

Scientific Writing

NRM 5311

Spring 2023

Instructor:

Dr. Rob Kinucan

RAS109

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Lecture: MW 2:00-3:15, RAS 129

Office Hours: MW10:00-12:00. I am also available by appointment.

Course Description:

Welcome to Scientific Writing! My name is Dr. Rob Kinucan and I'll be working with you this semester to develop your scientific writing skills. For most of us, writing is an intimidating and stressful endeavor, but a skill that can be honed with practice and effort. Strong writing skills will serve you well throughout your career. As noted by Dr. Steve Heard, the author of your text, "Writing craft takes years to master and is never perfected." This is a workshop and project-oriented course and borrows heavily from the course he teaches using his text. You must have a research project (thesis or proposal) developed enough to include in course activities and to share drafts with classmates. In this class you will develop capability with writing through practice, understand the utility of simple and clear writing, and deliberate focus on your writing behaviors.

Required Textbook:

S. B. Heard. 2016. *The Scientist's Guide to Writing*. Princeton University Press. Available at the campus Bookstore or online: <https://amzn.to/2GzVozc>.

Required Supplies:

For several Workshop Exercises you will need various colored highlighters (W8, W10, W23) using yellow, orange, blue, green and pink. You are responsible for highlighters.

Course Student Learning Outcomes:

Students are expected to develop the following knowledge throughout the course.

- State why scientists write in specific styles.
- Identify your goals as a scientific writer.
- Manage yourself as a writer to reach those goals.
- Be able to integrate the knowledge of writing style, structure, content, and behavior to effectively write a scientific manuscript.

Marketable Skills:

Students are expected to develop the following general marketable skills throughout the course.

- Communication: Students will gain effective written communication skills through workshop discussions and written assignments.
- Critical thinking: Students will practice critical thinking in writing analysis, workshop participation and products, and assignments.

Program Student Learning Outcomes:

The graduating student will be able to demonstrate that he/she is able to:

- Apply statistical concepts and procedures to natural resource data.

- Evaluate literature and references as they apply to the natural resource field.
- Demonstrate their knowledge of fundamental and advanced concepts of range and wildlife management.

ADA Statement:

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112; Mailing address: P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas; Telephone: 432-837-8203; More resources can be found at: <https://www.sulross.edu/section/2408/counseling-and-accessibility-services>

Academic Integrity:

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Assignment Submission Makeup Policy:

Turn work in on time! If you have a specific circumstance that prevents you from submitting an assignment on time, reach out as soon as possible. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be penalized 25% per day.

Grades:

Your final grade will consist of:

60% assignments (7)

20% workshop products (19)

20% workshop participation (19)

Grade assignments: 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; <60 = F

Date	Lecture	Workshop	Reading*	Assignment due
Jan 18	L1: Intro, set up peer groups	W1: Peer groups get-to-know-you		
Jan 23	L2: Papers as stories	W2: Outlining 3 ways	Ch 1, 2, 7	
Jan 25	L3: Writing strategy	W3: Tip sheets	Ch 4, 5, 6	A1: Story summary
Jan 30	L4: Paper structure	W4: Finding IMRaD	Ch 8, 16	
Feb 1	L5: Methods	W5: Methods detail	Ch 11; pp 164-166	
Feb 6	L6: Figures and tables	W6: Figure/Table draft	Ch 12	
Feb 8	L7: Results	W7: Results critique		A2: Methods draft
Feb 13	<i>SRM meeting</i>	<i>None</i>		
Feb 15	<i>SRM meeting</i>	<i>None</i>		
Feb 20	L8: Introduction	W8: Introduction markup	Ch 10	
Feb 22	<i>TCWS meeting</i>	<i>None</i>		
Feb 27	L9: Reference management and citation searching (<i>Guest lecture – SRSU Library</i>) Meet in Library Classroom, 2nd Floor	W9: Reference management		A3: Results draft
Mar 1	L10: Discussion	W10: Discussion markup	Ch 13	
Mar 6	L11: Paragraphs	W11: Paragraph markup	Ch 17	
Mar 8	Markup	Markup		
Mar 13	<i>No meeting – Spring Break</i>			
Mar 15	<i>No meeting – Spring Break</i>			
Mar 20	L12: Peer reviewing	W12: Methods/Results peer comments	Ch 23; pp 242-244	A4: Introduction draft
Mar 22	<i>No lecture, but meet for workshop</i>	W12: Methods/Results peer comments, cont.		
Mar 27	L13: Deep reading and writing (<i>Guest Lecture – SRSU Library</i>)	W13: Deep reading		
Mar 29	L14: Title and Abstract	W14: Titles	Ch 9	A5: Introduction peer review
Apr 3	L15: Revision	<i>None</i>	Ch 21, 22	A6: Discussion draft
Apr 5	L16: Response to reviews	W16: Response to reviews	Ch 24	
Apr 10	L17: Brevity	W17: Bloat and cut	Ch 20	
Apr 12	L18: Citation practices	<i>None</i>	Ch 15	
Apr 17	<i>SRSU Research Symposium</i>	<i>Attend/Participate Symposium</i>		
Apr 19	L19: Co-authorship	<i>None</i>	Ch 26	A7: Complete paper draft and response to reviews

Apr 24	L20: Journal choice	W19: Evaluating journals		
Apr 26	L21: Outreach: blogging (<i>Guest lecture</i>)	W20: Blog critique	pp 244-245	
May 1	Thesis Formats (<i>Guest lecture – Justin French</i>)			
May 3	L23 Thesis submission & processes (<i>Guest lecture – MarilynMcGhee</i>)			
May 8	L24: Why scientific writing sucks	<i>None</i>		
May 10	L25: Beauty and humour	W23: Jargon	Ch 28	
*All readings from the <i>Scientist's Guide to Writing</i>				