AEC 3033C Research & Business Writing
in the Agricultural & Life Sciences
Syllabus Fall 2024 • §10140, §10141 & §20513
Dr. Heather Young

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

AEC 3033C Research & Business Writing in Agricultural and Life Sciences focuses on strategic written communication for the agricultural and life sciences. Students can hone their writing skills, gain experience in effective professional and scholarly writing, and earn 6,000 words toward UF's writing requirement. Emphasis is placed on science communication, critical analysis, ethics, responsibility, accuracy, clarity, coherence, brevity, and style, as well as American English grammar and spelling. This course establishes the importance of effective communication to success in both educational and professional environments, emphasizes writing as a primary form of communication, examines the elements of effective written communication in organizational and scholarly areas, and explores the causes of ineffective writing and ways to correct them.

Course objectives are to enable students to (1) write effectively in scientific, business, and academic contexts, (2) write in a variety of genres using accurate grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and (3) accurately communicate information tailored to the needs and expectations of target and multicultural audiences.

Lecturer:
Dr. Heather Young • heather.young@ufl.edu • 113A Bryant Space Science Center
Office hours: **Mon:** 10 a.m.-12 p.m., in person and/or via Zoom, and by appointment via Zoom.
(**Zoom links @ Canvas: Office Hours**)

Teaching Assistants: • **Suzanna Browning** • suzanna.browning@ufl.edu
Office hours: **Mon**: 9:30-11:30 a.m., via Zoom and by appointment.
• **Camryn Farquhar** • camryn.farquhar@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment
• **Kyleigh Hilburn** • k.hilburn@ufl.edu
Office hours: **Thurs**: 12:00-2:00 p.m., via Zoom and by appointment
• **Candace Jones** • candace.jones@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment
• **Maggie Murphy** • maggie.murphy@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment
• **Sravani Pasula** • sravanipasula@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment
• **Aubrey Pearce** • aubreypearce@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment.
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Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment.
• **Dorcas Sunday** • dorcassunday@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment.
• **Lily Waters** • waters.lily@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment.
• **Cesar Zamora** • cesarzamora@ufl.edu
Office hours: **TBD**., via Zoom and by appointment

Textbook: Johnson-Sheehan Richard, *Technical Communication Today 6th ed.*, Pearson, (2018)
ISBN-13: 9780137527724 https://www.pearson.com/en-us/subject-catalog/p/technical-communication-today/P200000002273/9780137527724
The fifth edition is also acceptable Pearson, (2014). ISBN: 9780321907981

**You will need a Packback subscription; you will receive an email to start your subscription. **

Recommended: APA 7th edition Publication Manual or Concise Guide to APA Style: 7th edition
Amazon link for 7th edition Publication Manual
Amazon link for 7th edition Concise Guide

Harbrace College Handbook, Harcourt Brace College Publishers (grammar reference).

Prerequisites: AEC 3033C has no pre-requisite courses, but students must have junior or senior standing to enroll.

Technology: Desktop Computer or Laptop
- With Audio and Speaker Capabilities

University of Florida Email
- Students are expected to check their my.ufl emails daily. View the Student Computing Requirements page for information on technology requirements and expectations.

Microsoft Word - Microsoft 365 basics video training
Adobe Reader - Acrobat tutorials
Zoom - Zoom Privacy Policy
Internet Connection with access to Canvas
- Canvas is the course management system at the University of Florida in which students will find course content, links to video lectures, assignments, quizzes, discussions, and grades. The use of this system will vary by instructor, but the following videos describe the most common tools in Canvas. The full student guide is provided if you have additional questions.

View Canvas Privacy Policy
Web Browser - Chrome is the preferred browser for Canvas. If you do not have Chrome, you can download it.

Communication: The instructor and graders are committed to responding to your Canvas and email messages as promptly as possible during the work week, Monday through Friday, *except holidays*. We also hold two hours of office hours each week via Zoom or in person; links, times, and locations are provided on the Office Hours page. The major assignments will be graded, with *meaningful feedback* provided, **within two weeks of their submission**. Quizzes are graded automatically upon submission.

Communication About this Course: Questions about **class content** should be directed to Dr. Young at heather.young@ufl.edu. Questions about **Canvas** should be directed to the Canvas Help Desk at http://helpdesk.ufl.edu.

Class expectations: **To succeed in this course, you must complete all assignments and quizzes for each module.** As you work through the modules; we expect collegial and timely class participation in Packback discussions, on-time submission of assignments, and honest effort. Many assignments involve sharing information and ideas online with colleagues. These discussions are important to the critical analyses you will conduct for writing assignments, along with further developing your communication and critical thinking abilities. You are expected to engage and interact respectfully with groupmates, as well as with the TAs and the instructor. You can expect such professional interaction from us in return. To ensure you are doing your part to support the free exchange of ideas in this course, please read and follow the Netiquette Guide for Online Courses guidelines. **Your instructor is committed** to helping you improve your writing and critical thinking skills. To that end, **you can expect** constructive feedback on your writing and expression of ideas and opportunities to apply that feedback, including **rewrites** for the appropriate assignments, which can help improve both your writing and your scores for those assignments. **You are responsible for** all information delivered in class, including information given via Canvas announcements, in the modules, and recorded lectures. Lecture notes are posted but are not a substitute for viewing lectures. You are also expected to contact the instructor if instructions are unclear or information is missing. **Extensions** for quiz and assignment deadlines are granted only for documented excused absences consistent with UF policies: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/.

Technical Skills: Students are expected to have already gained the minimum technical skills of navigating Canvas, using Microsoft Word, attending meetings using Zoom, and using email with attachments.

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty is expected, just as high ethical standards are required professionally. There will be zero tolerance for anything less. That includes not giving, accepting, or taking unauthorized aid,

plagiarizing others' work *or your own previous* **work (self-plagiarism)**; over-quoting sources, or doubling on assignments without the permission of all involved professors and instructors. This course expects you to **write your assignments using your own words unless directions are specifically given to use other forms of technology, such as generative AI.**

Plagiarism: Plagiarism includes taking **verbatim phrases of** *just a few words* without permission or full attribution. It includes *quoting too much* from your sources, thereby substituting their expression for your own, or quoting too much from one source, effectively taking more than a *fair use* of their work. **Over-quoting (direct quotes)** comprising more than 10% of any assignment will be considered plagiarism. Plagiarism includes *unique expressions, which can be phrases* of a few words or a simple moniker. Our writing is mostly *our own expression.* When writing for science and business, we base our work on **facts** obtained from a variety of **credible sources.** We give credit where it is due. We **cite our sources** so others can access the information we present. When appropriate, we very carefully, ethically, and lawfully use others' expressions of that information. We obtain permission to use our sources' expressions or give full credit for *limited, fair use,* including direct quotes. Assignments submitted via Canvas are automatically vetted with Turnitin for plagiarism, including self-plagiarism. Assignments submitted through Packback are verified using the program's built-in originality report. Violations will be pursued according to university guidelines. A copy of the University of Florida's statement on academic honesty is on page 4 of this syllabus.

Using AI: The availability of artificial intelligence (AI) should not be viewed as a shortcut or the easy way out of an assignment. This course includes assignments where we will utilize the benefits of AI, specifically Generative AI, and we will also spend time identifying AI's shortfalls. Just as we give credit to the work of others, you will be **required to provide the AI output** utilized for the assignment. Using AI and not providing the necessary information or using AI when not specifically stated in the instructions, the penalty can be a deduction of up to 100%.

Assignments: Assignments are submitted electronically through Packback Deep Dives. Occasionally assignments need to be submitted to Canvas to check formatting, in which case they should be submitted as Word documents. **Late work** is penalized 10% of the available points for that **DEEP DIVE assignment** *per day* unless you have a documented, excused absence. The late penalty is **automatically assigned** for the **Packback Questions**. You must notify Dr. Young two weeks i*n advance* and provide documentation if participation in UF-approved activities can affect your grade. **Documentation** for excused absences must be provided *within one week* of the absence. **DRC accommodations:** Students must discuss their needs at the beginning of the semester before the need arises. **Optional rewrites,** when available, must be submitted *within one week* of the graded assignments being returned in Packback. It is *your responsibility to routinely check Packback* for your graded assignments. *Late rewrites will not be accepted.* You are responsible for **submitting assignments correctly**, assuring they have uploaded successfully, and checking Packback/Canvas for their *return.*

Major Assignments	Due Date	Word Count	Points Available
What Ag/Nat Res Science Issue (Worksheet) (R)	Aug 30	100	25
Discussion: Introduce Yourself	Aug 30 & Sept 1	~50	25
1. Letter of Introduction (R)	Sept 6	500	100
Discussion: Analyze Your Audience (for A2)	Sept 12 & 15	250	50
2. Analyze ChatGPT Output	Sept 20	700	100
3. Cover Letter and Résumé (R)	Oct 4	500 & 200	100
4. Personal Statement (R)	Oct 17	700	100
Discussion: Brainstorm a Comm. Solution	Oct 24, 27, & 30	300	100
5. Science Issue Analysis	Nov 1	900	125
6. Situation Analysis Report	Nov 15	700	84
7. Research Report & Proposal	Dec 3	700	91
Packback Questions (10)	Weekly	400	100
Quizzes	Weekly	0	100
(R) = Rewrite available	**Totals**	**6,000**	**1,100**

Grading: Your assignments are graded according to **course rubrics** located in Packback/Canvas. Questions or concerns about your grade must be directed to **your TA** *within one week* of the assignment's being returned to you before appealing to Dr. Young. Rewrites, available for certain assignments, can help you earn up to half the points you missed on the original. You must earn a C (730 points) or better to receive UF Writing Rule credit. **The grading scale** follows:

A	100 – 95%	C	<77 – 73%
A-	<95 – 90%	C-	<73 – 70%
B+	<90 – 87%	D+	<70 – 67%
B	<87 – 83%	D	<67 – 63%
B-	<83 – 80%	D-	<63 – 60%
C+	<80 – 77%	E	<60 – 0%

Information on UF policies for assigning grade points:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

UF writing requirement:

The UF writing requirement ensures students maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive writing requirement credit, you must receive a grade of C or higher and satisfactorily complete the writing component of the course.

ESL students may get help in the Writing Studio: http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/esl-assistance/

Reading & Assignment Schedule:

• Readings are from the **sixth edition** of the textbook. **Fifth-edition** readings are specified where they differ.

Week	Topic	Readings
I • Aug 18	Welcome video **Module 1**: Introduction, Issues & Letters *Quiz 1*: Introduction, Letters, & Writing Well (***due*** Aug 30) **Packback Discussion** *available* **Aug 22** (Quest-Aug 30, Resp-Sept 1) *DUE* **Aug 30: What science issue do you want…? Worksheet**	Canvas home page Ch. 6 (Ch. 5 in 5th), 19
II • Aug 25	**Module 2:** Writing Well • Grammar *Quiz 2:* Writing Well (***due*** Sept 4) *DUE* **Aug 30 & Sept 1: Packback Discussion: Introduce Yourself**	Appendix A Ch. 16: pp. 449-465 (pp. 421-437 in 5th)
III • Sept 1	**Module 3:** Audiences • Writing Styles *Quiz 3:* Audiences (***due*** Sept 6) *DUE* **Sept 6: Formal Letter of Introduction**	Ch. 2 (pp. 421-437 in 5th)
IV • Sept 8	**Module 4**: APA Style *Quiz 4:* APA style (***due*** Sept 13) *DUE* **Sept 12 & 15: Packback Discussion: Audience Analysis**	Ch. 15, Appendix C
V • Sept 15	**Module 5**: Technical Writing: Definitions & Descriptions *Quiz 5:* Technical Descriptions (***due*** Sept 20) *DUE* **Sept 20: Analyze Gen-AI Output**	Ch. 1, 7 (Ch. 6 in 5th)
VI • Sept 22	**Module 6**: Tech. Explanations, Instructions & Documentation *Quiz 6:* Technical Explanations & Instructions	Ch. 8 (Ch. 7 in 5th)
VII • Sept 29	**Module 7**: Cover Letter, Résumé & Personal Statement *Quiz 7:* The Job Search (***due*** Oct 4) *DUE* **Oct 4: Cover Letter and Résumé**	Ch. 5 (Ch. 11 in 5th)
VIII • Oct 6	**Module 8**: Science Communication • Issue Analysis • Brainstorming *Quiz 8:* Science Communication (***due*** Oct 11)	Ch. 3, 12, Handouts
IX • Oct 13	**Module 9**: Persuasive Writing *Quiz 9:* Persuasion (***due*** Oct 17) *DUE* **Oct 17: Personal Statement**	Ch. 13, 16: p. 465-475 (Ch. 16: pp. 437-445 in 5th)
X • Oct 20	**Module 10**: Research Reports and Proposals *Quiz 10:* Research Reports and Proposals (***due*** Oct 25) *DUE* **Oct 24:** Discussion: Problem statement *DUE* **Oct 27:** Discussion: Proposed Communication Solutions *DUE* **Oct 30:** Vote for the best solutions	Ch. 9, 11, 14 (Ch. 8-10 in 5th)
XI • Oct 27	**Module 10**: Intercultural Communication *Quiz* 11: Intercultural Communication (***due*** TBD) *DUE* **TBD: A6 Part A: Situation Analysis Report**	
XII • Nov 3	**Module 12:** Communication Law and Research Ethics *DUE* **TBD : A6 Part B: Research Proposal**	Ch. 4
XIII • Nov 10	**Module 12**: Communication Law and Research Ethics, *cont.* *Quiz 12:* Law & Ethics (***due*** TBD 9)	

UF classes end Wednesday, December 4

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus as necessary.

Packback Questions

Participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. Packback Questions is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications. For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this [video](#).

Packback Questions Requirements:

Your participation in/on Packback will count toward 10% of your overall course grade. Monday Discussions have different requirements and deadlines than Discussions (Intro, Analyze Aud., Brainstorm), so please pay close attention to the assignment details. Questions will become available on Monday mornings. There are bi-weekly deadlines of Thursday and Sunday at 11:59 p.m. for submissions. To receive full credit, you should submit the following:

- One question by Thursday @ 11:59 p.m.
- Two responses by Sunday @ 11:59 p.m.
- Achieve a Curiosity Score of 65 or greater.

Packback Deep Dives

Packback Deep Dives will be used to assess independent research skills and improve academic communication through long-form writing assignments such as essays, papers, and case studies. While completing the summative writing prompts on Deep Dives, you will interact with an AI Research Assistant who will help you gather your notes and cite your sources and a Digital Writing Assistant for in-the-moment feedback and guidance on your writing.

Deep Dives Requirements:

Here are your Deep Dives assignments for this course:

1. Letter of Introduction
   Due Date: September 6, 2024
2. Analyze Gen-AI Output
   Due Date: September 20, 2024
3. Cover Letter
   Due Date: October 4, 2024
4. Personal Statement
   Due Date: October 17, 2024
5. Science Issue Analysis & Bibliography
   Due Date: November 1, 2024
6. Situation Analysis Report
   Due Date: November 15, 2024
7. Research Proposal
   Due Date: December 3, 2024

How to Register on Packback:

Packback requires a paid subscription.

1. Click "Packback" within Canvas to access our community.
2. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.
3. **For your grade to be visible in Canvas and for them to sync properly,** you must access Packback only directly from the Canvas page.

How to Get Help from the Packback Team:

If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at [help.packback.co](#). If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

Attendance Policies:

Absences - Students may only participate in classes if they are registered officially or approved to audit with evidence of having paid audit fees. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls to instructors. Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Absences

count from the first class meeting. Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.

For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class or any required class activity must inform the instructor as early as possible before the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergency situations, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered during absence from class or inability to engage in class activities for the reasons outlined above. If a student does not participate in at least one of the first two class meetings of a course or laboratory in which they are registered and have not contacted the department to indicate their intent, the student can be dropped from the course. Students must not assume that they will be dropped, however. The department will notify students if they have been dropped from a course or laboratory. The university recognizes the right of the instructor to make attendance mandatory and requires documentation for absences (except for religious holidays), missed work, or inability to fully engage in class. After due warning, an instructor can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

General Education Objectives:

AEC3033C course objectives are aligned with UF General Education Objectives, enabling students "to think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively, and make informed decisions.…":
https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-programs/general-education/#objectivesandoutcomestext.
This course includes instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English, including grammar, punctuation, and usage. Using multiple forms of writing, students are expected to use critical analysis to organize complex arguments using credible sources and evidence-based thesis statements and claims. These objectives will be assessed through the six major assignments, including (1) business correspondence, (2) technical descriptions and instructions or explanations, (3) employment correspondence, (4) statements for academic or professional advancement, (5) evidence-based issue analysis, and (6) a situation analysis with communication proposal regarding a science issue. Content, formatting and writing competency will be assessed using rubrics, which are expanded for students on the assignment instructions. The rubrics for grading are located in Canvas Assignments.

UF Academic Honesty: As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: ***"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."*** You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ***"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."***

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g., assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean, or Student Honor Court. **It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code.** Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see the UF Student Code of Conduct Webpage.

Privacy Online and This Course: Helping Resources

Software Use: All university faculty, staff, and students are required to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Recording lectures: Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer to and for enrolled students who cannot attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image

agree to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate orally agree to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Evaluation of Online Courses

Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at: https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at: https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575
  www.counseling.ufl.edu
  o Counseling Services
  o Groups and Workshops
  o Outreach and Consultation
  o Self-Help Library
  o Wellness Coaching
- U Matter We Care, www.umatter.ufl.edu/
- Career Connections Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, https://career.ufl.edu/
- Student Success Initiative, http://studentsuccess.ufl.edu.
- Student Complaints:
  o Residential Course: Options for Reporting Concerns and Filing Complaints – UF Human Resources (ufl.edu)
  o Online Course: Student Complaints - Flexible Learning - University of Florida (ufl.edu)

Services for Students with Disabilities:

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services, and mediating faculty-student disability-related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. It is the *student's responsibility* to assure the documentation is delivered to the instructor in a timely manner and to communicate about their special needs with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. *Services for Students with Disabilities:* The Disability Resource Center — 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, **www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/**

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