

**AEC 3033C Research & Business Writing
in the Agricultural & Life Sciences**
Syllabus Spring 2024 • §10224, §10223 & §19430



Dr. Heather Young

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, style, and 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 various 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: Wed: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., and by appointment via Zoom.
(Zoom links @ Canvas: Office Hours)

Teaching Assistants:

- **Lexi Bolger** • abolger@ufl.edu • 215 Rolfs Hall
Office hours: Wed: 3-5 p.m., and by appointment, via Zoom.
- **Suzanna Browning** • suzanna.browning@ufl.edu • 406 Rolfs Hall
Office hours: Mon: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., and by appointment, via Zoom.
- **Jason Dossett** • j.dossett@ufl.edu • 310 Rolfs Hall
Office hours: Tues: 12:30-2:30 p.m., and by appointment, via Zoom.
- **Astrid Ericson** • astrid.ericson@ufl.edu • Rolfs Hall
Office hours: Tues: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., and by appointment via Zoom.
- **Colleen Gariton** • colleenh@ufl.edu • 406 Rolfs Hall
Office hours: Tues: 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m., and by appointment via Zoom.
- **Dorcass Sunday** • dorcassunday@ufl.edu • Rolfs Hall
Office hours: DAY: Time p.m., and by appointment via Zoom.
- **Jennifer K. Morgenthal** • jhoney@ufl.edu • 215 Rolfs Hall
Office hours: Wed: 3-5 p.m., and by appointment via Zoom.
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- **Jessica Switzer** • jlswitzer@ufl.edu • Rolfs Hall
Office hours: DAY: Time p.m., and by appointment, via Zoom.
- **Cesar Zamora** • cesarzamora@ufl.edu • 408 Rolfs Hall
Office hours: Thurs: 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., and by appointment, via Zoom.

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 ConciseGuide-APA Style](#))

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; Chrome is the preferred browser for Canvas. If you do not have Chrome, you can download it.

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

Communication: The instructor and TAs 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; links 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 on discussion boards, 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, so you will have opportunities to interact with colleagues on three discussion boards. You are expected to engage and interact respectfully with groupmates, as well as with graders and the instructor, and you can expect such professional interaction from us. To assure 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 as well as opportunities to apply that feedback, including **rewrites** for three 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, using Zoom to attend meetings, 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 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, 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** from various **credible sources**. We give credit where it is due. We **cite our sources** so others can access the information we present. When appropriate, we 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**. Violations will be pursued according to university guidelines. A copy of the University of Florida's statement on academic honesty is on page 5 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 ChatGPT, 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 following the relevant instructions in Canvas Assignments. They must be uploaded as editable Microsoft Word documents by the due date to be considered submitted on time. **Late work** is penalized **10%** of the available points for that assignment *per day* unless you have a documented, excused absence. Work over **five (5) days late will not be accepted**. Excused absence **documentation** must be provided *within one week* of the absence. You must notify Dr. Young two weeks *in advance* and provide documentation if participation in UF-approved activities can affect your grade. Students with DRC accommodations 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 Canvas. **Late rewrites will not be accepted**. You are responsible for **submitting assignments correctly**, assuring they have uploaded successfully, and checking Canvas for their *return*.

Major Assignments	Due Date	Word Count	Points Available
<i>Module 1 Discussion Board</i>	Jan 19	50	25
Approval of Science Issue	Jan 22	0	25
1. Letter of Introduction (R)	Jan 26	500	100
<i>Module 4 Discussion Board A & B (for A2)</i>	Feb 5 & 9	250	50
2. Analyze Chat GPT output	Feb 16	700	100
3. Cover Letter and Résumé (R)	Feb 23	700	100
4. Personal Statement (R)	March 8	700	100
<i>Module 7 Discussion Board A, B & C (for A6)</i>	March 26, April 1, & 4	300	100
5. Science Issue Analysis	April 5	900	125
6. Research Report & Proposal	April 21	1,900	175
Quizzes	Weekly	0	100
(R) = Rewrite available	Totals	6,000	1,000

Grading:

Your assignments are graded according to **course rubrics** located in 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. The number of **points** earned determines your final grade. Rewrites, available for three 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	950 to 1000	C	730 to 769
A-	900 to 949	C-	700 to 729
B+	870 to 899	D+	670 to 699
B	830 to 869	D	630 to 669
B-	800 to 829	D-	600 to 629
C+	770 to 799	E	599 & Below

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 • Jan 8	Welcome video Module 1: Introduction, Issues & Letters <i>Quiz 1:</i> Formal Business Letters (<i>due</i> Jan 19) Discussion Board 1 (DB1) available Jan 13 (after drop-add)	Canvas home page Ch. 6 (Ch. 5 in 5 th), 19
II • Jan 15	Monday, Jan. 15 is MLK Day Module 2: Writing Well • Grammar <i>Quiz 2:</i> Grammar (<i>due</i> Jan 24)	Appendix A Ch. 16: pp. 449-465 (pp. 421-437 in 5 th)
III • Jan 22	Module 3: Audiences, Writing Styles Module 3: Audiences <i>Quiz 3:</i> Audiences (<i>due</i> Jan 26) DUE Jan 26: A1 Formal Letter of Introduction	Ch. 2 (pp. 421-437 in 5 th)
IV • Jan 29	Module 4: APA Style <i>Quiz 4:</i> APA style (<i>due</i> Feb 2)	Ch. 15, Appendix C
V • Feb 5	Module 5: Technical Writing: Definitions & Descriptions <i>Quiz 5:</i> Technical Descriptions (<i>due</i> Feb 9) Discussion Board 4 for A2 in two parts (DB4 a & b) DUE Feb 5: DB4(a) Feb 9: DB4(b)	Ch. 1, 7 (Ch. 6 in 5 th)
VI • Feb 12	Module 6: Technical Explanations, Instructions & Documentation <i>Quiz 6:</i> Technical Explanations & Instructions (<i>due</i> Feb 16) DUE Feb 16: A2 Analyze Chat GPT Output of Technical Description	Ch. 8 (Ch. 7 in 5 th)
VII • Feb 19	Module 7: Cover Letter, Résumé & Personal Statement <i>Quiz 7:</i> The Job Search (<i>due</i> Feb 23)	Ch. 5 (Ch. 11 in 5 th)
VIII • Feb 26	Module 8: Science Communication • Issue Analysis • Brainstorming Handouts <i>Quiz 8:</i> Science Communication (<i>due</i> March 1) DUE Feb 23: A3 Cover Letter and Résumé	Ch. 3, 12,
IX • March 4	Module 9: Persuasive Writing <i>Quiz 9:</i> Persuasion (<i>due</i> March 8) DUE March 8: A4 Personal Statement	Ch. 13, 16: p. 465-475 (Ch. 16: pp. 437-445 in 5 th)
X • March 18	Module 10: Research Reports and Proposals <i>Quiz 10:</i> Research Reports and Proposals (<i>due</i> March 22) DUE March 26: Discussion Board 7(a): Issue & organization problem statement	Ch. 9, 11, 14 (Ch. 8-10 in 5 th)
XI • March 25	Module 11: Intercultural Communication <i>Quiz 11:</i> Intercultural Communication (<i>due</i> March 29) DUE April 1: DB7(b). Solution Ideas DUE April 4: DB7(c). Vote for the best solutions	
XII • April 1	Module 12: Communication Law and Research Ethics DUE April 5: A5 Science Issue Analysis	Ch. 4
XIII • April 8	Module 12: Communication Law and Research Ethics, <i>cont.</i> <i>Quiz 12:</i> Law & Ethics (<i>due</i> April 12)	
XIV • April 15	Continue working on A6 DUE April 21: A6 Research Report & Proposal	
XVI • April 22	UF classes end Wednesday, April 24	

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

Attendance Policies:

Absences - Students may only participate in classes if 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 the instructor approves.

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 prior to the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergencies, 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 above reasons. 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, they 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 require 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 explicitly permits 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. Your individual responsibility is **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. Please see the UF Student Code of Conduct Webpage for more information regarding the Student Honor Code

Privacy Online and This Course; Helping Resources

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

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 having your profile or video image recorded, 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 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 professionally and respectfully 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 for currently enrolled students at no cost. 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
 - Counseling Services
 - Groups and Workshops
 - Outreach and Consultation
 - Self-Help Library
 - 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:
 - Residential Course: [Options for Reporting Concerns and Filing Complaints – UF Human Resources \(ufl.edu\)](#)
 - 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 ensure the documentation is delivered to the instructor promptly 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/