students must attend four per month (12 total over the semester). These meetings will be highly interactive, with a mixture of instruction, discussions, and "workshop" sessions where you work together to critique each other's writing with my help.

## FORMAL COMMENTARY (2 PARTS; 15%)

**FORMAL COMMENTARY PART 1 (5%):** Select a very recent (i.e., published either online or in a journal issue within the past three years) brief report or full-length empirical paper on a research topic of interest to you. Submit a PDF of the publication that will form the basis for your commentary (Part 2).

**FORMAL COMMENTARY PART 2 (10%):** Prepare a brief commentary per principles for “Comments on Published Articles” for publication in the journal *The American Psychologist* (i.e., no more than 1000 words not counting title, abstract, and up to 10 APA-formatted references; [apa.org/pubs/journals/amp](http://apa.org/pubs/journals/amp)). This commentary (on your previously submitted and approved paper from Part 1) will comprise five main components:

1. Brief summary of the published paper, particularly the main findings.
2. Discussion of its primary strengths.
3. Discussion of its primary weaknesses or limitations.
4. Discussion of the implications of the findings reported for research in the field going forward for clinical practice and/or public health.
5. Summary and conclusions.

Example: Najman, J.M. (2016). Commentary on Ally et al. (2016\*): Can alcohol market segmentation provide a basis for alcohol policy? *Addiction*, 111(9), 1580-1581.

\*Note your selected article will be from the past three years.

## INFORMAL CRITIQUES OF MANUSCRIPTS (2 PARTS; 15%)

**INFORMAL CRITIQUES OF MANUSCRIPTS PART 1 (5%):** You will be asked to complete two informal manuscript critiques in the course. One will be a brief critique of a draft manuscript I send you by Canvas as if I were your colleague asking for feedback regarding a manuscript draft. You will respond via Canvas with an informal 500-word critical summary. Your informal summary will include the following brief components:

1. Discussion of its primary strengths.
2. Discussion of its primary weaknesses or limitations.
3. Description of the changes you recommend focusing on in a subsequent draft.

**INFORMAL CRITIQUES OF MANUSCRIPTS PART 2 (10%):** The other will be a detailed critique of the initial manuscript draft of one of your class colleagues. You will provide the same type of 500-word critical summary as in the first assignment and then detailed, substantive changes on the document using tracked changes.

## FORMAL MANUSCRIPT REVIEW (10%)

I will send you a completed manuscript draft from one of your course colleagues for your review as if you were a peer reviewer for a journal. You will read the manuscript carefully and prepare a formal, 750-word critical summary. Your critical summary will include the following brief components:

1. Summary of the manuscript, including its potential contribution to the field.
2. Discussion of its primary strengths.
3. Discussion of its primary limitations and weaknesses.
4. Description of the changes you recommend focusing on in a subsequent draft.

You will not provide edits or comments in the manuscript with tracked changes. You will only provide the critical summary.

## FINAL PROJECT (50%)

Your final project will be a complete, brief report-length manuscript. As part of this assignment, I will ask you to select a journal outlet for your manuscript and to provide a brief rationale for your choice. The “default” format for the final project will be a 12-page, double-spaced manuscript containing all parts as specified according to APA format, with the page limit including the text of the paper itself (i.e., the Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion), not the other parts of the manuscript (i.e., title page, abstract,

acknowledgments, tables, figures, and references). Please use 12-point font and 1-inch margins. All three drafts of the manuscript should be completed in the same format. If you are a PhD student, exceptions to the default format can be made with the instructor's permission to match the format of the journal outlet you selected.

**FINAL PROJECT OPTION 1:** An empirical report describing the results of either primary or secondary data analyses. If you are a PhD student, should you select this option and do not have data of your own to analyze and write up, you may ask your mentor or another faculty member (I may also be able to contribute data for this purpose). If you are an MS student, I am happy to contribute data for this purpose—please note this in your FINAL PROJECT PART 1 submission. I recognize that students in the class are likely to be at differing levels regarding their data analytic skills. Thus, there are a few different possibilities in terms of conducting analyses for your manuscript:

1. You may construct a simple, straightforward data analytic plan that you can carry out yourself: The statistics need not be complicated for this project. Given the brief report format, all reports should report preliminary/descriptive results, followed by 2-3 primary findings. This is a good option for MS students.
2. You may conduct the analyses with the help of a collaborator: A fellow graduate student, post-doc, or another faculty member. However, if you choose this option, you must declare the individual or individuals with whom you will be collaborating. If one or more of these collaborators are not faculty, I will ask you to briefly describe their qualifications (e.g., the coursework they have taken; empirical manuscripts published). Remember that you will be responsible for promptly having these individuals work with you on these analyses. This is a good option for PhD students.

**FINAL PROJECT OPTION 2:** A report describing the results of a systematic/scoping literature review on a topic of interest to you. For the second option, you will essentially be conducting a partial, focused systematic/scoping review since a formal review requires at least two investigators to complete. The focus of this review will be the very recent literature (i.e., the past three years) for a topic of your choosing. The objective will be for you to identify a topic broad enough that several research groups have conducted relevant research but narrow enough so that your final report will cover approximately 12-15 papers published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. For PhD students, with all things being equal, I suggest you choose the empirical paper option. In most cases, it will be more feasible for you to produce an empirical manuscript nearly ready for submission than a systematic review manuscript. Again, a formal, systematic review will require at least one collaborator, so at best, during this class, you will only be able to conduct about half of the work of a full systematic review during this course. Also, in many cases, the narrowness of the review requirements for this class will lead to a manuscript that is not competitive for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Thus, in many cases, you would have to expand your literature search beyond the course requirements to make this manuscript sufficient for acceptance for publication. That said, a scoping review is often a good choice for an MS student. Other types of reviews (e.g., narrative) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The final project will be completed incrementally throughout the course and will consist of the following parts:

### **FINAL PROJECT PART 1 (5%)**

Manuscript topic selection and plan: You will provide the topic of your manuscript, including the data set you will use and any collaborators who will assist you with the statistical analyses, should you choose the empirical manuscript option. Due to time constraints, I cannot provide any statistical consultation or conduct any statistical analyses for these projects. Please also provide your primary hypotheses along with the specific variables you will examine and the statistical analyses that will be undertaken to address these hypotheses. For the systematic review option, please include two databases you will search for literature, an initial set of keywords you will use to search, and an initial set of criteria for papers to be included in your systematic review. This assignment has no strict word or page limit; however, it should be at most 2-3 pages. There may be a possibility for minor changes to hypotheses and specific variables selected with instructor permission;

however, your general topic and selected dataset will not be changeable except in the event of a problem that arises that will make the completion of a manuscript with that topic and dataset impossible. Again, this change would be with the instructor's permission only.

#### **FINAL PROJECT PART 2 (5%)**

Journal outlet selection with brief rationale: You will select an appropriate journal outlet given your manuscript topic along with a brief 1-2 paragraph rationale for your choice.

#### **FINAL PROJECT PART 3 (5%)**

Initial manuscript draft: This will be a complete draft of your manuscript, including all components as specified per APA style, except the abstract, which will be omitted.

#### **FINAL PROJECT PART 4 (15%)**

Response to informal critiques of the initial draft of the manuscript (5%) and revision (10%): This project component will have two main parts. (A) First, you will respond via Canvas to two informal critiques of your initial draft, one from me and one from one of your class colleagues. Both informal critiques will include an overview via email message and comments directly in your manuscript draft. Your responses to the informal critiques via email will make up 5% of your final grade. (B) The second part will be a revised, second complete draft of your manuscript, including the abstract, which will make up 10% of your final grade.

#### **FINAL PROJECT PART 5 (5%)**

Cover letter for submission of your revised manuscript to your selected journal outlet: You will complete a cover letter to accompany your revised, second complete manuscript draft. This letter will be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief of your selected journal. The cover letter will be comprised of the following:

1. One paragraph statement that the research and manuscript drafting processes were conducted ethically.
2. One paragraph overview of the results reported in your manuscript.
3. One paragraph description of the importance and novel contribution to the field/extant literature that your manuscript offers.
4. Three suggested reviewers who are experts in your subject area and would be qualified to review your manuscript, along with their contact information.

#### **FINAL PROJECT PART 6 (15%)**

Response to formal critiques (5%) and final version of the manuscript (10%): (A) You will receive formal critiques of the second, revised version of your manuscript, one from me and one from one of your class colleagues. These formal critiques will not include comments on the manuscript draft itself. You will write a formal response addressing each reviewer's comment, stating whether you revised the manuscript accordingly and, if so, what changes you made. Please also identify in parentheses the page number where each change is located in the manuscript. This formal, written response will make up 5% of your final grade. (B) Lastly, a final draft of your manuscript revised based on the formal, written critique will make up 10% of your final grade.

#### **EXTRA CREDIT**

Any requests for extra credit or special exceptions to these grading policies will be interpreted as an honor code violation (i.e., asking for preferential treatment) and handled accordingly.

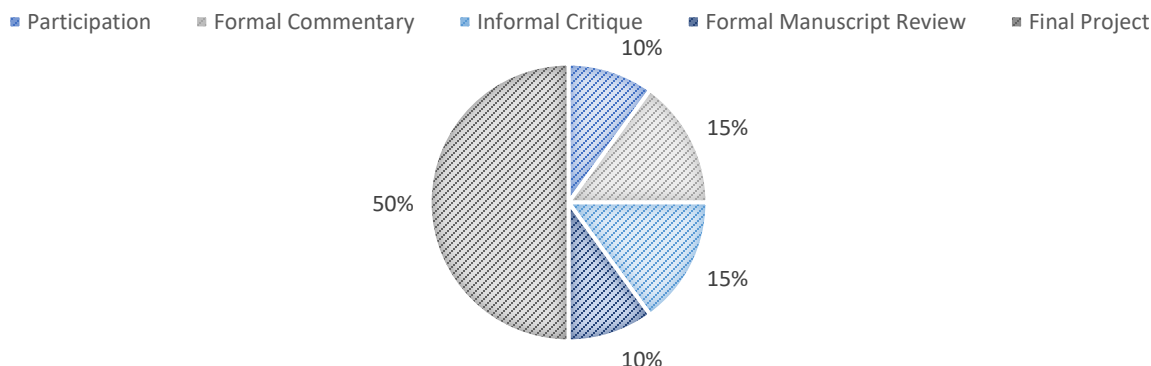
## Grading

### OVERVIEW

Activity, project, and participation will be uploaded directly into Canvas. Grades are usually available within 2-3 weeks. More detailed information regarding current UF grading policies can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

### GRADE BREAKDOWN

Evaluation Components	Approximate % of Total Grade
Participation	60/600 = 10%
Formal Commentary Part 1	30/600 = 5%
Formal Commentary Part 2	60/600 = 10%
Informal Critique of Manuscripts Part 1	30/600 = 5%
Informal Critique Manuscripts Part 2	60/600 = 10%
Formal Manuscript Review	60/600 = 10%
Final Project Part 1	30/600 = 5%
Final Project Part 2	30/600 = 5%
Final Project Part 3	30/600 = 5%
Final Project Part 4	90/600 = 15%
Final Project Part 5	30/600 = 5%
Final Project Part 6	90/600 = 15%



### GRADING SCALE

Letter Grade	Points Needed to Earn Each Letter Grade	Percent of Total Points Associated with Each Letter Grade	GPA Impact of Each Letter Grade
A	$600 \times .94 = 564$	94%>	4.0
A-	$600 \times .9 = 540$	90%	3.67
B+	$600 \times .87 = 522$	87%	3.33
B	$600 \times .84 = 504$	84%	3.0
B-	$600 \times .8 = 480$	80%	2.67
C+	$600 \times .77 =$	77%	2.33
C	$600 \times .74 =$	74%	2.0
C-	$600 \times .7 =$	70%	1.67
D+	$600 \times .67 =$	67%	1.33
D	$600 \times .64 =$	64%	1.0
D-	$600 \times .6 =$	60%	0.67
E		0%	0



## SUCCESS AND STUDY TIPS FROM A FORMER STUDENT

- The weekly readings are essential to project completion, especially early in the semester (e.g., the formal commentary).
- You cannot just open the assignment and expect to be able to complete it without first watching lectures, completing assigned readings, and planning—allot enough time for this (i.e., don't wait until 11 PM Sunday!).
- Come prepared with ideas and concerns when you attend Power Hour. This is your opportunity to get your questions answered early and often!
- Writing can be intimidating—build connections and support systems with your peers early and use them.
- **Start FINAL PROJECT PART 3 (i.e., 1st draft) no later than the end of week 4 or the beginning of week 5.**

## University Policies

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### ATTENDANCE POLICY

While I will not be taking attendance per se, there will be a course participation component to your grade (10%). You will find it challenging to excel in this course if you do not attend Power Hours. There will be weekly Power Hours, and all MS students must attend one per month (four total over the semester). PhD students must attend 12. These meetings will be highly interactive, with a mixture of instruction, discussions, and “workshop” sessions where you work together to critique each other’s writing with my help.

### PERSONAL CONDUCT POLICY

Students are expected to exhibit behaviors that reflect highly upon themselves and our University. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that violate this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you must report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to the appropriate personnel. Please consult the instructor or TA in this class if you have any questions or concerns.

### MAKE-UP POLICY

A student experiencing an illness should visit the UF Student Health Care Center or their preferred healthcare provider to seek medical advice and obtain documentation. If you have an illness, family emergency, or death, please contact the Dean of Students Office ([www.dso.ufl.edu](http://www.dso.ufl.edu)) and follow the DSO Care Team procedures for documentation and submission of a request for make-up assignment (<https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>). The DSO will contact the instructor. Do not provide any documentation to the instructor regarding illness or family emergency. This is your personal and protected information. The DSO is qualified to receive and verify the documents you provide. The instructor will follow the recommendations from the DSO. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course will be consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting their Get Started page at <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. Students must share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

## COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

## COPYRIGHT POLICY

The materials used in this course are copyrighted. The content presented is the property of UF and may not be duplicated in any format without permission from the College of Health and Human Performance and UF and may not be used for any commercial purposes. Content includes but is not limited to syllabi, videos, slides, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy or distribute the course materials unless permission is expressly granted. Students violating this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the UF Conduct Code.

## DISCLAIMER

This syllabus represents the objectives and tentative plans for the course. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes will be communicated, are common, and should be expected.

## Getting Help

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### HEALTH & WELLNESS

- U Matter, We Care: [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) 352-392-1575
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [counseling.ufl.edu](http://counseling.ufl.edu) 352-392-1575
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services: 352-392-1161
- University Police Department: [police.ufl.edu](http://police.ufl.edu) 352-392-1111

### ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- E-learning Technical Support: [lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml](http://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml) 352-392-4357
- Career Connections Center: 352-392-1601
- Career Assistance and Counseling: [career.ufl.edu](http://career.ufl.edu)
- Library Support: [cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask](http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask)
- Teaching Center: [teachingcenter.ufl.edu](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu) 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420
- Writing Studio [writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/](http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/) 352-846-1138
- On-Campus Student Complaints: [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/](http://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/)
- On-Line Students Complaints: [distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/](http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/)

### CIVILITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Office of the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) [www.cdo.ufl.edu/](http://www.cdo.ufl.edu/)



## Weekly Schedule Assignments Due Sunday at 11:59 PM

Week	Topic	Reading/Due	Date	%
<b>Week 1</b>	Syllabus Science and Scientific Communication Literature Sources / APA Formatting Reading a Scientific Research Article Comments on Published Articles	Reading: Hoffman Ch. 1, 4, 10 Due: FORMAL COMMENTARY PART 1	1/14 11:59P	5%
<b>Week 2</b>	Fundamentals of Scientific Writing Style Fundamentals of Scientific Writing Composition Tone and Style Writing with Others	Reading: Hoffman Ch. 2-3; Silva Ch. 2-3 Due: FORMAL COMMENTARY PART 2	1/21 11:59P	10%
<b>Week 3</b>	Research Papers (i.e., Empirical Report) Review Articles (i.e., Systematic/Scoping) Writing Groups	Reading: Hoffman Ch. 7, 11 Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 1 (Topic Selection & Plan)	1/28 11:59P	5%
<b>Week 4</b>	Basics of Statistics Data, Figures, and Tables How to Pick a Journal	Reading: Hoffman Ch. 5-6; Silva Ch. 1 Due: INFORMAL CRITIQUES OF MANUSCRIPTS PART 1	2/4 11:59P	5%
<b>Week 5</b>	Writing the Intro / Method Writing the Results / Discussion Arcana and Miscellany	Reading: Silva Ch. 4-8 Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 2 (Journal Selection & Rationale)	2/11 11:59P	5%
<b>Week 6</b>	<i>No Lecture</i>	<i>Work on 1<sup>st</sup> Draft</i>	---	---
<b>Week 7</b>	<i>Lectures as Needed</i>	Reading: See Canvas Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 3 <b>(1<sup>st</sup> Draft)</b>	2/25 11:59P	5%
<b>Week 8</b>	Revising and Editing Dealing with Journals	Reading: Hoffman Ch. 8; Silva Ch. 9 Due: INFORMAL CRITIQUES OF MANUSCRIPTS PART 2	3/3 11:59P	10%
<b>Week 9</b>	<i>Lectures as Needed</i>	Reading: See Canvas Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 4A (Informal Critiques Responses)	3/10 11:59P	5%
<b>Spring Break</b>	<i>No Lecture</i>	<i>Work on 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft</i>	---	---
<b>Week 10</b>	<i>Lectures as Needed</i>	Reading: See Canvas Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 4B <b>(2<sup>nd</sup> Draft)</b>	3/24 11:59P	10%
<b>Week 11</b>	Peer Review Process	Reading: See Canvas Due: FORMAL MANUSCRIPT REVIEW	3/31 11:59P	10%
<b>Week 12</b>	Cover Letters	Reading: See Canvas Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 5 (Cover Letter)	4/7 11:59P	5%
<b>Week 13</b>	Response to Reviewers	Reading: See Canvas Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 6A (Formal Critiques Responses)	4/14 11:59P	5%
<b>Week 14</b>	<i>No Lecture</i>	<i>Work on Final Draft</i>	---	---

<b>Week 15</b>	Issues in Academic Publishing Predatory Journals	Reading: See Canvas Due: FINAL PROJECT PART 6B <b>(Final Draft)</b>	4/28 11:59P	10%
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