

Barbara Gastel, MD, MPH
VIDI 397
979-845-6887 (office and voice mail)
b-gastel@tamu.edu

Appointments in person, by Zoom, and by phone are readily available. Also feel free to drop in if I am in the office and not meeting with someone else.

VIBS 665.601
Methods of Specialized Journalism
(Research Writing)

Fall 2022
Mondays, 8:45–11:30 a.m.
VIDI 121

This course is designed primarily to increase your ability to write papers for journals. Other goals include increasing your knowledge of the academic publication process, enhancing your skill at other professional communication (such as presentations and grant proposals), increasing your ability to edit or peer review others' work, and helping you to refine or maintain your English-language skills. We hope that you will find this course helpful and that you will share information from it with others.

The goals of this course will be pursued through presentations, small-group discussions (“workshops”), reading assignments, and writing assignments. The reading will come mainly from the book *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper*, 9th edition, by Barbara Gastel and Robert A. Day (Greenwood Press, 2022), which is available online through the Texas A&M libraries and is being provided to you.

Because your and others' learning will depend in part on your class participation, you will be expected to attend the course regularly; normally, no more than two sessions should be missed. However, if you are ill, please stay home; I will be glad to have you join us by Zoom if your condition permits.

The main writing assignments will entail preparing or revising the parts of a scientific paper about research that you have done. In general, the homework for this course will take at least several hours per session. I hope that by the end of the course, you will have a manuscript nearly ready to submit to a journal.

Please double-space all writing assignments and use an unjustified right margin. Also, please use margins of at least 1 inch. The preferred font for this course is 12-point Times New Roman.

Your grade in the course will be based on the writing assignments, an oral presentation about your work, and weekly discussion posts. Grading will be as follows:

95-100	outstanding; highly professional; likely to wow peer reviewers
90-94	excellent; approaching highly professional quality
85-89	generally solid but still would benefit from substantial revision
80-84	a reasonable start but still needs much more work
<80	below acceptable graduate student level

For all assignments, both content and crafting will be considered. An average of 89.50% or above will earn a final grade of A, an average of 79.50% to 80.49% will earn a B, and so forth.

Communications outside of class sessions will be mainly by email. Therefore, please check your Texas A&M University email at least once a day. When emailing about class items, please start the subject line with “VIBS 655” (Example: VIBS 655—Question about Reading).

The graded items and the percentages of your grade that they will constitute are as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Due</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Equivalent in Points</u>
draft of informal abstract	9/4	1%	10
set of annotations	9/11	4%	40
draft of methods section	9/18	2%	20
revised informal abstract	9/25	2%	20
revised draft of methods section	10/2	5%	50
draft of results section	10/9	2%	20
draft of discussion	10/16	2%	20
draft of introduction	10/23	2%	20
revised draft of results section	10/30	5%	50
revised draft of discussion	11/6	5%	50
revised draft of introduction	11/13	5%	50
abstract	11/20	5%	50
final version of paper	12/9	35%	350
oral presentation	10/31–11/28	15%	150
discussion posts	weekly	10%	100
TOTAL		100%	1000

Discussion posts normally will be due Fridays, with a grace period until 5 p.m. Saturday. Writing assignments normally will be due at 10 p.m. Sunday. Early submissions are welcome.

Please submit assignments on time. Except in cases of excused absences, 10% of the maximum available points for an assignment will be deducted for each 24 hours or portion thereof that an assignment is late.

The success of a course such as this one depends on the class members as well as the instructors. Suggestions for making the course more useful and enjoyable are welcome at any time.

Tentative Schedule

Date/Session Main Activities and Assignments

Mon, Aug 29
(01)

Introductions: The Participants and the Course
 Presentation/Discussion: Deciding When and Where to Submit a Paper
 Exercise: Defining the Focus and Contribution of Your Paper
 Presentation/Demonstration: Journals' Instructions to Authors
 Overview: The Structure of Papers
 Introduction: Drafting an Abstract

Fri, Sep 2

Reading Due (note: all listed reading is in the textbook unless stated otherwise)

- Preface
- A Word to International Readers
- Chapter 6: Where to Submit Your Manuscript
- Chapter 9: How to Prepare the Abstract

Browsing Due: papers in the journal for which you are writing a paper

Instructions: Look at some papers in the journal for which you hope to write your paper. Identify a paper that you think would be a good model for yours.

Discussion Post #1 Due

Note: This post is to include a link to or copy of the paper chosen as a model.

- Sun, Sep 4 **Writing Due:** draft of an informal abstract on the research on which you'll write a paper
Instructions: Please draft an informal abstract of the research about which you will write a paper. The abstract should run about 250 words (1 double-spaced page). If appropriate, use the following headings: Background, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.
- Mon, Sep 5 (Labor Day—no classes)
- Fri, Sep 9 **Reading Due**
- Chapter 3: Approaching a Writing Project
 - Chapter 34: How to Write Science in English as a Foreign Language
 - Chapter 11: How to Write the Materials and Methods Section
 - “Preparing the Four Main Parts of a Scientific Paper (IMRAD): Concise Advice” (available at <https://www.authoraid.info/en/resources/details/1322/>)
 - annotated journal article (posted at <http://www.authoraid.info/uploads/resources/annotated-journal-article-1.pdf>)
- Discussion Post #2 Due**
Note: This post is to include links to instructions to authors from 3 journals in your field. One set of instructions should be from the journal to which you hope to submit the paper about your research.
- Sun, Sep 11 **Writing Due:** set of at least 10 annotations
Instructions: Using as a model the annotated journal article looked at, prepare at least 10 annotations of the journal article that you are using as a model in this course. In the annotations, you should note items that the journal article does appropriately. The 10 or more annotations should include annotations in each major part of the paper and may include annotations in other parts.
- Mon, Sep 12 (02) Workshop and Discussion: Instructions to Authors
 Presentation/Discussion: Approaching a Writing Project
 Presentation/Discussion: Writing in English as a Foreign Language—or Working with Colleagues Who Do So
 Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Methods Section
 Presentation/Discussion: Providing Feedback on Drafts
 Discussions: The Annotated Journal Articles
 Workshop: Class Members’ Drafts of Informal Abstracts
- Fri, Sep 16 **Reading Due**
- Chapter 27: How to Present a Paper Orally
 - Chapter 15: How to Cite the References
- Discussion Post #3 Due**
- Sun, Sep 18 **Writing Due:** draft of methods section
- Mon, Sep 19 (03) Presentation/Discussion: Giving Oral Presentations
 Presentation/Discussion: Citing References—Some Basics
 Workshop: Drafts of Methods Sections
- Fri, Sep 23 **Reading Due**

- Chapter 12: How to Write the Results
- Chapter 16: How to Design Effective Tables
- Chapter 17: How to Prepare Effective Graphs
- Chapter 18: How to Prepare Effective Photographs
- Chapter 19: Rights and Permissions
- Readings from the *Clinical Chemistry Guide to Scientific Writing* (<https://www.aacc.org/publications/clinical-chemistry/clinical-chemistry%20a0guide-to-scientific-writing>):
 - Part 7. Put Your Best Figure Forward: Line Graphs and Scattergrams
 - Part 8. Bars and Pies Make Better Desserts Than Figures
 - Part 9. Bring Your Best to the Table

Discussion Post #4 Due

Note: This post is to include some tables, figures, or both that you might be able to use as models.

Sun, Sep 25

Writing Due: revised version of informal abstract

Mon, Sep 26
(04)

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Results Section

Presentation/Discussion: Tables and Figures

Workshop: Examples of Results Sections and Tables and Figures

Fri, Sep 30

Reading Due

- Chapter 28: How to Prepare a Poster
- Chapter 7: How to Prepare the Title
- Chapter 8: How to List the Authors and Addresses
- Chapter 14: How to State the Acknowledgments
- Chapter 13: How to Write the Discussion

Discussion Post #5 Due

Note: Feel free to include an example of a poster presenting research. The poster can be one that you or others have prepared. The design of the poster might then be discussed during the course.

Sun, Oct 2

Writing Due: revised draft of methods section

Mon, Oct 3
(05)

Presentation/Discussion: Preparing Poster Presentations

Presentation/Discussion: Titles and Authors

Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Discussion

Small-Group Exercise: Plans for/Progress on the Results and Discussion Sections

Mini-Workshop: Revised Drafts of Methods Sections; Plans for and Progress on Results Sections

Fri, Oct 7

Reading Due

- Chapter 10: How to Write the Introduction
- Chapter 20: How to Submit the Manuscript
- Chapter 21: The Review Process (How to Deal with Editors)
- Chapter 22: The Publishing Process (How to Deal with Proofs)—and After Publication

Discussion Post #6 Due

Sun, Oct 9

Writing Due: draft of results section

- Mon, Oct 10 (Fall Break—no classes)
- Fri, Oct 14 **Viewing Due**
- some videos of excellent presentations
 - some slides from excellent presentations
- Optional Reading**
- Chapter 1: What Is Scientific Writing?
 - Chapter 2: Historical Perspectives
 - Chapter 4: What Is a Scientific Paper?
- Discussion Post #7 Due**
- Sun, Oct 16 **Writing Due:** draft of discussion
- Mon, Oct 17 (06)** Discussion: Some Examples of Excellent Oral Presentations
Presentation/Discussion: Writing the Introduction
Presentation/Discussion: Publishing a Paper (Part 1 of 2)
Workshop: Drafts of Results Sections
- Fri, Oct 21 **Reading Due**
- Chapter 5: Ethics in Scientific Publishing
 - Chapter 30: Use and Misuse of English
 - Chapter 31: Avoiding Jargon
 - Chapter 32: How and When to Use Abbreviations
 - Chapter 33: Writing Clearly Across Cultures and Media
 - Appendix 2: Words and Expressions to Avoid
- Discussion Post #8 Due**
- Sun, Oct 23 **Writing Due:** draft of introduction
- Mon, Oct 24 (07)** Presentation/Discussion: Publishing a Paper (Part 2 of 2)
Presentation/Discussion: Some Ethical and Other Issues
Presentation/Discussion: Some Aspects of Writing Style
Workshop: Drafts of Discussions
Guest Segment: One Brain Is Never Enough: Personal Knowledge Management for Academics
- Yasha Hartberg, PhD
Lecturer, Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences
- Fri, Oct 28 **Reading Due**
- Chapter 36: How to Prepare a Curriculum Vitae
 - Chapter 26: How to Write for the Public
 - Chapter 39: How to Work with the Media
- Discussion Post #9 Due**
- Sun, Oct 30 **Writing Due:** revised draft of results section
- Mon, Oct 31 (08)** Presentations by Some Class Members About Their Work
Presentation/Discussion: Presenting Science to the Public
Presentation/Discussion: Preparing or Refining a Curriculum Vitae

Workshop: Drafts of Introductions
 Workshop: Starting to Revise Your Curriculum Vitae or Resume

- Fri, Nov 4 **Reading Due**
- Chapter 37: How to Prepare Grant Proposals and Progress Reports
 - “20 Tips for Grant Writing Success” (available at https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/20TipsforGrantWritingSuccess_FactSheet.pdf)
- Discussion Post #10 Due**
- Sun, Nov 6 **Writing Due: revised draft of discussion**
- Mon, Nov 7 (09) Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work
 Presentation/Discussion: Preparing Grant Proposals and Progress Reports (Part 1 of 2)
Guest Segment: Preparing and Creating Effective Scientific Figures
 Jennie Lamb
 Creative Manager, VMBS Communications
- Fri, Nov 11 **Browsing Due**
- annotated example of successful proposal, posted at <http://www.authoraid.info/en/resources/details/587/>
 - sample grant proposals posted at <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/sample-applications>
- Discussion Post #11 Due**
- Sun, Nov 13 **Writing Due: revised draft of introduction**
- Mon, Nov 14 (10) Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work
 Presentation/Discussion: Preparing Grant Proposals and Progress Reports (Part 2 of 2)
- Fri, Nov 18 **Reading Due**
- Chapter 23: How to Write a Review Paper
 - Chapter 24: How to Write Opinion (Book Reviews, Editorials, and Letters to the Editor)
 - Chapter 35: How to Write a Thesis
 - Chapter 40: How to Provide Peer Review
- Browsing Due: 3 review papers in your field**
Instructions: Find and look at 3 review papers in your field. Attach them, or provide links to them. Be ready to discuss what you notice about them.
- Discussion Post #12 Due**
- Sun, Nov 20 **Writing Due: abstract**
- Mon, Nov 21 (11) Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work
 Presentation/Discussion: Writing Review Papers (Review Articles)
 Presentation/Discussion: Writing or Supervising a Thesis or Dissertation

(Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, nothing is due this Friday or Sunday.)

- Mon, Nov 28 (12)** Presentations by Some Class Members about Their Work
Presentation/Discussion: Other Writing for Journals
Presentation/Discussion: Providing Peer Review
- Fri, Dec 2 **Reading Due**
- Chapter 25: How to Write a Book Chapter or a Book
 - Chapter 41: How to Edit Your Own Work
 - if desired, other chapters not yet read
 - Appendix 4: Some Helpful Websites
 - “Beating the Odds for Journal Acceptance” by Warren S. Warren (*Science Advances*, 27 July 2022, available at <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.add9147>)
- Discussion Post #13 Due**
Note: This post is to include a list of items you still need to do before submitting your completed paper.
- Mon, Dec 5 (13)** Presentation/Discussion: Writing Book Chapters and Books
Presentation/Discussion: Assorted Other Items
Panel Discussion: Advice from Journal Editors and Peer Reviewers
- Wed, Dec 7 (14) (redefined day)** Presentation/Discussion: Resources for Continuing to Develop Your Professional Communication Skill
Presentation/Discussion: Editing Your Own Work
Workshop: Looking Ahead—Completing and Submitting the Current Paper, Continuing to Develop Your Writing Skill, Continuing to Write, and Sharing Your Learning from This Course with Others
- Fri, Dec 9 **Writing Due: entire paper**
Note: You are encouraged to submit your paper earlier, but you can have until now if needed.

University-Approved Statement Regarding COVID-19 Prevention

To help protect Aggieland and stop the spread of COVID-19, Texas A&M University urges students to be vaccinated and to wear masks in classrooms and all other academic facilities on campus, including labs. Doing so exemplifies the Aggie Core Values of respect, leadership, integrity, and selfless service by putting community concerns above individual preferences. COVID-19 vaccines and masking — regardless of vaccination status — have been shown to be safe and effective at reducing spread to others, infection, hospitalization, and death.

Required University Statements

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including

definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below) Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit

disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.