

SYLLABUS  
EBIO 5820  
Instructor: Margie Krest

Office hours: TTH – 10-11, 1-2  
Monday, before and after class  
Other times available by appointment  
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### MATERIALS

1. Course Packet: Graduate Writing Seminar – EPOB/EBIO 5820. Available at UMC Bookstore
2. Throughout the course, as needed and requested by you, I may place specific readings on reserve in Norlin. I will let you know which articles are placed on reserve, and we will discuss when and if we want to talk about them as a class.
3. Please refer to the handout – A Short Bibliography—if you feel you need a useful grammar book. One is not better than another; some are just more detailed than others. I suggest that you look at number of grammar books before buying one because each is arranged differently. (I have most of these in my office if you want to take a look at them.)

### GENERAL COURSE OVERVIEW

As graduate students, you may have been drawn to specific areas of science by your investigative aptitudes and interests rather than your superb writing abilities. In fact, you may have had little undergraduate writing experience, having concentrated on courses that rely on tests and laboratory work for assessment.

However, as graduate students, you will ultimately be judged on your ability to write effectively. Both the scientific and lay communities depend on the communicative abilities of scientists if these communities are to understand the complexities of sophisticated research. A reluctance to write or an inability to articulate ideas to particular audiences will seriously compromise your success in graduate school because they limit not only your ability to complete coursework, write grants, manuscripts and dissertations, but they can also restrict your reputation or advancement in your profession.

Thus, this course is designed to help you work through writing problems that graduate students in the sciences encounter and function as a support for you and your writing projects. From the start, you will be asked to consider your assumptions about writing by discussing them with your colleagues and by examining articles and writing samples.

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As your instructor, I will lecture, provide readings and writing exercises, facilitate discussions and student presentations, and help you learn to facilitate small group discussions of your papers. As students, you will discuss your research and readings about writing, complete writing projects and exercises, and offer comments for peer-review workshops. You will select your own writing projects within the course requirements so that you can use the course to complete portions of your graduate work.

(Note: Please confer with your mentor and/or content course instructors if you plan to use papers for their courses as your writing projects for this course. Be sure your graduate professor is aware of and consents to your working on his/her assignment for this graduate writing class.)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Writing Project** – You will select a writing project for the course from your graduate course work. You will submit two portfolios (each consisting of 10-15 pages of writing).

**Short Assignments** – Exercises and self-analyses will be assigned to enhance fluency and self-reflection.

**Practice Sentences** – You will correct/improve particular sentences and paragraphs from one another's papers.

**Individual Conferences** – You need to sign up for 3 individual conferences with me. The first one, during the first week of classes so we can discuss your writing project(s) for the semester, will be only about 15 minutes. The second and third ones will be 30-60 min and are scheduled around mid-semester and end-semester (see course schedule).

**Peer-review Critiques** – You will write critiques of your peers' drafts and discuss the critiques with the writers. 25% of class time is devoted to discussing your drafts with your peers.

**NOTE:** All written assignments must be typed. Use 1 1/2" margins on all sides of your papers in order to allow room for comments.

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## GRADES

Portfolio	
Completed Project	80
Workshop Drafts, Peer-review critiques	15
Participation	
Practice Sentences, Short Assignments, Self- Analysis, Individual Conferences	5

## ATTENDANCE:

Attendance is very important as much of the class consists of discussion and group work. Given that a specific focus of the course is to learn how to revise your papers and how to provide feedback to others, you need to attend class in order to develop these skills. Your participation grade is based on your contributions to class (both written and oral). If you don't attend class, you are not participating. The 20% of your grade that is based on workshops and participation reflects both your attendance and preparation of drafts.

## Office Hours

If you are having difficulty drafting or revising your paper(s) or with your writing in general, please come see me. I will be happy to look over any of your writing and work with you on any particular problems or concerns you may have. My office hours are for the sole purpose of talking to you and working with you.

## Learning Disabilities

Please let me know if you have a learning disability that might influence your performance in class or if you wish to make special arrangements related to course requirements. Class sessions may be tape recorded, but you must agree not to duplicate, sell or distribute the tape in any way.

Remember: Plagiarism is a serious offense! Using someone else's ideas or words without citing each source specifically is not acceptable. You will not receive credit for work that is in any way plagiarized.

## **REVISION**

Revision is an essential aspect of any writing you do. As I hope you will soon come to understand, revising a paper means much more than just correcting grammar, punctuation, and stylistic mistakes/weaknesses. Revision means re-visioning or re-seeing your paper. To re-vision your paper, you must be able to restructure the paper to meet the needs and expectations of a different audience or bring to the paper a greater depth of knowledge about the topic, a better organizational structure, or a broader perspective. To RE-SEE your paper means that you must be able to look at the paper in a fresh, more informed way. Revision is not merely making the corrections or incorporating the suggestions we make; you must be able to take suggestions and “run with them,” so to speak, and show your own analytical and/or argumentative abilities.

For our purposes, correcting grammar and style is called editing or proofreading. You want to be able to detect and correct an array of grammar, punctuation, etc. errors, not just the ones that are pointed out to you. We can suggest how you might reword a sentence or what type of information you could add, but remember, much of what you are graded, and ultimately judged on, is your ability to apply the concepts we discuss in class, to analyze and strengthen your own content, and to detect and correct weaknesses in style and grammar and punctuation.