

ACADEMIC WRITING FOR COGNITIVE SCIENTISTS

Winter Term 2016

Instructor: Guenther Knoblich & Natalie Sebanz

Office Hours: by appointment (e-mail sebanzn@ceu.hu)

Course description: This course aims at improving oral and written presentation skills that are vital for Cognitive Scientists. How does one write an abstract, a methods section, or a results section for an empirical paper? How can experimental results be presented most effectively? What are good strategies for dealing with reviewers' comments when revising a paper? How does one write a review? What is important to keep in mind when writing a research proposal? What makes for a good oral presentation? Course participants will learn about all of these and many more aspects of exposition through hands-on experience.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will

- know the basics of writing an empirical paper
- know what to look out for when writing a research proposal
- know how to best visualize empirical results or predictions
- be familiar with the publishing process
- have gained practice in preparing a poster
- have gained insight into how to improve their oral presentation skills

Course Requirements: completion of writing assignments; presentation of posters and talks; regular attendance; participation in discussion

Grading: Performance on assignments (oral and written) will determine grades (all assignments have equal weight, grade 100% based on assignments); Grading criteria: 1) clarity of the structure (this includes order and prioritizing of information, logical flow, proper use of paragraphs in text/visual arrangement in presentations), 2) accuracy and completeness of the reported information, and 3) writing/presentation style (command of grammar; effective, non-redundant communication). These three grading criteria have equal weight.

COURSE SCHEDULE

SESSION 1, WEDNESDAY 18TH JANUARY 13:30-15:10

This session will introduce the course structure, and we will discuss general principles related to academic writing.

SESSION 2, WEDNESDAY 25TH JANUARY 13:30-15:10

This session will introduce guidelines on writing methods and results sections.

Assignment: Write a methods and results section (Stroop task and interesting manipulation).

SESSION 3, WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 13:30-15:10

In this session, we will review specific issues concerning methods and results sections in more depth, and we will discuss how to write a good abstract.

Assignment: Write an abstract (Stroop).

SESSION 4, WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 15:30-17:10

This session will focus on how to write an outline, and how to structure the introduction and the discussion of an empirical paper. We will also discuss the use of paragraphs, and practice reverse-engineering on an earlier writing assignment.

Assignment: Reverse-engineer the introduction and discussion of a paper of your choice by writing the outline for these sections.

SESSION 5, WEDNESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 13:30-15:10

This session will provide guidance on the presentation of results through figures and tables, including legends.

Assignment: Prepare figures for given results.

SESSION 6, WEDNESDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 13:30-15:10

This session will address questions related to reviewing papers, dealing with reviewers' and editors' comments, and publishing in different journals.

Assignment: write a cover letter for the paper used in the reverse-engineering exercise.

SESSION 7, WEDNESDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 15:30-17:10

We will discuss principles for making sentences clearer and easier to comprehend, and practice writing at the sentence level.

Assignment: Improve sentences from prior writing assignments.

SESSION 8, WEDNESDAY 1ST MARCH 13:30-15:10

Continuation of Session 6 and 7

SESSION 9, WEDNESDAY 8TH MARCH 13:30-15:10 (may have to be shifted to March 15 15:30)

In this session we will discuss how to write various kinds of research proposals, with a focus on the first year PhD research proposal.

SESSION 10, WEDNESDAY 15TH MARCH 13:30-15:10

Participants will prepare and present posters, receiving feedback on their presentation.

Assignment: Make a poster and present it.

SESSION 11 WEDNESDAY 22RD MARCH 13:30-15:10

In this session, we will continue working on oral presentation skills.

Assignment: Prepare a short presentation.

SESSION 12 WEDNESDAY 29TH MARCH 13:30-15:10

We will discuss individual writing issues related to the research proposal.