

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| Academic Year | AY2019/20 | Semester | 2 |
| Course Coordinator | Pavel Adamek | | |
| Course Code | ES0238 | | |
| Course Title | Writing Science for Non-Scientists | | |
| Pre-requisites | ES0138 | | |
| No of AUs | 2 | | |
| Contact Hours | Total hours – 26 (Lecture – 12; class activities – 14) | | |
| Proposal Date | 07/06/2019 | | |

Course Aims

This course builds on ES0138, and is designed to provide you with tools for writing in a more engaging and impactful ways, and to familiarize you with authorial positioning. During the course, you will analyze written (and at times spoken) texts, and experiment with vocabulary choices, grammatical structures, and stylistic features in order to better understand how you can craft effective scientific messages for (non-)specialist audiences.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you (as a student) will be able to:

1. Articulate and exemplify nine feature areas that contribute to engaging academic writing and authorial positioning (LO1);
2. Analyze written texts for the presence or absence of features of engaging writing and authorial positioning, and suggest alternatives (LO2);
3. Appropriately use strategies of engagement and authorial positioning to produce texts about scientific findings intended for (non-)specialist audiences (LO3).

Course Content

The module starts with a brief review of important aspects of reader-centered writing encountered in ES0138 (flow, whose story, and emphasis). New course content can be divided into three broad topics: story-telling in research (plots and sub-plots, narrative features, vocabulary, transitivity), authorial positioning and reader engagement (hedging, boosting, attitude markers, personal asides, self-mention, reader pronouns, questions, directives, etc.), and selected topics in impactful written communication (verbal fitness, opening paragraphs and introductions, exemplification, titles, rhetorical appeals).

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

| Component | Course LO Tested | Related Programme LO or Graduate Attributes | Weighting | Team/ Individual | Assessment Rubrics |
|-----------|------------------|---|-----------|------------------|--------------------|
|-----------|------------------|---|-----------|------------------|--------------------|

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------|---|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Paper | 3 | Demonstrate intellectual flexibility and critical thinking in order to apply theoretical knowledge in the real world; communicate environmental concepts with enthusiasm to varied audiences both orally and in writing; formulate scientific questions, and be able to access and analyse quantitative and qualitative information to address them; exhibit the motivation, curiosity and skills for lifelong learning; and demonstrate ethical values and responsibility. | 40% | Individual | Appendix 1 |
| 2. Oral presentation | 2 | Demonstrate intellectual flexibility and critical thinking in order to apply theoretical knowledge in the real world; communicate environmental concepts with enthusiasm to varied audiences both orally and in writing; formulate scientific questions, and be able to access and analyse quantitative and qualitative information to address them; exhibit the motivation, curiosity and skills for lifelong learning; and demonstrate ethical values and responsibility. | 35% | Team | Appendix 2 |
| 3. Class participation | 1, 2, 3 | Demonstrate intellectual flexibility and critical thinking in order to apply theoretical knowledge in the real world; formulate scientific questions, and be able to access and analyse quantitative and qualitative information to address them; and exhibit the motivation, curiosity and skills for lifelong learning; and collaborate and lead by influence. | 10% (includes peer evaluation) | Individual | Appendix 3 |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|---|------|-----------------|------------|
| 4. Homework | 1, 2, 3, | Demonstrate intellectual flexibility and critical thinking in order to apply theoretical knowledge in the real world; formulate scientific questions, and be able to access and analyse quantitative and qualitative information to address them; and exhibit the motivation, curiosity and skills for lifelong learning; demonstrate ethical values and responsibility; and collaborate and lead by influence. | 15% | Individual/Team | Appendix 4 |
| Total | | | 100% | | |

Formative feedback

You will receive informal feedback continuously throughout the course while working on individual/group in-class tasks, and formal feedback following every homework task. In addition, I will be available to answer questions regarding the paper and oral presentation throughout the course.

Learning and Teaching approach

| Approach | How does this approach support students in achieving the learning outcomes? |
|------------------------|--|
| Lecture | To effectively convey information about key concepts and to bring all of you up to similar levels of knowledge (LO1) |
| Interactive activities | Various activities (homework, tutorial, group tasks, in-class discussion, etc.) to help you analyze and deepen your understanding of the concepts, develop your critical thinking, collaboration, and sharpen their communication skills (LO1, LO2, LO3) |

Supplementary reading

Pinker, S. (2014). *The sense of style: The thinking person's guide to writing in the 21st century*. London: Allen Lane; ISBN-13: 978-0670025855

Phillips, J. (2012). Storytelling in Earth sciences: The eight basic plots. *Earth-Science Reviews*, 115 (3), 153-162.

Sword, H. (2009). Writing higher education differently: A manifesto on style. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34 (3), 319-336.

Sword, H. (2012). *Stylish academic writing*. Cumberland, RI, USA: Harvard University Press; ISBN 9780674064485

Sword, H. (2016). *The writer's diet*. Auckland: Auckland University Press; ISBN 978 1 86940 831 2

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities on time, attend all lectures and class discussions, and submit all scheduled homework assignments and papers by due dates. Assignments/papers submitted late will have 10% deducted from their final scores. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments, and course related announcements they have missed.

(2) Absenteeism

Absence from scheduled lectures and class discussions without a valid reason will affect your overall course grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate.

If you miss a class, you must inform me via email (padamek@ntu.edu.sg) prior to the start of the class.

(3) Compulsory Assignments

You are required to submit compulsory assignments on due dates, unless a valid reason is provided. Valid reasons include falling sick (supported by a medical certificate).

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behavior. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honor Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust, and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Course Instructors

| Instructor | Office Location | Phone | Email |
|--------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------|
| Pavel Adamek | N2-01a-14 | | padamek@ntu.edu.sg |

Planned Weekly Schedule

| Week | Topic | Instructor | Course LO | Readings/ Activities |
|---------------|---|------------|-----------|---|
| 1 (Jan 13-17) | Review of writing fundamentals: Flow, whose story, and emphasis | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Notes from ES0138 |
| 2 (Jan 20-24) | What is stylish writing? Avoiding unnecessary jargon; verbal fitness | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Sword (2009), Sword (2016), Appendix, |

| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------|---------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | Pinker, Chapters 2+3 |
| 3 (Jan 27-31) | Basic plots | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Phillips |
| 4 (Feb 3-7) | Narrative features in texts | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Sword (2016), Chapter 4 |
| 5 (Feb 10-14) | Telling a research story | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Sword (2012), Chapter 8 |
| 6 (Feb 17-21) | Transitivity–grammar and story-telling | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | |
| 7 (Feb 24-28) | Writing an opening paragraph | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Sword (2012), Chapter 7 |
| 8 (Mar 9-13) | Going about writing a literature review | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | |
| 9 (Mar 16-20) | Giving examples | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Sword (2012), Chapter 9 |
| 10 (Mar 23-27) | Expressing stance through hedging and boosting | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | |
| 11 (Mar 30-Apr 3) | Reader engagement | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | |
| 12 (Apr 6-10) | Writing titles Ethos, pathos, and logos | P. Adamek | 1, 2, 3 | Sword (2012), Chapter 6 |
| 13 (Apr 13-17) | Oral presentations | P. Adamek | 1, 2 | |

Appendix 1: Assessment Criteria for the Final Paper

| | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| The title (original or re-worked) is engaging (question, engaging: informative, allusion, result, etc.). | Yes (2pts) | Attempt made (1pt) | No (0pts) |
| The opening paragraph sets the scene in an engaging way. | Yes (2pts) | Attempt made (1pt) | No (0pts) |
| The (story) events are temporally/causally sequenced. | Yes (1pt) | No (0pts) | |
| Tellability: Appeal is clearly mentioned (why the story is being told, what is the dramatic or unusual event, recommendation). | Yes (1pt) | No (0pts) | |
| Sensory language is used (imagery punchy adjectives/adverbs, vivid verbs). | 5 or more (2pts) | 3-4 (1pt) | 1-2 (0pts) |
| Concepts are explained through examples/anecdotes/analogies/scenarios/metaphors. | 3 or more (2pts) | 1-2 (1pt) | No (0pts) |
| Hedging is used appropriately. | Yes (2pts) | Attempt made (1pt) | No (0pts) |
| Boosting is used appropriately. | Yes (2pts) | Attempt made (1pt) | No (0pts) |
| Collective reader reference <i>we</i> is used (at least once) appropriately. (<i>You</i> is not really suitable, unless imperatives are used.) | Yes (1pt) | No (0pts) | |
| Rhetorical questions are used in the text's body (at least once). | Yes (1pt) | No (0pts) | |
| Appeals to shared knowledge are used (at least once) appropriately. | Yes (1pt) | No (0pts) | |
| Personal asides/attitude markers are used (at least once) appropriately. | Yes (1pt) | No (0pts) | |
| The text flows from old to new information. | 0-1 Issues) (4pts) | 2-3 Issues (2pts) | 4 > Issues (0 pts) |
| Grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are correct. | 0 Issues (2pts) | 1-2 Issues (1pt) | 3 > Issues (0pts) |

Appendix 2: Assessment Criteria for Oral Presentation

| | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The title (original or re-worked) is engaging (question, engaging: informative, allusion, result, etc.). | Yes (2pts) | Attempt made (1pt) | No |
| The basic plot and sub-plots are identified. | Yes (2pts) | Only plot/ sub-plot (1 pt) | No |
| The opening paragraph was analysed for engaging style. | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Identified narrative features: | | | |
| Lesson 1: Temporal/causal sequence(s) of events/conjunctions | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Lesson 2: Dramatic/unusual event(s), settings, aftermath | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Lesson 3: Movement through time | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Lesson 9: Appeal (tellability; moral stance) | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Flow | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Introduction was analysed according to the CARS model. | Yes, correctly (2 pts) | Yes, but with issues (1pt) | No |
| Concepts are explained through examples, anecdotes, analogies, scenarios, metaphors (identified or created for the presentation). | 3 or more (2pts) | 1–2 (1pt) | No |
| Identified features of authorial stance: | | | |
| Hedging | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Boosting | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Attitude markers | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Self-mention (types of authorial roles) | Authorial roles (2pts) | Only pronouns (1pt) | No |
| Identified features of reader engagement: | | | |
| Reader pronouns (<i>you</i> ; <i>we</i> as a guide or a representative) | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Rhetorical questions | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Appeals to shared knowledge/Personal asides | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Directives | Yes (1pt) | No | |
| Verbs (e.g., verbs in connection with transitivity, weak or active verbs), adjectives/adverbs (e.g., as sensory/imagery words or promotional | Yes (3pts) | Two word classes (2pts) | One Word class (1pt) |
| | | | No |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| language), and nouns (e.g., as nominalizations, imagery words or searchability) are identified . | | | | |
| Bonus points (e.g., extended analyses of verbal processes, stance and engagement, vocabulary) | 4pts | 3pts | 2pts | 1pt |

Appendix 3: Assessment Criteria for Participation in Class Discussion and Group Work

| | Frequent, important, meaningful, clear evidence (3) | Satisfactory, sometimes, some evidence (2) | Minimal, limited, little evidence (1) | None (0) |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Contribution to class discussion | Meaningful, frequent, important | Satisfactory, sometimes | Minimal | None |
| Capacity to articulate and present points of view | Clear evidence | Some | Limited | None |
| Evidence of having understood and assimilated the concepts taught | Clear evidence | Some familiarity with the concepts | Little familiarity with the concepts | None |
| Arguments and debates about the topics, based on the concepts and student's own insights and knowledge | Clear evidence of reasoning | Some evidence of having considered the discussion topic | Little serious thought about the discussion topic | None or unexplained or unjustified absences from discussions |

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|--------|--|
| Group mate | | | | |
| Your group mate was willing to cooperate (e.g., finding the time, communicating regularly, finishing work on time, offering constructive feedback). | All/Most of the time (2) | Some of the time (1) | No (0) | |
| Your group mate took the lead on certain aspects of group work (e.g., arranging meetings, pioneering ideas, volunteering). | All/Most of the time (2) | Some of the time (1) | No (0) | |
| Overall, your group mate did his/her fair share of work. | Yes (2) | No (0) | | |
| Other comments | | | | |

Appendix 4: Homework Assignments and Assessment Criteria

| Week | Topic | Example Assignment | Course LO |
|------|--|--|-----------|
| 1 | Review of writing fundamentals: Flow, whose story, and emphasis | Review the paper on permafrost thawing to improve its flow, theme consistency, and emphasis. | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2 | What is stylish writing? Avoiding unnecessary jargon; verbal fitness | Use the software by Sword (2016) to evaluate your written assignment from the previous semester. Suggest revisions. | 2, 3 |
| 3 | Basic plots | Identify the plots and sub-plots of a selected article. | 1, 2 |
| 4 | Narrative features in texts | Analyze an introduction of a selected article for the four narrative lessons. | 1, 2 |
| 5 | Telling a research story | Things to try (Sword, 2012, Chapter 8) | 1, 2, 3 |
| 6 | Transitivity—grammar and story-telling | Select a passage from a published text and suggest alternative verbal processes. | 2 |
| 7 | Writing an opening paragraph | Things to try (Sword, 2012, Chapter 7) | 1, 2, 3 |
| 8 | Going about writing a literature review | Prepare a preliminary outline of your final paper. | 1, 3 |
| 9 | Giving examples | Things to try (Sword, 2012, Chapter 9) | 1, 2, 3 |
| 10 | Expressing stance through hedging and boosting | Describe a finding from your field, expressing appropriate degree of certainty. | 1, 3 |
| 11 | Reader engagement | Identify reader engagement features in <i>Tumbling through a landscape</i> (section IV). Finalize the outline of your paper. | 1, 2, 3 |
| 12 | Writing titles Ethos, pathos, and logos | | |

| Points | Criteria |
|----------|---|
| 3 | Very well structured and focused; evidence of excellent ability to apply knowledge taught in the course while thinking outside the box; evidence of deep understanding and not just memorization of key concepts taught in the course |
| 2 | Evidence of structure and focus; evidence of some ability to apply knowledge taught in the course; some evidence of understanding and not just memorization of key concepts taught in the course. |
| 1 | Does a poor to middling job of addressing the question; has limited structure and focus; limited evidence of ability to apply knowledge taught in the course; limited familiarization with key concepts taught in the course. |
| 0 | Lacks structure and focus; inadequate capacity to apply knowledge taught in the course; poor familiarization with key concepts taught in the course. OR failure to submit the homework assignment. |