

University of Florida
College of Public Health & Health Professions Syllabus
PHC 7902: Scientific Writing for Peer Reviewed Publications for Population and
Public Health Science (3 Credits)

Spring: 2026

Delivery Format: Online

Course Website: e-learning in Canvas

Instructor Name: Dr. Ashley Malin

Room Number: N/A

Phone Number: (352) 294-5495

Email Address: ashleymalin@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Fridays 10-11am via Zoom

Teaching Assistants: N/A

Preferred Course Communications: UF email or CANVAS email

Prerequisites

PHC 6000 Epidemiology Methods I or graduate-level methods course with instructor approval; have a potential data source identified or plan to identify one during the first two weeks of class

PURPOSE AND OUTCOME

Course Overview

This course will focus on drafting a complete manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Students will apply epidemiologic methods and report on quantitative analysis of large datasets. Students will learn different components of manuscript preparation including refining a research question, selecting a data source and target journals, and drafting the abstract, introduction, methods, results, and discussion sections.

Relation to Program Outcomes

Scientific writing is one of the most important skills to learn; publishing is vital for advancing scientific knowledge and for a research career. This course provides students with the opportunity to maximize this skill. Additionally, the course will strengthen students' ability to engage in critical thinking and critical evaluation of research findings. Additionally, students will hone their skills in data analysis and interpretation of results from large datasets. Students will also learn to increase the visibility of their science and expand their network by learning how to engage in research sharing platforms. Lastly, they will have opportunities to improve science communication strategies to apply during class, committee, or conference presentations as well as interactions with the media or public as applicable.

Course Objectives and/or Goals

- 1.0 Write concise and cohesive scientific articles for publication in a public health-related journal
- 2.0 Perform critical reviews of scientific public health literature and make recommendations for improvement
- 3.0 Draft a complete scientific manuscript as first author applying epidemiologic methods to research design and data analysis

Instructional Methods

This course is completely online, with approximately the first 2 hours focusing on instructional material and the last hour focusing on writing, peer discussion and feedback. Students are also expected to join in discussion and to present their work for the in-class assignments. Online instructional material will generally focus on content applicable to students' assignments that are due the following class. Therefore, the last hour of each lecture will consist of sharing assignments completed during the prior week. Students are expected to attend virtually, with cameras on.

What is expected of you?

Students are expected to actively engage in the course throughout the semester. They are expected to come to class prepared by completing all assignments. Students must be able to be first author, with agreement by the mentor, that they can be first author on the manuscript that they are drafting for this course. They must be able to make substantial progress on the paper by completing all sections by the end of the semester. This paper cannot be one that is nearly finished, in need of revision (already submitted), or that has someone else as first author. If you need guidance or help finding a data source, please speak with Dr. Malin during the first week of class. If you are not cleared/approved by your mentor (or the IRB if applicable) to analyze the data, the course should be taken later.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT

Topical Outline/Course Schedule

Week	Date(s)	Topic(s)	Readings
1	Jan 12	Lecture: Syllabus review and introductions; data sources and paper outlines Assignment: Present your research question (or question you are considering) to the class	Think about your potential research question and what data source you can use to address it; be prepared to discuss this with the class. It is okay if you are still undecided about your research question/data source.
2	Jan 19	Martin Luther King Day- No Class	-
3	Jan 26	Lecture: Writing an introduction section Assignment: Share the outline for your paper via Power Point or word document	Construct an outline for your paper, including generally what you plan to include in the introduction, methods, results, and discussion in point form and be prepared to discuss with the class
4	Feb 2	Lecture: selecting a journal; paper titles, abstracts, key words Assignment: Share content for your introduction section via Power Point or word document	Review several papers from Dr. Malin (in PubMed) for examples of titles, abstracts and different journal article formats; Read Chapter 6 of <i>The Craft of Scientific Writing 4th Edition</i> , Michael Alley; Publisher: Springer New York 2018; https://books.google.com/books?id=-X9SDwAAQBAJ Be prepared to present your paper introduction

Week	Date(s)	Topic(s)	Readings
5	Feb 9	<p>Lecture: Writing a methods section</p> <p>Assignment: share an example of a paper title and how you would revise it; share your target journal and paper title with the class</p>	<p>Read 2 papers from Dr. Malin in PubMed and 2 peer-reviewed empirical papers in your area for examples of Methods sections.</p> <p>Find a paper title in PubMed that you think can be improved; Be prepared to present this along with your paper title and target journal</p>
6	Feb 16	<p>Lecture: Writing a statistical analysis subsection</p> <p>Assignment: Share the content of your methods section with the class via Power Point or word document</p>	<p>Read: Torres-Valladares, D., Ballinas-García, E., Villarreal-Reyes, J., Morales-Álvarez, V., & Ortiz-del-Ánge, C. (2021). Research papers 101: The do's and don'ts of scientific writing. <i>Materials Today: Proceedings.</i></p> <p>Be prepared to present your methods section</p>
7	Feb 23	<p>Lecture: Writing a results section</p> <p>Assignment: Share your statistical analysis subsection with the class</p>	<p>Read 2 papers within your area that have used different statistical approaches for examples of diverse statistical analysis and results sections.</p> <p>Read one paper that examines effect modification of results by demographic characteristics (i.e., age, race, gender etc.)</p> <p>Be prepared to present your statistical analysis section</p>
8	Mar 2	<p>Lecture: Other considerations for manuscript writing and writing your abstract</p>	<p>Review BMC Writing Resources: Writing resources (biomedcentral.com)</p> <p>Review formatting guidelines for your target journals</p>
9	Mar 9	<p>Lecture: Writing a discussion section</p>	<p>Assignment: Share your preliminary results from at least one analysis with the class</p> <p>Read 3 papers from PubMed on topics related to your area of focus for examples of discussions</p> <p>Be prepared to present some of your results section</p>
	Mar 16	No class-Spring Break	-
10	Mar 23	Writing on your own	

Week	Date(s)	Topic(s)	Readings
11	Mar 30	<p>Lecture: Making your science visible</p> <p>Peer Learning Circles and Feedback for Diverse Learners</p> <p>Assignment: Present some of your discussion</p>	<p>Read the following:</p> <p>Six steps to increased visibility - How to increase the visibility of your research? - Guides at University of Pittsburgh (libguides.com)</p> <p>Research in progress blog Peer Mentoring Circles: A strategy for thriving in science (biomedcentral.com)</p> <p>Be prepared to present some of your discussion section</p>
12	Apr 6	<p>Lecture: Science Communication and Media Engagement</p>	<p>Read:</p> <p>Quick Guide to Science Communication 0.pdf (brown.edu)</p> <p>A Checklist for Communicating Science and Health Research to the Public National Institutes of Health (NIH)</p>
13	Apr 13	Final Presentations	Present the final (or near final) sections of your manuscript via PowerPoint
14	April 20	Final Presentations	Present the final (or near final) sections of your manuscript via PowerPoint
15	April 27	Submit your final paper to Dr. Malin via Canvas	

Course Materials and Technology

Online/No text. Check on CANVAS for information, Zoom link, Readings etc. However, if you want a good book for reference, you can get: *Winning the Publications Game* by Tim Albert. CRC Press. 2016. Students are not permitted to use copilot or chatbot for the preparation of their manuscript; however, they can utilize UF writing resources listed below.

For technical support for this class, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- helpdesk@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

Additional Academic Resources

- [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](#)
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.](#)

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Assignments

Students are expected to share their research question or potential research question and a complete paper outline during the first and second class respectively. You are also expected to participate in class by sharing (on screen) and discussing different sections of your paper each week, either for the entire class or in small groups via breakout rooms. Sharing sections of the manuscript for weekly assignments consist of an informal progress update that is graded for completion of progress made on a given manuscript component. You are also asked to offer feedback to others on their material and will be graded for participation based on your engagement in these discussions. All assignments are required to be submitted via Canvas by 11:59PM the day of class. In the case of excused absences, students will have until the Friday after class to submit their assignment to Dr. Malin via Canvas as a default, or the student and Dr. Malin will work together to establish a new agreed upon due date. For unexcused absences, 10% per day will be deducted for late assignments.

Final Presentation and Paper: You are expected to deliver a final presentation of your study at the end of the term. This consists of a well-organized 10-12-minute Power Point presentation summarizing the Background, Methods, Results and Discussion/Conclusion of your manuscript. The final assignment is to email Dr. Malin your completed first author manuscript via Canvas. Please make sure that you have your mentor's approval to write the paper as first author. You are permitted and encouraged to seek collaborative input and feedback from your research mentor as well as any other co-authors on the study during the preparation phase of your manuscript. While you are expected to be the first author, it is acknowledged that you are not the sole author of the study. The presentation and paper will be graded based on organization and completion of key components of each section. For the results section for both the presentation and paper, you are expected to have at least descriptive statistical results and statistical results pertaining to your main research question included. The final manuscript should be suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Rubrics for the presentation and final manuscript will be posted on Canvas.

Grading

Requirement	Due date	Points or % of final grade (% must sum to 100%)
In Class Assignments	Each class (as specified)	24% (3% each)
Final Presentations	April 8th	10% ; a rubric describing grading criteria is available on Canvas
A completed first author manuscript emailed to Dr. Malin	By end of the semester	<p>60% (Abstract 2%: a concise summary of the study, providing a clear overview of the research question, methods, key findings and conclusions. It should effectively communicate the study's significance in the field and public health.</p> <p>Introduction 12%: an overview of the study that includes background information on its significance, a summary of relevant literature on the topic, the knowledge gap, the research question and any hypotheses.</p> <p>Methods 16%: an overview of the study design, participants, measures/instruments, key variables, procedures and statistical analyses</p> <p>Results 12%: numerical findings from statistical analyses that include descriptive statistics for characteristics of the study sample and key variables, as well as numerical results that address the research question</p> <p>Discussion 12%: the discussion provides an overview of the research findings discussed in the context of the existing literature. Strengths, limitations and future directions, as well as the conclusion for the study should be included.</p> <p>Manuscript Writing and Organization 6%: the manuscript should be written concisely with very limited to no grammar/spelling errors; a rubric describing grading criteria is available on Canvas)</p>
Contribute to the discussion of each students' paper	Each class	6% (0.5% per class and during final presentations)

Point system used:

Percentage Earned	Letter Grade
93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
Below 60	E

Please be aware that a C- is not an acceptable grade for graduate students. The GPA for graduate students must be 3.0 based on 5000 level courses and above to graduate. A grade of C counts toward a graduate degree only if based on credits in courses numbered 5000 or higher that have been earned with a B+ or higher.

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Policy Related to Make Up Exams or Other Work

To earn any credit, assignments must be submitted on time. Late submissions will not be accepted, unless emergent and other excused absences occur based on UF policies. Students are advised to plan accordingly to ensure timely submission of assignments. All assignments are due Monday at 11:59pm. Students are permitted to submit assignments after class on the due date to allow time to incorporate feedback and suggestions from classmates during class. **Assignments can only be submitted via e-mail after the deadline in cases of excused absences.**

Please note: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues **MUST** be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You **MUST** e-mail me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty.

Policy Related to Required Class Attendance

If you are aware that you will need to miss a class session for an approved reason then you must inform me in advance. If you miss a class for illness then you will be expected to provide a doctor's note after the missed class. Missing a class session without a UF defined/approved reason will result in loss of 3% of your final course grade.. Arriving more than 20 minutes late or leaving more than 20 minutes early will result in a deduction of participation points for that class. In the case of excused absences, you will have until the Friday after class at 11:59pm to submit your assignment to Dr. Malin via Canvas as a default, or the student and Dr. Malin will work together to establish a new agreed upon due date. For unexcused absences, 10% per day will be deducted for late assignments.

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog

(<https://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/graduate/regulations/#Attendance%20Policies>). Additional information can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, ROLES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT

Expectations Regarding Course Behavior

Cameras are expected to be on throughout class. Students are expected to start the session on time and to attend for the duration of the class period. Professional and respectful demeanor is expected of all students. Students are expected to provide input to class discussion during each class either via the Zoom chat function or vocally by using the raise hand function. Students are only permitted to use electronics and applications needed to participate in class. The use of cellphones or other electronic devices not related to course work is not permitted as these can contribute to a distracting learning environment and impede the learning process. Do not engage in unauthorized communication or entertainment (web surfing, instant messaging, chat room chatting, movie viewing, music playing, game playing, etc.) during the Zoom class unless it is part of the lesson. Please charge your device fully before coming to class.

Zoom Etiquette

When attending a Zoom class or meeting:

- Do not share your Zoom classroom link or password with others.
- Your professor and classmates can also see what is behind you, so please make sure the background is not distracting or something you would not want your classmates to see.
- When in doubt, use a virtual background.
- Mute your microphone unless intending to speak.
- If you want to speak, you can raise your hand (click the “raise hand” button at the center bottom of your screen) and wait to be called upon or type a message in the chat

Communications Guidelines

E-mail via UF email or Canvas is the preferred mode of communication. Please include PHC 7902 in the subject line and allow me up to 48 hours during the work week to respond to your email, although I strive to reply sooner. I sometimes check email on the weekend, but I may not be available during that time. If you do not receive a response within 48 hours during the work week, re-send the message as messages occasionally get missed due to high volume of emails. Please address me as Dr. Malin or Professor Malin and let me know how you prefer to be addressed. Email correspondence should follow the etiquette of business emails as described here: <https://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.docx>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. 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 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 additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Handbook for additional details:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

<https://graduateschool.ufl.edu/work/handbook/>

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

Turnitin

Academic integrity is a serious issue that has been a growing problem at Universities. I have a zero tolerance policy for breaches of academic integrity, including plagiarism and cheating. There are multiple video resources posted on our Canvas site that discuss plagiarism and how to properly quote and cite other people's work. With each assignment and exam you complete you are pledging that you hold yourself and your classmates to the highest standards of academic integrity.

I use an online tool called Turnitin to check student work for originality; in other words, your work should be in your own words and not copied from any source. Every student needs to watch the videos on plagiarism and on using Turnitin and needs to check their own Turnitin report, made available through the Canvas site automatically when you submit anything through assignments. You should submit assignments early enough to have time before the due date to make revisions to them if your Turnitin report shows areas of high similarity to online resources. **Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be reported to the Dean of Students Office and will be subject to academic penalties in the course, at minimum.**

Recording Within the Course

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 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.

Online Faculty Course Evaluation Process

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.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, it is strongly recommended you register with the Dean of Students Office <http://www.dso.ufl.edu> within the first week of class or as soon as you believe you might be eligible for accommodations. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation of accommodations to you, which you must then give to me as the instructor of the course to receive accommodations. Please do this as soon as possible after you receive the letter. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

Counseling and Student Health

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you.

- *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.
- *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).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services*: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-2734450.

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

Inclusive Learning Environment

Public health and health professions are based on the belief in human dignity and on respect for the individual. As we share our personal beliefs inside or outside of the classroom, it is always with the understanding that we value and respect diversity of background, experience, and opinion, where every individual feels valued. We believe in, and promote, openness and tolerance of differences in ethnicity and culture, and we respect differing personal, spiritual, religious and political values. We further believe that celebrating such diversity enriches the quality of the educational experiences we provide our students and enhances our own personal and professional relationships. We embrace The University of Florida's Non-Discrimination Policy, which reads, "The University shall actively promote equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination. The University is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act."