Writing for Professional Publications

HSC5956 | 3 Credits | Fall 2025

Department of Health
Education and Behavior
College of Health and Human Performance
UNIVERSITY *of* FLORIDA

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Course Information

INSTRUCTOR	**Liana S.E. Hone, MS, MPH, PhD** **Office**: Florida Gym 75 **Phone**: (352) 294-0547 **Email**: lhone@ufl.edu **Preferred**: Canvas
OFFICE HOURS	Wednesday 5:00 PM EST
LOCATION	Canvas
TIME	Asynchronous

REQUIRED BOOKS

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 BOOKS

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.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe importance of peer-reviewed literature and importance to multiple health behavior and education careers in practice and research.
2. Differentiate between empirical research reports and systematic/scoping literature reviews.
3. Identify and refine a research topic suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
4. Navigate the manuscript submission process, including journal selection and cover letter writing.
5. Understand importance of, and conduct effective literature searches using scholarly databases.
6. Develop organized screening and data extraction practices to track records, reports, and studies.
7. Draft a complete manuscript following APA style and formatting guidelines.
8. Respond to peer review, including drafting responses to reviewers, and revise manuscripts accordingly.

9. Understand common reasons for manuscript acceptance, invitations to revise, and rejection in peer-reviewed journals.
10. Apply ethical and legal considerations in publishing, including appropriate use of AI tools.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Integrity

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE
Honor Pledge. *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. <u>On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.</u>*

The university requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior."

Cheating. *"Cheating includes but is not limited to:*
1. *Using any materials or resources prepared by another person or Entity without the other person or Entity's express Consent or without proper attribution to the other person or Entity.*
2. *Using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit to a Student."*

Plagiarism. *"A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another person or Entity (this includes but is not limited to generative artificial intelligence, large language models, content generation bots, or other non-human intelligence or digital tools). Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:*
1. *Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.*
2. *Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.*
3. *Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.*
4. *Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author."*

Outside Sources. "*A Student must not submit as their own work any academic work in any form that the student purchased or otherwise obtained from an outside source, including but not limited to:*

1. *Academic work in any form generated by an Entity (this includes but is not limited to generative artificial intelligence, large language models, content generation bots, or other non-human intelligence or digital tools);*
2. *Academic materials in any form prepared by a commercial or individual vendor of academic materials;*
3. *A collection of research papers, tests, or academic materials maintained by a Student Organization or other entity or person,*
4. *Any other sources of academic work."*

COURSE PLAGIARISM POLICY

Plagiarism. In this course, students must not duplicate passages from any source, including (but not limited to) assigned readings, research articles, or websites without putting the passages in quotes and providing an appropriate reference (including the exact page numbers). This includes copying a passage word-for-word, or substantially copying a passage or sentence while changing only a word or two here and there. More than three words in one sequence that is taken from any source and not cited appropriately with direct quotes and a page number is considered plagiarism in this course. Students must never duplicate another students' work, or their own work from another course.

Quoting. Excessive use of quoted passages also counts as plagiarism, even when appropriate references are provided. Students are expected to formulate and express their own ideas, inferences, and conclusions. This is an essential part of the writing process. Passages placed in quotation marks should be kept at a minimum and used only for compelling reasons. Any writing assignment which contains an excessive use of quotations will be returned to the student to be re-written; the assignment will be considered late until it is turned back in, and policies regarding grade reductions for late assignments will apply.

Sharing. Collaboration with other students, with respect to sharing ideas, is encouraged. Students, however, must express their ideas in their own words. Students may discuss the readings and their ideas for their assignments prior to any writing, but students should not share with one another their completed, written papers. If you share your completed assignment with another student, and that student plagiarizes all or part of your paper in their own assignment, you will both receive a zero for the assignment, with an opportunity to re-submit for half credit (first offense).

Assignments. The "understanding the peer review process" assignments always comprise independent work. If you have co-authors in this course, you and your co-authors will submit separate "understanding the peer review process" assignments and be graded individually. When completing the "developing a manuscript & submitting to a peer-reviewed journal" assignments, if you have a co-author, **turn on tracked changes** in Microsoft Word [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymBMonYehFA]. This will let me track your individual writing and editing.

Penalty. Depending on your familiarity with ethics in academic writing, navigating misunderstandings about plagiarism can be difficult. Because this is a learning environment and mistakes can happen (e.g., copying and pasting while taking notes and forgetting to reword), any assignment plagiarized in this way will automatically receive a zero, with one opportunity to re-submit for half credit (late penalties apply). A second offense could be grounds for failing the course.

When in doubt, ask!

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE AI ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

"Generative AI has undeniably made a significant impact in the classroom, ushering in both opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, generative AI-driven tools offer innovative approaches to curriculum development and instructional design that can foster a dynamic learning environment. However, the integration of generative AI in the classroom has brought academic integrity into sharper focus. The ease with which AI-generated content can be produced has heightened the risk of plagiarism and unauthorized assistance. Maintaining academic honesty in the face of this technological advancement is paramount."

COURSE AI POLICY

Honor Pledge. Students are accountable under the scope of the University Honor Code for the content of all work they submit (including the portions generated in part or whole by an external Entity— inclusive of AI). You are responsible for all content you generate for the course, regardless of how the work is generated, and you are subject to disciplinary action if the content contains plagiarism.

By submitting an assignment for evaluation, you assert that:
1. It accurately reflects the facts and to do so you need to have verified the facts, and they do not they originate from generative AI resources;
2. All your sources that go beyond common knowledge are suitably attributed. Common knowledge is what a knowledgeable reader can assess without requiring confirmation from a separate source;
3. You have respected all specific requirements of your assigned work, in particular requirements for transparency and documentation of process

If any of these assertions are not true, whether by intent or negligence, you have violated your commitment to truth, and possibly other aspects of academic integrity.

Permitted AI Tools. Students should engage in strict efforts to ensure the totality of the work submitted includes their original content and reflects university and course ethical values. In some instances, in this course, the use of AI tools (e.g., Grammarly) will facilitate student development of skills and knowledge acquisition within the stated learning objectives. Acceptable AI tools include Grammarly or similar non-generative spellcheck tools that have been expressly approved by the instructor. You should be transparent about your use of non-generative AI (e.g., Grammarly) in this course and ensure you are adhering to university and course academic integrity standards. When students opt to leverage AI tools to augment their submitted products, they must appropriately cite the tool(s) used. You are responsible for **APA citation of AI** if you use permitted, non-generative AI (e.g., Grammarly).

Prohibited AI Tools. In other components, the use of any AI enabled tool in this course substantially compromises the student's ability to achieve the stated learning objectives. Assignments were developed such that use of AI systems/large language models (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft co-pilot) defeat the learning objectives. Thus, use of these systems is not allowed in any capacity unless explicitly indicated in writing by the instructor. Unacceptable AI tools include (but are not limited to) ProWritingAid, LanguageTool, Hemingway Editor, QuillBot, Ginger Software, and especially tools that generate content (e.g., ChatGPT, Wordtune, Writer). If use of these tools is suspected, students will be

subject to oral examination and have points deducted for poor performance on oral exam. A first offense will result in an oral exam. A second offense could be grounds for failing the course.

Additional Information

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

All assignments are completed in Microsoft Word with tracked changes turned on and submitted through Canvas. Late assignments will be accepted at a rate of 10% off per day. Given the interactive nature of the course, you are strongly encouraged to submit on time—late assignments may affect your participation grade. Always check your TurnItIn report for potential signs of plagiarism— plagiarized assignments are unacceptable. A first offense will result in an opportunity to resubmit for half credit. A second offense will be reported. Use of generative AI is not allowed in this course. A suspected first offense will result in an oral examination, a second offense will be reported.

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.

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC POLICIES & RESOURCES

Important information regarding university-wide academic policies and student support resources can be found **here** [https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links]. This includes essential guidance on:

- Attendance expectations
- Getting started with the Disability Resource Center
- Grading policies and academic standards
- Faculty course evaluations
- Academic honesty and integrity
- In-class recording policies
- Health and wellness resources
- Academic support services
- Students are responsible for reviewing and understanding these policies. They are designed to support your success and ensure a fair, inclusive, and respectful learning environment.

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 on the due date!).
- Come prepared with ideas and concerns when you attend Writing Group. 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 Part 3 (i.e., 1st draft) early.**

Weekly Schedule | Assignments Due Sunday at 11:59 PM

Week	Topic	Reading (Hoffman 3rd Ed)	Writing Group (EST)	Due 11:59PM (EST)	%
Week 1	Why We Write Science and Scientific Communication Research Papers (i.e., Empirical Report) Review Articles (i.e., Systematic/Scoping)	Silvia Preface, Intro Hoffman Ch. 1,6, 10 Silvia p. 210-211	8/21 11:00AM	8/24 Identification	5%
Week 2	Style Composition Tone Writing with Others	Hoffman Ch. 3-4 Silvia Ch. 2-3		8/31 Comprehension	5%
Week 3	Literature Sources APA Formatting Plagiarism Artificial Intelligence	Hoffman Ch. 2	9/4 11:00AM	9/7 Part 1A	5%
Week 4	Basics of Statistics Data, Figures, and Tables How to Pick a Journal	Hoffman Ch. 5 Silvia Ch. 1	9/10 2:00PM	9/14 Part 2	5%
Week 5	Writing the Intro / Method Writing the Results / Discussion Arcana and Miscellany	Silvia Ch. 4-8 Silvia p. 117-121	9/18 11:00AM	9/21 Part 1B	5%
Week 6	Work on 1st Draft Dr. H Out of Office (OOO)	See Canvas		9/28 *Optional: Method/Results*	2.5%
Week 7	Work on 1st Draft Dr. H OOO	See Canvas		10/5 *Optional: Intro/Discussion*	2.5%
Week 8	Peer Review Process	See Canvas	10/8 4:00PM	10/12 Part 3 **1st Draft**	5%
Week 9	Revising and Editing Reading, Summarizing, Critiquing Dealing with Journals	Hoffman Ch. 7, 9 Silvia Ch. 9		10/19 1st Peer Review	5%
Week 10	Response to Reviewers	See Canvas	10/20 5:00PM	10/26 Part 4A	5%
Week 11	Work on 2nd Draft	See Canvas	10/30 11:00AM	11/2 Part 4B	10%

				2nd Draft	
Week 12	Issues in Academic Publishing	See Canvas		11/9 2nd Peer Review	10%
Week 13	Cover Letters	Silvia 178-181	11/12 2:00PM	11/16 Part 5	5%
Week 14	Response to Reviewers	See Canvas	11/17 5:00PM	11/23 Part 6A	10%
Week 15	Work on 3rd Draft	See Canvas		11/30 Part 6B **3rd Draft**	15%
Week 16	Reading Days			12/7 Participation	5%

Requirements | 100% of Final Grade

UNDERSTANDING THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS
(35% of Final Grade)

If you have co-authors, the following individual assignments comprise independent work and you and your co-authors will submit separate assignments and be graded individually.

Attending and Participating in Writing Group (5%)

Participation in Writing Group is a required part of your grade. Regular attendance is essential for success in this course. These meetings are interactive and collaborative, involving instruction, discussion, Q&A about publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and goal setting. You'll learn to create and achieve SMART goals that advance your writing and career. You'll also learn how to be a peer reviewer and provide constructive feedback broadly.

Be sure to add Writing Group Meetings to your calendar. Writing Groups are scheduled on a variety of dates and times throughout the semester to accommodate as many student schedules as possible (e.g., some morning, some afternoon, some after business hours). If you find you have numerous schedule conflicts with available Writing Group meetings, you may attend office hours in lieu of Writing Group. Office Hours are Wednesdays at 4:00PM. Please register by noon on Tuesday (the day before office hours) so that I can prepare!

Requirements
- MS students must participate in at least one Writing Group meeting per month (4 total per semester).
- PhD students must attend four Writing Group meetings per month (12 total per semester).

Identifying and Understanding Empirical and Review Publications (15%)

Independently, you will demonstrate your ability to identify empirical and review publications in peer-reviewed journals and your understanding of the difference between the two. You will reflect on how you will apply these skills to developing your own manuscript and submitting to a peer-reviewed journal.

Identification (5%)
Choose one full-length empirical publication in a peer-reviewed journal (2.5%) and one full-length review published in a peer-reviewed journal (2.5%) on a health education and behavior topic that interests you. Each article must be published in the last three years. Submit a PDF of each article.

Comprehension (10%)
Using the empirical and review publications you identified in the prior week, submit:
1. Article Descriptions
2. Search Process Reflection
3. Article Type Identification
4. Study Design & Evidence Level

5. Personal Reflection

Peer Reviews (15%)

Independently, you will complete two formal peer reviews. These reviews simulate the peer review process. You will automatically receive a classmate's draft on the Monday following draft due dates. You will respond as if you are a journal reviewer and I am the editor.

Peer Review of 1st Drafts (5%)
Review a classmate's first draft. Submit your review via Canvas, including: Comments to the Authors (your classmates; 500 words) and Private Comments to the Editor (the instructor; 250 words).

Peer Review of 2nd Drafts (10%)
Review the revised manuscript draft of the same (or potentially different) classmates. Submit your review via Canvas, including: Comments to the Authors (500 words) and Private Comments to the Editor (250 words).

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**DEVELOPING A MANUSCRIPT & SUBMITTING TO A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL
(65% of Final Grade)**

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You will write a full manuscript (12 pages, double-spaced, APA format) by the middle of semester, revise it during the second half of the semester, and submit a final draft (with cover letter) at the end of the semester. Each subsequent draft is worth a higher percentage of your grade so that your first draft is worth the fewest points and your last draft is worth the most points. Each subsequent draft weights scientific writing more heavily and content less heavily as you move from "big picture" edits to finer detail correction. Note that in a typical peer-review process, a cover letter is submitted with a first draft, but in this class, we will submit it with the final draft as this version will be closest to publication-ready. Also note if you have co-authors, the following group assignments comprise collaborative work and you and your co-authors will be graded together. Be sure to **turn on tracked changes** to track your writing and editing.

Author Requirements
- MS students: Co-authored with a classmate
- PhD students: Solo/first-authored

Format Requirements
- APA format, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced
- 12-page limit (excludes title page, abstract, acknowledgments, tables, figures, references)
- All drafts must follow this format unless otherwise approved

Manuscript Options
- Option 1: Empirical Report *(PhD students only; limited exceptions for MS co-authors)*
- Option 2: Scoping Review *(Required for MS co-authors)*

Part 1A: Topic Description (2.5%)

You (collaboratively with any co-author(s) if applicable) will submit a brief (max 2–3 pages) overview of your manuscript topic and research/search plan via Canvas. Because it is early in the semester, scientific writing is weighted less than content:

Manuscript Topic Selection Evaluation (10 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (5 points).

Part 1B: Protocol/Pre-Registration (2.5%)

You (collaboratively with any co-author(s) if applicable) will submit a pre-registration/protocol via Canvas.

Empirical Papers: OSF; Review Papers: JBI. Because it is early in the semester, scientific writing is weighted less than content:

Protocol/Pre-Registration Evaluation (10 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (5 points).

Part 2: Journal Selection (5%)

You will select a target journal (and backup) that is appropriate for your manuscript topic and provide a brief rationale (1–2 paragraphs) explaining your choice. Because it is early in the semester, scientific writing is weighted less than content:

Journal Selection Evaluation (20 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (10 points).

Part 3: 1st Draft (5%)

Submit a complete draft of your manuscript in MS Word via Canvas. This draft should follow APA formatting guidelines and include all required sections. You may also include a completed authorship determination form with your submission. In this draft, content and composition are weighed equally:

Manuscript Content Evaluation (15 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (15 points).

Part 4A: Response to Reviewers (5%)

You (collaboratively with any co-author(s) if applicable) will respond to the peer review of your 1st draft. Your responses will be submitted as a resubmission letter addressed to the Editor-in-Chief of the journal you selected earlier in the semester. Grading:

Response to Reviewers Evaluation (20 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (10 points).

Part 4B: 2nd Draft (10%)

Submit a second, complete draft of your manuscript via Canvas (collaboratively with any co-author(s) if applicable). This version must include the abstract, tables, and figures, and reflect revisions based on peer review from part 4A. In this draft, content is weighted less than composition, as the bulk of your content should be solidified:

Manuscript Content Evaluation (25 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (35 points).

Part 5: Cover Letter for Journal Submission (5%)

You will write a cover letter (collaboratively with any co-author(s) if applicable) to accompany your final manuscript. This letter will be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief of the journal you selected earlier in the semester. Note that the cover letter is usually submitted with the first draft, but in this class, you will submit with the third draft as this version is closer to publication ready. Grading:
Cover Letter Content Evaluation (20 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (10 points).

Part 6A: Response to Reviewers (10%)

You will write a formal response to reviewers (collaboratively with any co-author(s) if applicable) addressing the peer review(s) of your second manuscript draft. Your responses will be submitted as a resubmission letter addressed to the Editor-in-Chief of the journal you selected earlier in the semester. Grading:
Response to Reviewers Evaluation (20 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (10 points).

Part 6B: 3rd Draft (15%)

Submit the final version of your manuscript (collaboratively with any co-author(s) if applicable), revised based on the peer reviews received in Part 6A and any tracked changes from the instructor. This version will count for 15% of your final grade. In this draft, content is a small portion of your grade, as there should be only minor tweaks to the information you present. Composition is weighted very heavily, as clarity should be a focus:
Manuscript Content Evaluation (10 points)
Scientific Writing Style & Composition Evaluation (50 points).

Grading

OVERVIEW
Grades will be uploaded directly into Canvas. To calculate your final grade, divide the number of points you have earned by 600. Grades are usually available within 3 weeks, but please understand, writing feedback takes time. 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	% of Final Grade
WRITING & UNDERSTANDING PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS (35% of Final Grade)	
Participation & Writing Group Attendance	30/600 = 5%
Empirical & Review Publications: Identification	30/600 = 5%
Empirical & Review Publications: Comprehension	60/600 = 10%
Peer Review of 1st Drafts	30/600 = 5%
Peer Review of 2nd Drafts	60/600 = 10%
DEVELOPING A MANUSCRIPT & SUBMITTING TO A PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL (65% of Final Grade)	
Part 1A: Topic Description	15/600= 2.5%
Part 1B: Protocol/Pre-Registration	15/600= 2.5%
Part 2: Journal Selection	30/600= 5%
Part 3: 1st Draft	30/600 = 5%

Part 4A: Response to Reviewers	30/600 = 5%
Part 4b: 2nd Draft	30/600 = 10%
Part 5: Cover Letter for Journal Submission	30/600 = 5%
Part 6A: Response to Reviewers	60/600 = 10%
Part 6B: 3rd Draft	90/600 = 15%