

INSC 590: Writing for the Profession

COURSE INFORMATION

INSC 590: Writing for the Profession, Summer 2021

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Class Meetings: Monday, 6:30 PM - 9:10 PM on ZOOM;

ZOOM Course ID/Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/95669228619?pwd=U2RZM2dYN0NjWGF2WEFWcUdzTUg2dz09>

Meeting ID: 956 6922 8619

Passcode: 3ZY0Tv

Faculty Contact Information

- Christine Schmitz
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- (865) 974-1827
- www.beprompted.com
- Office Hours: Virtual Zoom, available by appointment



SIS Office Information

- 450 Communications Bldg.
- 1345 Circle Park Drive
- Knoxville, TN 37996-0341
- SIS Office: 865.974.2148
- Fax (SIS): 865.974.4667

Welcome Statement

My passion for teaching a course such as this is the empathy I feel for people who either don't like to write, or who feel anxious about writing. While writing is something that came naturally to me, other things such as solving mathematical equations did not. I believe the environment I create in class helps students gain confidence in their writing ability. Mistakes are necessary to the process, and so is revision. Students can expect to grow through the experience of receiving rapid feedback, editorial critique, guidance, and instruction.

COURSE INFORMATION

Catalog Description

Most job descriptions contain a requirement for "excellent communication skills", and the ability to write effectively has become a necessary part of the information science skill set. The aim of this course is to provide a safe space to master important communication skills. Practical and comprehensive instruction is provided to help students improve their writing

ability and gain confidence in their professional writing. Best practices will be covered for the following types of internal and external communication challenges:

- Email
- Memos
- Newsletters
- Annual reports
- Press releases
- Program and event advertising
- New product/service launches
- Websites
- Social media
- Activity reports
- Procedure manuals
- Internal wikis
- Business letters

Additional Information

Learning in this course takes place through lectures, outside readings, student critiques of writing samples, and hands-on writing exercises. Each student can expect personalized one-on-one feedback from the professor, and continuous opportunities for editing and revision. Additional tips and tools will be provided to help students improve their grammar, punctuation, and editing skills.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete this course will be capable of demonstrating awareness, knowledge, and/or understanding of...

- writing as a personal process of creation, organization, management, use, and distribution of information;
- written information through varied means, for diverse populations;
- analysis of source material for authenticity and validity.

Course Design

This course is designed to meet the needs of students who may have outside commitments such as full or part-time jobs. For that reason, nearly all the work required for class (reading, writing, editing, etc.) will be completed during the class meeting period, Mondays from 6:30 PM - 9:10 PM. For this reason, if you wish to receive a passing grade in this course, attendance is mandatory and highly encouraged.

Class will begin each week with a short lecture and introduction of the topic followed by a writing prompt. Students will then be given a designated amount of time to complete the writing assignment and upload to our class dropbox. Class will reconvene to workshop and discuss the submitted assignment and students will gain personalized feedback for editing. Students will be allowed to make edits before submitting each assignment for credit.

Students are also encouraged to choose their own personal writing project for which they can receive individual feedback and editorial guidance from the instructor. This can include any written material related to school, work, or personal life.

Required Texts

Weekly required reading articles will be posted in Canvas, and read during class.

Recommended Texts

Style handbook of your choice (APA or Chicago Manual of Style).

COMMUNICATION

Email

I am required to communicate with you through your UTK email address. If you prefer to use another address, consult the [OIT Helpdesk](#) to obtain directions for forwarding your UTK mail to your preferred address if you don't wish to check both accounts.

Instructor Availability

I am available throughout the course term for virtual Zoom conferences by appointment, M-F, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Please email me 24 hours in advance and offer two potential times that you are available. While not required, I welcome individual appointments with students and encourage all students to take advantage of this offer for one-on-one guidance and instruction on course-related work, or personal writing projects.

COMPUTING REQUIREMENTS AND RESOURCES

Requirements

You must have adequate computing skills, including but not limited to use of word processing, Web browsers, e-mail, listservs, Canvas, and Zoom software. You must learn how to submit your assignments using Canvas. The [Office of Information Technology \(OIT\)](#) provides training classes in using varied technologies for students at no charge (advance registration is required).

You must obtain a UT email account and subscribe to the SIS student listserv to insure you're made aware of course-related information. In addition, you must have the PowerPoint Reader or the regular PowerPoint software installed on your computer in order to download the lecture notes from Canvas.

Technical Support

Please review the SIS Technology Introduction website for help getting started with the tools you'll need in the program: <https://sis.utk.edu/techintro/>

For assistance with technical and computing issues, contact the OIT HelpDesk by phone at (865) 974-9900, using the [Contact Form](#), or at the [Walk-in HelpDesk](#).

Course Resources

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COURSE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Learner Expectations

Students can expect prompt email responses, M-F, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM; focused and meaningful assignments, as well as helpful and respectful critique of written assignments.

Instructor Expectations

I expect all students to be considerate of one another's perspectives, demonstrate open-mindedness to feedback, take creative risks, and participate in all class discussions.

Attendance and Participation

Due to our course being held on Mondays, and the Summer 2021 session being shortened by two weeks, as well as Monday, July 5 being a UTK holiday, we are scheduled to meet just 7 times. Nearly all the work required for this course (reading, writing, editing, etc.) will be completed during the class meeting period, Mondays from 6:30 PM - 9:10 PM. **Attendance is mandatory and participation is expected in all 7 meetings.** I also recommend scheduling at least one virtual one-on-one Zoom session with me during the semester, for personalized instruction, on a writing topic of your choice.

Inclement Weather

"The chancellor (or appointed representative) may officially close or suspend selected activities of the university because of extreme weather conditions. When a decision to close is made, information is distributed to the campus community, shared with local media, and posted on the front page at <http://utk.edu>. SIS will cancel classes when UT is closed. Please check the SIS student listserv (UTKSIS-L@LISTSERV.UTK.EDU) for messages about closing.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND POINTS OF INFORMATION

Disabilities that may Impede Learning

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact [Student Disability Services](#) in 2227 Dunford Hall at 865-974-6087, or by video relay at 865-622-6566 to coordinate reasonable academic accommodations.

Civility

Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other's well-being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

CCI Diversity Statement

The College of Communication and Information recognizes that a college diverse in its people, curricula, scholarship, research, and creative activities expands opportunities for

intellectual inquiry and engagement, helps students develop critical thinking skills, and prepares students for social and civic responsibilities. All members of the College benefit from diversity and the quality of learning, research, scholarship and creative activities is enhanced by a climate of inclusion, understanding and appreciation of differences and the full range of human experience. As a result, the College is committed to diversity and equal opportunity and it recognizes that it must represent the diversity inherent in American society. The College is acutely aware that diversity and fairness are foundations that unite the College's faculty, staff, students, and the larger communication and information community.

Instructor Status as a Title IX Mandatory Reporter

University of Tennessee faculty are committed to supporting our students and upholding gender equity laws as outlined by Title IX. Please be aware that if you choose to confide in a faculty member regarding an issue of sexual misconduct, dating violence, or stalking, we are obligated to inform the University's Title IX Coordinator, who can assist you in connecting with all possible resources both on- and off-campus. If you would like to speak with someone confidentially, the Student Counseling Center (865-974-2196) and the Student Health Center (865-974-3135) are both confidential resources. For additional resources and information, visit titleix.utk.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS, ASSESSMENTS, AND EVALUATIONS

Academic Integrity

Students should be familiar and maintain their *Academic Integrity* described in <https://hilltopics.utk.edu/academics/>, p. 15 as: "*Study, preparation and presentation should involve at all times the student's own work, unless it has been clearly specified that work is to be a team effort. Academic honesty requires that the student present his or her own work in all academic projects, including tests, papers, homework, and class presentation. When incorporating the work of other scholars and writers into a project, the student must accurately cite the source of that work.*"

Students should abide by the **Honor Statement**

(<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/student-code-of-conduct/> Section X. Honor Statement)

"As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity."

Plagiarism

Plagiarism in any of its several forms is intolerable, and attention to matters of documentation in all written work is expected and required. Inadvertence, alleged lack of understanding, or avowed ignorance of the various types of plagiarism are not acceptable excuses.

Specific examples of plagiarism are:

1. Copying without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source;
2. Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
3. Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge);
4. Collaborating on a graded assignment without the instructor's approval;
5. Submitting work, either in whole or in part, created by a professional service and used without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph).

Students who may be unsure of the nature of plagiarism should consult the instructor or a guide for writing research reports. (Additional resources are available at <http://www.lib.utk.edu/instruction/plagiarism>.)

Infractions of academic integrity are penalized according to the severity of the infraction but may include a course grade of "F."

Assignments and Grading

Assignments are discussed in the first half hour of each class period and first drafts are due at 8:00 PM during class. Students are given the opportunity for multiple revisions and instructor feedback up until the final draft is due. Final drafts of assignments 1-4 are due at the Midterm on July 2; final drafts of assignments 5-7 are due at the Final on July 30. Only a midterm and final grade will be assigned.

Preparation of Written Work

During our class period each week students will be expected to upload drafts to our class Dropbox to be shared in a workshop session with classmates. This work can be single spaced, in a standard 11- or 12-point font (Arial, Helvetica, etc.).

For final drafts, each assignment will contain a specific set of formatting instructions, relevant to the lesson, that will be included as part of the grading rubric.

Due Dates and Late Assignments

An in-class assignment will be due during our class period each week at approximately 8PM. No late assignments will be accepted, as these drafts are relevant only to the class discussion from 8 PM-9:10 PM.

Final drafts of assignments will be due: Midterm - July 2; Final - July 30.

Incompletes

Based on adopted University of Tennessee-Knoxville and SIS policy, a grade of *I* (Incomplete) is reserved for emergencies that prevent the student from completing the course on time. Incompletes are granted only under "the most unusual of circumstances" and solely at the discretion of the instructor. Plan your semester's course of study carefully to insure sufficient time to complete the required work.

For students who simply "disappear" without contacting the instructor and without completing the required form, an "F" is submitted.

Assigning Grades

Writing is a process, and it is my pedagogical belief that a valuable writing course must allow students to receive feedback and make revisions before receiving a final grade. Drafts will not be graded, but will be used as an opportunity to receive instructor feedback and peer review. In this course, students will complete 7 writing assignments and the final drafts will be due for assignments 1-4 on July 2, and assignments 5-7 on July 30. Students will only receive a midterm and a final grade.

Evaluation

Semester grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A	93≤	(4 quality points per semester hour) superior performance.
A-	90-92. 99	(3.7 quality points per semester credit hour) intermediate grade performance.
B+	88-89. 99	(3.5 quality points per semester hour) better than satisfactory performance.
B	83-87. 99	(3 quality points per semester hour) satisfactory performance.
B-	80-82. 99	(2.7 quality points per semester credit hour) intermediate grade performance.
C+	78-79. 99	(2.5 quality points per semester hour) less than satisfactory performance.
C	70-77. 99	(2 quality points per semester hour) performance well below the standard expected of graduate students.
D	60-69. 99	(1 quality point per semester hour) clearly unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
F	59.99 ≥	(no quality points) extremely unsatisfactory performance and cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.
I		(no quality points) a temporary grade indicating that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course but, due to unforeseen circumstances, has been unable to finish all requirements. An I is not given to enable a student to do additional work to raise a deficient grade. The instructor, in consultation with the student, decides the terms for the removal of the I, including the time limit for removal. If the I is not removed within one calendar year, the grade will be changed to an F. The course will not be counted in the cumulative grade point average until a final grade is assigned. No student may graduate with an I on the record.
S/NC		(carries credit hours, but no quality points) S is equivalent to a grade of B or better, and NC means no credit earned. A grade of Satisfactory/No Credit is allowed only where indicated in the course description in the <i>Graduate Catalog</i> . The number of Satisfactory/No Credit courses in a student's program is limited to one-fourth of the total credit hours required.
P/N P		(carries credit hours, but no quality points) P indicates progress toward completion of a thesis or dissertation. NP indicates no progress or inadequate progress.
W		(carries no credit hours or quality points) indicates that the student officially withdrew from the course.

Course Evaluation

You will be invited to evaluate the course at the end of the term. Please participate in this valuable process. I also invite your comments throughout the course and read all comments, suggestions, and recommendations.

MSIS Program Outcomes

It is our vision to provide a quality educational program, and for students to have the very best educational experience possible. By the end of their time in the MSIS program, each student should be able to:

1. Describe and discuss the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use, and preservation of information.
2. Describe and discuss the nature of leadership and management in the information professions and the importance of participation in the global information society.
3. Apply the general principles, values, and ethical standards of providing information services in a variety of settings and for diverse populations.
4. Comply with the changing responsibilities of the information professional in a culturally diverse and networked global society.
5. Identify critical professional issues in a variety of organizational, cultural, societal, disciplinary, transdisciplinary, and historical contexts.
6. Analyze and apply standards or policies related to the processes of creation, organization, distribution, storage, access, retrieval, management, use or preservation of information.
7. Explain the changing nature of information, information needs, and information behavior.
8. Assess and implement information technologies, systems, sources, and services that serve users effectively and efficiently.
9. Analyze research and apply it to information practice.

Assignments: Descriptions, Due Dates, and Program Outcomes for SLC

This table identifies the MSIS Program Outcome(s) addressed in course assignment(s):

Assignment	MSIS Program Outcome
3. Writing as a process	1
7. Writing for broader audiences	3

This table provides a brief summary of assignment names, due dates, and grade distribution. A fuller description of each assignment follows the table.

Assignment	Value	Due Date
1. Introduce the course and review key principles of effective writing. Assignment helps you practice editing written material and discussing/providing feedback.		Draft 6/7; Midterm 7/2
2. Focus on writing with strong, active verbs, varied sentence structure, and strong paragraphs. Assignment helps you write in the active voice, practice using certain punctuation (the dash, colon, semi-colon, and parentheses) as well as writing well-organized and concise paragraphs.		Draft 6/14; Midterm 7/2

3. Learn how to view writing as a process. Assignment explores making your writing process easier, more efficient, and more organized.		Draft 6/21; Midterm 7/2
4. Focus on writing about research. Assignment explores new methods for readability and helps you write engaging documents discussing facts and research.		Draft 6/28; Midterm 7/2
Final Draft of Assignments 1-4 = Midterm Grade	50	
5. Discuss the peer review process, as well as ethical issues in research reporting. Assignment helps you learn to spot plagiarism, determine authorship, write a peer review, and more.		Draft 7/12; Final 7/30
6. Review types of writing beyond traditional research manuscripts. Assignment helps you practice writing press releases, letters of recommendation, newsletters, and personal statements/essays.		Draft 7/19; Final 7/30
7. Discuss communication to broader audiences. Assignment explores working with social media, conducting interviews, and writing about science for a general audience.		Draft 7/26; Final 7/30
Final Draft of Assignments 5-7 = Final Exam Grade	50	
TOTAL	100	

DISCLAIMER

None.