

Syllabus: English 202A—Writing in the Social Sciences

Instructor: Phillip Zapkin

Office: Burrowes 017

Email: pzz17@psu.edu

Office Hours: M 3:30-4:30, TH 1:30-3:30

Section	Time	Location
001	MWF 8-8:50AM	Willard Bldg. 269
011	MWF 1:25-2:15PM	Rackley Bldg. 107

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of English 202A is to introduce you to the types of writing that social scientists typically do in the workplace, including research proposals, literature reviews, and research reports. In discussing writing and writing activities, this class will focus on some of the more common forms of social science research—among them, experiments, interviews, observations, and surveys. You will learn to formulate ideas and create coherent pieces of writing from the research you have conducted and read about. In short, this course will introduce you to a variety of writing and research strategies from which you can begin to develop your own identity as a social scientist.

The goals for this course include:

- Becoming comfortable with a systematic approach to the writing process (e.g., developing, drafting, editing, revising);
- Learning how to identify and explore issues and questions in the social sciences;
- Improving critical reading skills;
- Developing and implementing approaches to social science research;
- Learning how to filter and synthesize collected information for use in the development of a convincing and logical argument;
- Learning how to write ethically and responsibly, including using appropriate conventions to document a variety of sources;
- Becoming more experienced with evaluating the work of others (e.g., through peer critique).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND SOFTWARE

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- You, Xiaoye. (2018). *Becoming a Social Science Researcher: A Rhetorical Approach*.
 - Trochim, William M. (2006). *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*, 2nd Edition.
<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/contents.php>
 - The first text will be provided to you for free. The second text is available online for free.
 - You are required to know the material in *all* assigned readings, even if we don't discuss a particular piece in class. Please read carefully.
 - This course requires you to use Microsoft Word for your formal assignments. Unless otherwise specified, files should be submitted as either .docx or .doc file types.
 - If you do not have Microsoft Word, Penn State makes the full Microsoft Office suite, which includes Word, available to Penn State students for free. To get this free version of Microsoft Office, simply login to <https://office365.psu.edu/> using your Penn State credentials.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Graded Assignment	Percentage
Research Proposal	10
Literature Review	10
Presentation of Findings	10
Findings Report	10
Research Report	20
Short Writing Assignments	20
Forum Discussions and Peer Reviews	20

To pass this course you *must* submit all four major projects. Failure to submit a project will result in an automatic failing grade for the course.

- Assignment sheets for each project, short writing, and peer reviews are available on Canvas. These sheets give you specific details about what the assignments require. We will also go over each assignment sheet in class.
 - If you're unsure about what an assignment requires/allows, please ask me in class, during office hours, or over email.
- All assignments must be submitted by *11:59PM Eastern Time* on the date assigned. Submitting a project after the deadline will cost one full letter grade per late day.

GRADING SCALE

This class uses the LionPATH standard grading scale to determine final course grades:

Letter Grade	Point Range
A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99
B	84-86.99
B-	80-83.99
C+	77-79.99
C	70-76.99
D	60-69.99
F	0-59.99

POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

You are allowed to miss three classes with *no penalty* to your grade. *Each class missed beyond those three will cost 1/3 letter from your overall course grade.*

- Excused absences do not count against you. In order for an absence to be excused you must discuss it with me as early as possible beforehand (at least 24 hours). Reasons for excused absences include: religious holidays, military service, university required activities (i.e., participation in a university sports team), or severe illness or injury.
 - Quarantining for Covid-19 will count as excused absences.
- If you miss class, *it is your responsibility to make up the missed material.* Ask a classmate to take notes for you, and then come to office hours and/or email me as soon as possible.

- ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.
- Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

- ACCESSIBILITY: DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

- Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Student Disability Resources Web site provides contact information for every Penn State campus (equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/disability-coordinator). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website at equity.psu.edu/sdr.
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- In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation (equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your [campus's disability services office](#) will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

- EDUCATION EQUITY: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

- Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/) (equity.psu.edu/reportbias/).

- COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

- Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 814-863-0395, studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/
- Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400
Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

- STANDARDS OF CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

- Classroom behavior should always reflect the essential Penn State values of civility, integrity, and respect for the dignity and rights of others. As such, the classroom space should be safe, orderly, and positive—free from disruptions, disorderly conduct, and harassment as defined in the University Code of Conduct (studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/Procedures.shtml). The University Code of Conduct defines disruption “as an action or combination of actions by one or more individuals that unreasonably interferes with, hinders, obstructs, or prevents the operation of the University or infringes on the rights of others to freely participate in its programs and services;” disorderly conduct includes but is not limited to “creating unreasonable noise; pushing and shoving; creating a physically hazardous or physically offensive condition;” and harassment may include “directing physical or verbal conduct at an individual...; subjecting a person or group of persons to unwanted physical contact or threat of such; or engaging in a course of conduct, including following the person without proper authority (e.g., stalking), under circumstances which would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or the safety of others or to suffer emotional distress” (Section IV, B). The course instructor has the authority to request that any disruptive students leave the class for the class period. If disruptive behavior continues in subsequent class periods, a complaint may be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which may result in the student being dismissed from class until University procedures have been completed. Any student with concerns or questions as to this policy should contact the Director of the Program in Writing and Rhetoric.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change by me. I will notify you ahead of time by email and/or Canvas announcement of any changes.

Week 1	<p>This week you will be introduced to the general expectations of this course and the major writing assignments.</p> <p>This week’s work will enable you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the importance of conducting original research in the social sciences, 2. Understand the key terms used in social science research, such as causal relationship, hypothesis, variable, data, and unit of analysis, 3. Seriously consider the relationship between social science research and your career development, 4. Get to know some of your classmates.
<i>Monday</i> <i>22 Aug.</i>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Course Syllabus (Canvas)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequenced Writing Project Overview (Canvas)
<p>Wednesday 24 Aug.</p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher, An Introduction</i> <p>Forum discussion #1</p> <p>Short Writing #1: Communications in My Major</p>
<p>Friday 26 Aug</p>	<p>Due: Forum discussion #1</p> <p>Please post your response to the forum. Read the responses posted by your classmates right before and after yours. Comment on what you find intriguing in their response as well as things that you would like to know more about.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Research Methods</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundations: Language of Research
<p>Week 2</p>	<p>This week’s work will enable you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Understand two key concepts in social science communication: ethos and logos, Be able to analyze and identify how researchers establish ethos and logos both in their research process and in their communication, Become familiar with the overarching frame of reasoning in survey-based research, as reflected in the sample research article “Racial Microaggressions and Daily Well-Being Among Asian Americans,” Begin searching for an appropriate topic for your semester-long research project.
<p>Monday 29 Aug.</p>	<p>Due: Short Writing #1: Communications in My Major</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher, Chapter 1</i> “Racial Microaggressions and Daily Well-Being Among Asian Americans” (Canvas) <p>Forum discussion #2</p>
<p>Wednesday 31 Aug.</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher, Chapter 2</i> “Racial Microaggressions and Daily Well-Being Among Asian Americans” (Canvas) <p>Forum discussion #3</p>
<p>Friday 2 Sept.</p>	<p>Due: Forum discussion #2 and #3</p> <p>Share in class what you’ve written in the forum discussions</p>
<p>Week 3</p>	<p>While continuing to develop your understanding of social science research and writing, you will be introduced to our first major writing project, the research proposal.</p>

	<p>This week's work will enable you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gain some preliminary understanding of qualitative research, specifically the observation-centered ethnographic method, 2. Understand the key steps you need to take in order to participate in a scholarly conversation, 3. Start to locate published studies related to your research topic.
<i>Monday</i> <i>5 Sept.</i>	Labor Day; No Class
<i>Wednesday</i> <i>7 Sept.</i>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher</i>, Chapter 3 • "Gaming Life like Outlaws" (Canvas)
<i>Friday</i> <i>9 Sept.</i>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher</i>, Chapter 4 <p>Forum discussion #4</p>
Week 4	This week, you will come to understand the expectations for the research proposal assignment, complete the first draft of your research proposal, and peer review your classmates' proposals.
<i>Monday</i> <i>12 Sept.</i>	<p>Due: Forum discussion #4</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample research proposals (Canvas) <p><i>Major Writing Assignment # 1: Research Proposal</i></p>
<i>Wednesday</i> <i>14 Sept.</i>	Library research. Come to class with your laptop and continue to search for published studies related to your research topic.
<i>Friday</i> <i>16 Sept.</i>	<p>Due by the beginning of class: Research Proposal, draft 1</p> <p>Peer Review Research Proposal, draft 1</p>
Week 5	<p>This week you will be introduced to our second major writing assignment, the literature review.</p> <p>This week's work will enable you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand how to compose the body of the literature review, 2. Become familiar with the APA documentation style, including in-text citations and the reference list, 3. Understand the expectations for the literature review assignment.
<i>Monday</i> <i>19 Sept.</i>	<p>Due: Research Proposal Peer Review Feedback</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher</i>, Chapters 5
<i>Wednesday</i> <i>21 Sept.</i>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Literature Reviews (Canvas)

	<p><i>Major Writing Assignment #2: Literature Review</i></p> <p>Short Writing #2: Taking Notes on Related Studies</p>
<p><i>Friday</i> <i>23 Sept.</i></p>	<p>Due: Short Writing #2: Taking Notes on Related Studies</p> <p>Share Short Writing Exercise #2 with your group.</p> <p>Library research. Continue to search for published studies related to your research topic, and add them to the table created in the short writing assignment #2.</p>
<p>Week 6</p>	<p>This week, you will complete the first draft of your literature review.</p>
<p><i>Monday</i> <i>26 Sept.</i></p>	<p>Due: Research Proposal, final draft Due by the beginning of class: Literature Review, draft 1</p> <p>Peer Review Literature Review, draft 1</p>
<p><i>Wednesday</i> <i>28 Sept.</i></p>	
<p><i>Friday</i> <i>30 Sept.</i></p>	<p>Due: Literature Review Peer Review Feedback</p>
<p>Week 7</p>	<p>This week focuses on preparing you for field research.</p> <p>This week's work will enable you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the ethical requirements for student researchers, including receiving your research participants' consent and protecting their identity and privacy, 2. Understand the different types of design and research design-related issues, 3. Understand the various aspects of survey-based research and how to design an effective survey, 4. Finalize your survey items if you intend to conduct a survey.
<p><i>Monday</i> <i>3 Oct.</i></p>	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher</i>, Chapter 6 <p>Short Writing #3: Advertisement/Research Subject Consent Form</p>
<p><i>Wednesday</i> <i>5 Oct.</i></p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Research Methods</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design: Internal Validity, Introduction to Design, and Types of Designs ○ Measurements: Survey Research: Constructing the Survey, and Interviews

	Short Writing #4: Research Materials
Friday 7 Oct.	<p>Due: Short Writing #3: Advertisement/Research Subject Consent Form Due by the beginning of class: Short Writing #4: Research Materials</p> <p>Peer Review Short Writing #4 Research Materials.</p>
Week 8	<p>You should start your field research immediately if you have not yet. This week will focus on providing you with guidance in both data gathering and analysis. The readings will introduce you to descriptive and inferential statistics. You are expected to develop a solid understanding of descriptive statistics and a general understanding of inferential statistics. The forum discussion will allow you to ask the class questions related to your field research and learn from your peers' experiences.</p>
Monday 10 Oct.	<p>Due: Literature Review, final draft Due: Short Writing #4 Peer Review Feedback</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Research Methods</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis: Conclusion Validity, Descriptive Statistics, and ○ Inferential Statistics <p>Forum discussion #5</p>
Wednesday 12 Oct.	
Friday 14 Oct.	<p>Due: Forum discussion #5</p> <p><i>Phillip out of town; No class</i></p>
Week 9	<p>You will continue to gather and analyze data this week.</p> <p>Three students who have completed their data gathering and started data analysis can present their findings. They will present their work-in-progress and receive feedback from the rest of the class. As they choose to become the first group of presenters, they will receive three bonus points for their final grade. If you would like to volunteer, please let me know by Wednesday.</p> <p>In addition, you will be introduced to the next major writing assignment, the findings report.</p>
Monday 17 Oct.	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher</i>, Chapter 7
Wednesday 19 Oct.	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Findings Reports (Canvas)

	<i>Major Writing Assignment #3: Findings Report</i>
<i>Friday 21 Oct.</i>	<i>Phillip out of town; No class</i>
Week 10	This week, we will present your findings. If you have not completed your data gathering and analysis, continue to do so. Please remember that you present your work-in-progress to receive feedback, which will help you improve data gathering and analysis. Don't attempt to include every detail of your analysis before the presentation.
<i>Monday 24 Oct.</i>	<p>Presentation of Findings: You will give a 15-minute presentation on your study. In the presentation, you can briefly review previous studies to explain why your study is warranted. Then you introduce your methodology (subjects, contexts, procedure, measures, and analysis) and results. You can use charts, tables, or graphs to help introduce your results. Use about 8 slides in your presentation. Practice once or twice, so you will be able to run 8 slides and explain them within 10 minutes. Leave 5 minutes for questions from the audience.</p> <p>Classroom/Forum Discussion #6 Three students will present the preliminary findings of their study. The rest of the class will ask each presenter one or two questions or make one comment. The presenter needs to answer the questions and explain how he or she will refine the study or improve the presentation of the findings.</p> <p>After the presenters have given their presentations, Phillip will create a thread for each presenter in the forum. Questions will be raised and answered on the same thread.</p>
<i>Wednesday 26 Oct.</i>	Presentation of Findings
<i>Friday 28 Oct.</i>	Presentation of Findings
Week 11	This week, we will continue our presentations.
<i>Monday 31 Oct.</i>	Presentation of Findings
<i>Wednesday 2 Nov.</i>	Presentation of Findings
<i>Friday 4 Nov.</i>	Presentation of Findings
Week 12	We will complete presentations, then you will complete the first draft of your Findings Report and peer review it for each other this week.
<i>Monday 7 Nov.</i>	Presentation of Findings
<i>Wednesday 9 Nov.</i>	Presentation of Findings

Friday 11 Nov.	<p>Due by the beginning of class: Findings Report, draft 1</p> <p>Peer Review Findings Report, draft 1</p>
Week 13	<p>This week, we will focus on understanding the key components of the research report, which is the final product of this semester-long research. You have learned to write the literature review, the method, the results, and the reference list thus far. The new components you are going to learn include the introduction, the discussion, and the conclusion.</p> <p>This week's work will enable you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand what the introduction, the discussion, and the conclusion will involve, 2. Understand how the different components of a research report fit together.
Monday 14 Nov.	<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Becoming a Social Science Researcher</i>, Chapter 8
Wednesday 16 Nov.	<p>Due: Findings Report Peer Review Feedback</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample research reports (Canvas) <p><i>Major Writing Assignment #4: Research Report</i></p> <p>Short Writing #5: What Your Study Means</p>
Friday 18 Nov.	<p>Due: Short Writing #5: What Your Study Means</p> <p>Class discussion: Short Writing Assignment #5</p>
Week 14	Thanksgiving; No classes
Week 15	We will peer review the first draft of your research report this week. For the first draft, please focus on the completeness of each section in your comments and leave any language issues for next week's workshop.
Monday 28 Nov.	<p>Due: Findings Report, final draft</p> <p>Due by the beginning of class: Research Report, draft 1</p> <p>Peer Review Research Report, draft 1</p>
Wednesday 30 Nov.	Due: Research Report, draft 1 Peer Review Feedback
Friday 2 Dec.	
Week 16	We will review the second draft of your research report this week. For the second draft, please comment on both content and style.
Monday 5 Dec.	Due by the beginning of class: Research Report, draft 2

	Peer Review Research Report, draft 2
<i>Wednesday</i> <i>7 Dec.</i>	Due: Research Report, draft 2 Peer Review Feedback
<i>Friday</i> <i>9 Dec.</i>	Due: Research Report, Final draft Due: SRTE