

Course Syllabus

Course:	Engl 312: BioComm	Instructor:	Scott Graham
Times:	T/R 11-12:20	Contact:	grahamss@iastate.edu
Lecture:	Carver 0294	Office:	Ross 435
Lab:	Durham 0091	Office Hours:	T/R by appointment

The primary purpose of English 312 is to teach students effective writing and communication methods in the biological sciences, presentation of research data, methods of bibliographic citation, ethical communication, use of oral and visual presentation methods for biological information, manuscript and report preparation. Though the primary emphasis will be on academic writing, English 312 is designed not only to help prepare students to communicate technical information to their biologically-knowledgeable peers, but also to managers, clients, and coworkers who may not understand the ramifications of the data itself. This necessarily involves an appreciation of not only the technical information, but also the rhetorical (communicative), social, political, and ethical issues at work in technical communication. It is the role of this class to help students explore how to communicate the technical information of your discipline with a much greater awareness of these issues. To that end, English 312 will help students study four primary areas:

- Rhetorical analysis and awareness
- Communication processes (including development, revision, and distribution)
- Written, oral, and visual information design
- Social, political, and ethical issues in biological communication

To help develop these areas, students will read about and produce an assortment of academic and technical documents. Additionally, students will explore how communication issues were involved in prominent scientific or technical cases in the biological sciences and related fields. This process of skill development and exploration social, political, and ethical issues will be facilitated by the following major assignments:

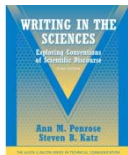
Table 1: Assignments by Weight and Goal

Assignment	Grade %	Rhetorical	Processes	Info Design	SPE Issues
Efficacy Analysis	10	X	X		X
Research Report	10	X	X	X	
Visual Analysis	5	X		X	X
Poster Presentation	10	X	X	X	
Midterm Examination	10	X	X	X	
Audience Analysis	5	X		X	X
Non-Tech Doc	10	X	X	X	X
Proposal	10	X	X	X	X
Final Project	20	X	X	X	X
Quizzes	10	X	X	X	X

Policies and Procedures

The following sections contain important policy information relating to grading, attendance, and other course issues. Please ensure that you are familiar with each of these sections. You will be responsible for knowing this information throughout the course of the semester.

Required Materials



Writing in the Sciences: Exploring Conventions of Scientific Discourse (3rd Ed.) Penrose & Katz



About \$50 for printing materials (paper and ink)

Grading Criteria

- **A- Outstanding work.** Shows superior analysis of assignment. Provides excellent selection of content, organization, and wording of material to fit the rhetorical needs of the particular situation. Uses style that is fluent and coherent. Has no mechanical errors. Shows great insight, perceptiveness, originality, and thought.
- **B- Good work,** significantly above level necessary to meet course requirements. Has thorough, well-organized analysis of the assignment. Shows judgment and tact in the presentation of material appropriate for the intended audience and purpose. Supports ideas well with concrete details. Has interesting, precise, and clear style. Is free of major mechanical errors. Strong, interesting work, although minor problems remain.
- **C- Meets all basic requirements** of the course and assignment. Provides satisfactory analysis of the writing task, subject, and audience. Accomplishes its purpose with adequate content and detail. Uses details, organization, and expression appropriate for the rhetorical context. Has acceptable mechanics. Could be mailed out in the professional world.
- **D- Meets the assignment but is weak** in one of the major areas (content, organization, style, mechanics) or offers a routine, inadequate treatment. Shows generally substandard work with some redeeming features.
- **F- Unacceptable work,** in one or more of the major areas. Fails to meet one or more of the basic requirements of the course or the assignment. Fails to cover essential points, or may digress to nonessential material. Has inadequate development resulting from failure to support generalizations or from unclear relationships between generalizations and examples or details. Lacks adequate organization and show confusion or misunderstanding of rhetorical context. May use an inappropriate tone, poor word choice, excessive repetition, or awkward sentence structure.

Grading Scale

A	94-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-93%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	59% and below

Late Papers

All assignments are due on the date listed on the assignment sheet. If you have a legitimate reason for delaying that deadline, please contact me **before** the due date. Otherwise, late papers will receive a failing grade.

Completion Requirement

A passing grade in English 312 requires course completion. This means that all assignments must be turned in prior to the end of the semester in order to pass. Even if the assignment was not completed on time and will receive a failing grade, it must be completed.

Attendance

In the professional world, regular **punctual** attendance is assumed. It's much the same in English 312. It is critical that you attend class on a regular basis to avail yourself of as many opportunities as possible to practice the skills of the class. As such I allow only three (3) absences without penalty. Subsequent absences will result in a one letter grade deduction to your final grade. Also like in the professional world, excessive absences (6) result in termination, in this case a failing grade.

Academic Honesty

Any student found guilty of engaging in any activity defined by the DSO or the student handbook as "academic dishonesty" will receive a failing grade for the assignment and the issue will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

The Writing and Media Help Center

The Writing and Media Help Center is a very valuable resource which can help you improve nearly all aspects of communication. While I will make every effort possible to assist you in any difficulties you have with any assignments, I strongly encourage you to seek help at the writing center if we cannot arrange a meeting in sufficient time before the due date.

Disabilities

Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form from the Disability Resources (DR) office (515-294-7220). DR is located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076.

Tentative Calendar

Date	Activity	Assignment Due
T 8/24	Intro to Class	Show up
R 8/27	Timeline, genres	<i>WITS</i> pp. 229-265
T 9/1	Socio-rhetorical issues Assign Rhetorical Analysis	<i>WITS</i> pp. 3-24
R 9/3	Analytic Practices	Re-read pp. 229-256
T 9/8	Assign Research Report Genre Conventions- IMRD	Rhetorical Analysis Due Bring Lab Report to Class
R 9/10	Lit Reviews, research and citation	<i>WITS</i> pp. 130-148
T 9/15	Genre Conventions Expanded, Abstracts, Citation methods	<i>WITS</i> pp. 91-129
R 9/17	Peer-Review	Complete RR Draft Due
T 9/21	Kuhn and Gould Activity	Research Report Due
R 9/24	Case Discussion Assign Visual Analysis	<i>WITS</i> pp. 349-375
T 9/29	Technology and Visual Design	<i>WITS</i> pp. 25-52
R 10/1	Assign Poster Poster Tour	Visual Analysis Due
T 10/6	Lab Practice	<i>WITS</i> pp. 149-174
R 10/8	Lab Practice	
T 10/13	Lab Practice	
R 10/15	Poster Presentations	Poster Due
T 10/20	Midterm Review	Read Everything
R 10/22	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam
T 10/27	Case Discussion Assign Audience Analysis	<i>WITS</i> pp. 376-391

R 10/29	Audiences, Ethics, and the Public	<i>WITS</i> pp. 53-88
T 11/3	Assign Non-Technical Assignment	Audience Analysis Due
R 11/5	Approaches for non-technical audiences	<i>WITS</i> pp. 198-223
T 11/10	TBA	TBA
R 11/12	TBA	TBA
T 11/17	Peer-review	Complete NTA draft due
R 11/19	Assign Proposal/ Final Project	Non-Technical Assignment Due
11/23-27	Turkey Week	Turkey Week
T 12/1	Proposal Workshops	Proposal Due
R 12/3	Project Conferences	
T 12/8	Project Conferences	
R 12/10	Proposal Workshops	Complete Project Drafts Due
12/14-18	Finals Week	Final Project Due