

**21G. 219 (Graduate) /21G.220 (Undergraduate)
Foundations of Academic and Professional Writing(ELS)**

Spring 2022

M W 3:30 – 5 pm

Classrm 4-249

Office hours M W 2-3 pm, and by appointment

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Canvas course site:

Course description:

This course is designed to improve your grammatical accuracy and teach you the strategies and forms needed to write clearly and concisely in your MIT career and beyond. We will focus on mastering sentence structure, clarity, and paragraph organization, and also work on audience awareness, improving vocabulary choices, and punctuation, as well as other mechanics of North American academic writing. Expect regular writing practice in and outside of class, focused on learning to express information and ideas clearly when defining terms, presenting problems and solutions, explaining processes, and commenting on data. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you will learn to revise and edit your own work through incorporating feedback from peers and the instructor.

Prioritizing for enrollment

First priority is for MIT students for whom the class is an Institute recommendation or requirement based on the English Evaluation Test (EET). Next are students required or recommended to take the class based on the EET within the past two years. Finally, if room remains, credit-seeking students for whom the class is not required or recommended by the Institute, with permission of the instructor. No listeners.

Required materials:

- Course Reader for 21G.219/220, available at Copy Tech (Bldng 11 basement). Please bring the Course Reader (CR) to every class.
- A writing portfolio with pockets in which to keep all your writing assignments, including successive drafts. You will be reviewing your first drafts in hard copy with peers, so be sure to bring those to class when due.
- A folder or notebook (3-ring binder recommended) for handouts and the additional materials distributed in class. These will also be posted on Canvas but you will often need hard-copies in class.
- An online dictionary and grammar reference. See Canvas for examples.

Attendance, Preparation, and other Policies

- Most of this course grade is based on work done and/or presented during class time. Therefore, attendance, punctuality, and participation are essential. Preparation (or lack thereof) affects performance, so is noted and factored into your grade. Thus, plan to attend every class and participate actively. If you think that you may be required to attend

lectures or do work for other classes during our class time, please consider changing to another section or postponing this class until you have more time.

- More than three unexcused absences (e.g., you have a conference or job interview during class time, get busy in lab, or you oversleep...) will negatively affect your course grade, as will a pattern of lateness.
- If you are ill, please let me know; that is an excused absence. If you know in advance that you absolutely must miss class, please email me as early as possible, so I will not worry about you. Instances where students miss more than one week of class for any reason will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis to ensure students stay on track toward learning outcomes.

Homework

Assignments will be given in class, and details posted on Canvas. Assignments should be submitted on Canvas unless otherwise specified. Missing class is not an excuse for missing an assignment. Students who must miss class are expected to find out the assignments and be prepared for the next class. Similarly, you must still submit your homework, unless you are ill. If ill, see below:

Late papers will not be accepted unless you have gotten *prior* approval from the instructor. This includes drafts of papers. Permission to turn in papers late will be given for emergencies. If you do not have time to submit your work on time because of other classes, please wait until you have more time to take this class.

Participation

Attendance and participation **make up 10% of your grade**. Students are expected to participate to the best of their abilities. This includes demonstrating preparedness, contributing comments in full class discussions, asking questions, being active in small group discussions, and thoughtfully evaluating other students' papers in peer review and offering constructive criticism. If needed, students may be required to come to the instructor's office hours or visit the writing center for additional tutoring.

Plagiarism

At MIT, per North American academic conduct rules, you are expected to do your own work. While borrowing ideas and words from others is acceptable in some cultures, it is not in North America, and the penalty for plagiarizing is severe. **Plagiarized papers will not receive credit, and the participation grade will also be negatively affected.** Students who plagiarize a second time are likely to fail the class.

*Do not copy/paste from the web, someone else's paper or another source.

*Do not submit papers you have already submitted for other classes.

*Do not give your papers to native speakers to edit.

*Keep a good record of any sources you use to write a paper and reference them properly.

We will talk more about how to avoid plagiarism as we move along, and help is available at the WCC (see below), but for now please be advised that any writing you submit must be completely your own, and any source material you use must be properly identified.

The MIT Writing and Communication Center (WCC)

The Writing and Communication Center in 12-132 offers **free** weekly one-on-one professional advice from communication experts with advanced degrees and publishing experience. The WCC can help you further develop your oral communication skills and to learn about all types of academic and professional writing. You can learn more about the WCC consultations at <http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center> and register with the online scheduler to make appointments through <https://mit.mywconline.com>. Please note that the WCC hours are offered on Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., and fill up fast; if you can not find an open slot, be sure to sign up for the Wait List (to be automatically notified by email when there's a cancellation).

ASSIGNMENTS

Work in this course includes short homework assignments, including grammar and vocabulary practice, editing, and other writing, as well as quizzes on grammar, mechanics and vocabulary; **Five 1-1.5 page major writing assignments, with 3 drafts of each:**

- **Personal Narrative:** What is your story? Or a story about something you have experienced that conveys a sense of who you are and what you value?
- **Extended Definition:** How can you accurately define a key term in your field, and then develop this definition to explain the term more fully to a non-expert reader? (Includes paraphrasing and review of summarizing without plagiarizing, i.e., without using the original wording of the source text?)
- **Process Description:** How can you explain the steps in a process so that your reader understands them clearly?
- **Data Commentary:** How can you explain graphs and charts so that your reader understands both the information and its implications?
- **Problem Solution Paper:** What is a current problem or issue in your field, and what research would you propose to solve it?

Revisions: Learning to revise your work carefully and objectively is where writing improvement actually occurs, so is a major feature of this course. Thus, you will revise each paper (at least) twice: first according to your classmate's feedback and then in response to mine. Your final paper grade will depend on the quality of the final draft, as well as the incorporation of others' suggestions.

Format and following instructions: See *Guidelines for Typed Assignments* at the beginning of the Course Reader. Papers not meeting these criteria will be marked down. Similarly, read the instructions for each assignment carefully and ask for clarification if you're not clear on what you should do. Turning in a paper that does not match the assignment given, including page length, will result in a lower grade.

Courtesy: The only acceptable use of cell phones during class is to look up something directly relevant to class discussion. If you must take an emergency call, please step out of class.

GRADES are based on the following:

Attendance, punctuality, and participation	10%
Preparation of homework assignments, including revisions and vocabulary lessons	15%
Quizzes on grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary	5%
Personal Narrative	10%

Extended Definition for a general audience (including memo of changes)	15%
Process Description	15%
Data Commentary	15%
Problem/Solution Paper	15%
	100.00%

Grading scale (major papers and course)

97 -100=A+	94 - 96 =A	90-93=A-	87-89=B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-
77-79=C+	73-76=C	70-72=C-	60-69=D	Below 60 = F	

Homework and other short assignments will be graded:

√+ (100%), √ (85%), √- (70%), or 0 (doesn't match assignment, late without permission, or not turned in).

Tentative Schedule (subject to change)

Homework and assignment details will be posted on Canvas, which you should check daily since details may change. Homework should be completed BEFORE and submitted in class, unless otherwise specified.

G: = Grammar

R: = Read

Cvs = Canvas

W	#	D	Date	Topics	Homework Due
1	1	M	Jan 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions to each other and the course • Discussion: Writing at MIT • Writing Sample (Narrative) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Information form; • Narrative 1st draft (both due on Canvas by day's end)
	2	W	Feb 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Parts of speech • What is good academic/professional writing? / Clear writing • Telling a story; describing things, people • Personal story conversation (and intro to peer review) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Writing in Your Field" exercise • Read Greene, "Why Write Science in Plain English?" (both in <i>Good Academic Writing 1</i> assignment) • Sample student narratives #1 & 2, answer questions
2	3	M	Feb 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing process I: free-writing (a favorite place) • Sentence parts • Choppiness 1: coordination • Emails/politeness • Narrative Peer Review discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G: parts of speech, sentence units • Greene, "Tell a Story" • R: Guidelines for Typed Assignments • Narrative Peer Review (read partner's first draft and answer Qs)
	4	W	Feb 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choppiness 2: subordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G: Verb tense review

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good paragraphs • Cohesion 1—transitions • Vocabulary journal assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email assignment
3	5	M	Feb 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary teach-in 1 • Plagiarism & Paraphrasing I • Adjective clauses • Intro to defining terms and extending the definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G: Adjective clauses and defining exercise. • Vocabulary List #1 • Narrative 2nd draft to instructor
	6	W	Feb 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition example & practice • Revision • Singulars and plurals in general statements • Assign Extended Definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G: Punctuating Quotations • Paraphrasing Practice
4		M	Feb 21	No Class: Presidents' Day	
	7	T	Feb 22	<i>Tuesday is Monday schedule</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic style • Topic sentences • The writing process 2: detailed outlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Definition proposal • Narrative Final Draft due • Vocabulary List #2
	8	W	Feb 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Definition Peer Review and discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Definition First Draft: to be peer reviewed in class. • Peer Review: Submit on Cvs by end of day
5	9	M	Feb 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary teach-in 2 • More on summarizing and outlining • Cohesion 2: key nouns, this + sum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Def 2nd draft to instructor
	10	W	Mar 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #1 • Can/could/will/would confusion • More on academic voice • Sample Extended Definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary #3
6	11	M	Mar7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary teach-in 3 • Describing a process • Student process description #1, answer Q's • Assign Process Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Definition Final Draft due
	12	W	Mar 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #2 • Cause/Effect structures; other grammar review as needed • Punctuation workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read sample student process descriptions #2 and #3, answer Q's

7	13	M	Mar 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process flow & cohesion Process Paper Peer Review discussion Verbs-- Active vs. passive voice; transitive/ intransitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Paper Peer Review (read partner's first draft and answer Qs) <i>Mid-term survey</i>
	14	W	Mar 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plagiarism and Paraphrasing 2 Academic Style 2 Begin Data Commentary (DC): purpose, sample; structure; Highlighting line graphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence combination (in CR) Process Paper 2nd draft to instructor
8			MARCH	21-25: SPRING BREAK	NO CLASSES
9	15	M	Mar 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles I Participial adjectives/linking DC: Highlighting bar graphs DC: Making defensible claims Assign Data Commentary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample student PDCS #2 Practice: Interpreting Data (CR) Bring two separate data sets to class that each highlight a different problem and for which you might propose a solution.
	16	W	Mar 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles II Mid-position adverbs Peer review DC proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Commentary topic proposal Vocabulary #4 Process Paper Final Draft due
10	17	M	Apr 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parallelism Vocabulary teach-in 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary review/prep
	18	W	Apr 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz #3 DC Peer Review discussion Conciseness and clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data Commentary Peer Review (read partner's first draft and answer Qs)
11	19	M	Apr 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject/verb agreement Assign Problem/Solution (final paper) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Problem/Solution Papers #1 and #2 and answer Qs
	20	W	Apr 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem/Solutions grammar Problem/Solution proposals discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem/Solution proposal Data Commentary 2nd draft to instructor
12		M	Apr 18	PATRIOTS DAY HOLIDAY	
				NO CLASSES	
			(also Drop Day)		
	21	W	Apr 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem/Solution Peer Review discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem/Solution Peer Review (read partner's first draft

					and answer Qs
1 3	22	M	Apr 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof-reading techniques and practice 1 • Grammar review as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Commentary Final draft due
	23	W	Apr 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Quiz (#4) • Final questions/concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem/Solution 2nd draft to instructor
1 4	24	M	May 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof-reading techniques and practice 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
	25	W	May 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course evaluation
1 5	26	M	May 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up • How to continue improving your writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem/Solution Final Draft due