Research & Business Writing in the Agricultural & Life Sciences
AEC 3033C

Summer 2025 - 3 credit hours

Instructor

Dr. Heather Young
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Teaching Assistant

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Course Description

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

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.

Class Times & Location

This course utilizes an online delivery. Asynchronous online content must be completed each week by Sunday evening.

Course 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 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 or your assigned TA if instructions are unclear or information is missing at least 24 hours before the due date.

DRC accommodations: Students must discuss their needs at the beginning of the semester before the need arises.

Instructor Team Communication & Feedback

The instructor and teaching assistants (TA) are committed to responding to your Canvas and email messages **within 24 hours** when feasible during the work week, Monday through Friday, *except holidays*. We also hold student hours weekly in person or via Zoom; links are provided in the 'Teaching Assistant' section above. The major assignments will be graded, with *meaningful feedback* provided, **within two weeks of their submission**. Quizzes are graded automatically upon submission.

Questions about class content should be directed to Dr. Young at heather.young@ufl.edu. Brooke Brammer (brooke.brammer@ufl.edu) is our instructional designer and can assist with Canvas content and functionality. She does not grade or have answers to assignment-specific questions, so please do not include her in your content-related messages.

Questions about **Canvas** should be directed to the Canvas Help Desk at http://helpdesk.ufl.edu.

Requirements

Textbook:

Required:
- Johnson-Sheehan, R. (2024). *Technical communication today* (7th ed.). Pearson. https://www.pearson.com/en-us/subject-catalog/p/technical-communication-today/P200000006746/9780137704453 (The 6th edition is also acceptable Pearson, (2021). ISBN: 9780137527724)
- ****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

Technology:
To succeed in this course, you must have access to the following technology:
- Desktop Computer or Laptop
  - Audio Capabilities
  - Webcam and Microphone for synchronous sessions
- Microsoft Office Programs
  - Microsoft Privacy Statement
  - Microsoft Accessibility Information
  - Word - Microsoft 365 basics video training
- Adobe Reader
  - Acrobat tutorials
  - Adobe Privacy Statement
  - Adobe Accessibility Statement
- Zoom

- - [Zoom Privacy Policy](#)
  - [Zoom Accessibility Information](#)
- UF NaviGator
  - [Data Information (no privacy policy or accessibility statement exists)](#)
- Quinncia
  - [Quinncia Privacy Policy](#)
  - No Accessibility Statement
- Packback
  - [Packback Privacy Policy](#)
  - [Packback Accessibility Statement](#)
- 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.
    - [Canvas Privacy Policy](#)
    - [Canvas Accessibility Standards](#)
- **Web Browser - Chrome** is the preferred browser for Canvas. If you do not have Chrome, you can [download it.](#)
- 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.

Prerequisite Knowledge:
AEC 3033C has no pre-requisite courses, but students must have junior or senior standing to enroll.
ESL students (and others) may get general writing, grammar, and mechanics assistance in the Writing Studio: http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/for-students/esl-assistance/

Expected Technical & Digital Literacy Skills:
Minimum skills required:
- Proficiency in utilizing Canvas and navigating the internet effectively.
- Competence in using email for communication purposes, including sending and receiving messages and managing attachments.
- Familiarity with commonly used word processing applications (such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs), including the ability to create, edit, and format documents.
- Basic computer skills, including understanding fundamental operations like file management, using menus and toolbars, and navigating between different applications.
- Ability to perform online research using a variety of search engines and library databases.

Assignments
Further information about UF grading policies can be found here:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/

Assignments are submitted electronically through Packback Writing Assignments (Deep Dives) or Canvas, as each assignment instructs. The Canvas submissions allow us to check for proper formatting (i.e., cover letter/resume, reference lists, etc.).

You are responsible for **submitting your assignments correctly**, ensuring they have uploaded successfully, and checking Packback/Canvas for their return.

Optional rewrites are available for four (4) assignments.
- If you choose to do the rewrite, it must be submitted *within one week* of the graded assignment being posted in Packback or Canvas.
- Rewrites are submitted in Canvas only.
- You can earn, at the most, half of the points lost on your initial submission grade.
  - If you earned 90 pts on your initial submission, you would regain 5 pts by submitting an edited rewrite, given that all errors were fixed.
- It is your responsibility to check Packback for your graded assignments routinely, as the assignments don't always automatically sync to the Canvas gradebook.
  - *Late rewrites will not be accepted.*

Last Assignment Policy:
You must notify Dr. Young two weeks in advance and provide documentation if participation in UF-approved activities can affect your grade. Late Deep Dives will be penalized 10% of the available points for that assignment per day unless you have a documented, excused absence submitted to Dr. Young within 24 hours of the missed deadline. The late penalty is automatically assigned in Packback Questions. The Question will lock after the final assignment deadline. If you are active military or reserves, please reach out to Dr. Young so she is aware of your situation and can make necessary arrangements.

Work submitted more than seven (7) days past the due date will receive a 0 unless arrangements are made with Dr. Young and documentation is submitted **before** the assignment deadline.

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/.

Documentation for excused absences must be provided within one week of the absence.

Assignment Points:

Assignments	Due Date	Word Count	Points Available
Packback Questions (Monday Discussions 8) (Issue-related 3)	Weekly		230
Syllabus, Packback & APA Formatting Quizzes	Varies		31
What ANR Science Issue Worksheet (Resubmit until 25/25 is achieved)	May 18		25
1. Introduction Email (R)	May 25	500	100

2. Media Critique	Jun 1	500	50
3. Analyze Gen-AI Output			
Part A: Description & Explanation (Start of A6 draft)	Jun 8	500	50
Part B: Reflection on AI-use & Audience Analysis Activity	Jun 15	500	50
1st Reference List check-in	Jun 15		
4. Cover Letter (R)	Jun 22	500	70
5. Résumé (R)	Jul 6	300	30
6. Personal Statement (R)	Jul 13	700	100
2nd Reference List check-in	Jul 13		
7. Issue Guide	Jul 20	500	100
8. Situation Analysis Report	Jul 27	1000	100
Final Reference List check-in	Aug 3		
9. Research Proposal	Aug 5	1000	100
Final Formatted Submission	Aug 5		50

Course 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 specific assignments, can help you **earn up to half** the points you missed on the original.

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.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100%	C+ = 76 – 79.99%	F = Below 60%
A- = 90 – 92.99%	C = 73 – 75.99%	
B+ = 86 – 89.99%	C- = 70 – 72.99%	
B = 83 – 85.99%	D+ = 66 – 69.99%	
B- = 80 – 82.99%	D = 63 – 65.99%	
	D- = 60 – 62.99%	

Reading & Assignment Schedule:

Readings are from the **seventh edition** of the textbook. Sixth-edition readings are specified where they differ.

Week	Lectures	Readings	Assignments
1 – Introduction & Issues	• Science Issues	• Chapters 6 (pages 156-175) and 19,	• Worksheet – ANR Related Science Issue Selection

	• From Writing Well: History of English • How To Write The BEST Email To • How to Write an Email	Technical Communication Today • Why copying only a few words can be plagiarism • How to Email a Professor: Complete Guide with Samples • UF Introduction to Library Research • Library Tutorials for Students and Faculty: Helpful Videos and Links	• Packback Discussion: Introduce Yourself • Knowledge Check
2 - Grammar & Writing Well	• Writing Well • What Is a Preposition? • Part 1 Grammar Common Problems • Part 2 Sentences Modifiers Appositives • Part 3 Punctuation and Spelling • Part 4 Irregular Verbs and Other Problems	• Appendix A & B, Technical Communication Today • Grammar Update	• Packback Discussion: What About Gen AI • #1 Introduction Email • Syllabus & Packback Quiz • Knowledge Check • Extra Credit: Course Deadlines
3 - Communication Law & Ethics	• Communication & Ethics Parts 1, 2, & 3 • Ethics in Research • Student Guide to AI	• Chapter 4, Technical Communication Today • The Ethics of Science Communication • Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence for Scientific Writing: Current Trends	• Packback Discussion: What is ethical use of AI • Packback Writing Assignment - #2 Media Critique • Knowledge Check
4 – Audiences	• Audiences • Writing Styles	• Chapters 2 and 17 (pages 497-514), Technical Communication Today	• Packback Discussion: Audience Analysis • Packback Writing Assignment - #3 Part A: Analyze Generative AI Output • Knowledge Check

5 – APA Style	• Issue Tracking • APA Style • Why Do You Need APA Style? • Who Uses APA Style and Why?	• Ch. 15 (pages 443-463), Technical Communication Today • When You Must Cite • Reference Guide for Journal Articles, Books, and Edited Book Chapters • Common Reference Examples Guide • Reference Examples	• Packback Writing Assignment - #3-Part B: Analyze Generative AI Output • 1st Reference List Check-in • Knowledge Check
6 – Cover Letter, Resume, & Personal Statement	• Job Search & Cover Letters • Resume • Interview & Personal Statement	• Chapters 5 & 6, Technical Communication Today • UF Career Connections Center: Professional Communication Guide • UF Career Connections Center: Resume Guide • UF Career Connections Center: Resume Examples • UF Career Connections Center: Cover Letter Guide • Beat the Robots: How to Get Your Resume Past the System and Into Human Hands • Should You Use Canva for Your Resume? Here's What You Need to Know	• Packback Discussion: Do I Still Need It? • APA Formatting Quiz #1 • Packback Writing Assignment - #4 Cover Letter • Knowledge Check
UF Summer Break			
7 – Technical Writing: Definitions & Descriptions	• Technical Definitions & Descriptions • 4 Types of Business Writing	• Chapters 1 & 7, Technical Communication Today	• Packback Discussion: What is a white paper? • #5 Resume • Knowledge Check

8– Explanations	• Explanations • What is Technical Writing (2 videos)	• Chapter 8, Technical Communication Today	• Packback Discussion: Picture worth 1,000 words • Packback <u>Writing Assignment</u> – #6 Personal Statement • 2nd Reference List Check in • Knowledge Check
9 – Science Communication, Issue Analysis, & Brainstorming	• Communicating Science Parts 1, 2, & 3 • Flat Earthers vs. Scientists: Can We Trust Scientists?	• Chapters 1 (pages 4-11) and 3 (pages 49-56), Technical Communication Today • Communication Fundamentals • Communicating Science Online	• Packback <u>Discussion</u>: What is EDIS? • APA Formatting Quiz #2 • #7 Issue Guide • Knowledge Check
10 – Persuasive Writing	• Persuasive Writing Parts 1, 2, & 3	• Chapters 14, 16, and 17 (pages 514-522), Technical Communication Today. • UF Career Connections Center: Personal Statement Guide	• Packback <u>Discussion</u>: Brainstorm and vote • Packback <u>Writing Assignment</u> - #8 Situation Analysis Report • Knowledge Check
11 – Research Reports and Proposals	• Research Reports • Research Proposals	• Chapters 9, 11, & 15, Technical Communication Today.	• Packback <u>Discussion</u>: Why does citation format matter? • APA Formatting Quiz #3 • Final Reference List Check-in • Knowledge Check
12 – Intercultural Communication	• Intercultural Communication	• Chapter 2 (pages 33-40), Technical Communication Today.	• Packback <u>Discussion</u>: What did you learn? • Packback <u>Writing Assignment</u> - #9 Research Proposal • Final Formatted Submission • Knowledge Check

Packback:

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 cover in class and relate topics to real-world applications. Watch this <u>video</u> for a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we use it in this class.

Packback Questions Requirements:

Participation in/on Packback will count toward 10% of your overall course grade. Monday Discussions have different requirements than the 'Introduce yourself,' Analyze your audience,' and 'Brainstorm communication solutions' discussions, so please pay close attention to the assignment details. Discussions will become available on Sunday mornings at 12:00 am. There are bi-weekly deadlines of Thursday and Sunday for submissions unless otherwise stated in Packback. To receive full credit, you must submit the following:

- One question by Thursday @ 11:59 p.m.
- Two responses by Sunday @ 11:59 p.m. (or 5 responses for the 3 'issue-related' discussions)
- Achieve a Curiosity Score of 65 or greater.

Packback Writing Assignments (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:

- Analyze Gen-AI Output
  - Part A: Due Date: June 8
  - Part B: Due Date: June 15
- Cover Letter
  - Due Date: June 22
- Personal Statement
  - Due Date: July 13
- Situation Analysis Report
  - Due Date: July 27
- Research Proposal
  - Due Date: August 5

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 correctly, 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.

Academic Code of Conduct

UF's Academic Honesty Statement:

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: UF Student Code of Conduct Webpage.

Plagiarism:

Academic integrity is a fundamental value in our educational community and is essential for maintaining a fair and honest learning environment. As students, you are expected to adhere to the highest standards of honesty and ethical behavior in all academic activities. To ensure that you maintain academic integrity throughout the course, please ensure all sources and text are properly referenced. Familiarize yourself with the appropriate citation style for the course (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) and consistently apply it to all written work. Properly citing sources not only demonstrates respect for others' intellectual contributions but is also crucial in avoiding plagiarism. Plagiarism encompasses using verbatim phrases without permission or proper attribution, quoting excessively from sources, and surpassing the 10% limit for direct quotes in an assignment. It extends to appropriating unique expressions, like short phrases or simple monikers.

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Use:

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.

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 explicitly stated in the instructions, the penalty can be a deduction of up to 100%.

Attendance Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: UF Attendance Policies..

Institutional Policies

Recording Statement

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another
student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. UF In-Class Recording

Software Use

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

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
3. The central portal at https://my-ufl.bluera.com

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/."

Student Services

Health & Wellness

- U Matter, We Care
  - If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center
  - Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
  - 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.
- Student Health Care Center
  - Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- University Police Department
  - Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services
  - For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support
- Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connections Center
  - Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- Library Support
  - Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center
  - Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio
  - 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Student Complaints On-Campus
  - Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.
- On-Line Students Complaints
  - View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

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
0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, UF Disability Resource Center.