

# BIOSC 1010: Communicating in the Biological Sciences

## Fall 2016, Wednesdays 2:00pm – 3:50pm, A202 Langley Hall

**Instructor:** Dr. Erica McGreevy  
**Email:** emm92@pitt.edu  
**Office Hours:** Mondays 1-2pm and by appointment, Clapp L-05

### Course Goals and Learning Objectives

- Learn how, when, and why scientific writing is similar or different from professional writing in other contexts.
- Recognize how communication must change to accommodate the audience and the medium.
- Learn to recognize the patterns in written versus spoken English that help or hinder communication.
- Search, read, and interpret primary scientific literature.
- Prepare a professionally written, 8 page review paper summarizing the current literature on a topic in the field of Biological Sciences.
- Perform an easy-to-follow, polished presentation of your review to your peers.
- Provide constructive feedback and assessment on your peers written and oral communication strategies.
- Self-evaluate your own writing and presentations.

### Attendance

Class meetings are interactive and student attendance and participation is essential for success in this course. Come prepared to think, question, write, and discuss your ideas with the class community. Ten points of your final grade are based on attendance and participation. **Failing to attend any of the peer review sessions or oral presentations results in zero points for those assignments.** Excused absences will only be granted for extenuating circumstances (death in the family or severe illness).

### Assignments

Assignments are due *at the start of class* on the specified class day. For late assignments, scores will be reduced 10% per 24-hour period following assignment due dates. For example, a 20-point assignment loses 2 points each day it is late. It is your responsibility to review the list of assignment due dates.

### Final Grade

The total points earned out of 250 points will determine your final grade. The point value for each assignment is given below.

Assignment	Points
Primary Literature Assignment	10
Topic Choice + Bibliography Assignment	12
Review Article Introduction Draft	30
Figures and Figure Legends	8
Review Article Draft 1	50
PowerPoint Assignment	10
Practice Oral Presentation	10
Final Oral Presentation	30
Final review article	80
Attendance and Participation	10
Total:	250

Final letter grades are determined on a straight scale as follows:

A range: >90% of total points

B range: 80-89% of total points

C range: 70-79% of total points

D range: 60-69% of total points

Failing (F grade) assigned if fewer than 60% of the points have been earned.

Note: You must earn a grade of C (not C-) or better for the 2 credits of this course to count toward the elective credits required for the Biological Sciences major. If you pass this course with less than a C, the 2 credits will only count toward the University's requirement that you have completed a writing intensive course in your major discipline.

## **TURNITIN.COM**

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Any attempt to submit work that is not the student's own is a violation of academic integrity. Plagiarized assignments will be given zero points. Students agree that by taking this course, papers are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

To register for our course, go to [turnitin.com](https://turnitin.com) and create an account. Use the following information to access our course:

Class ID: **13376330**

Enrollment password: **mcgreevy1010**

## **Emergency Situations**

Assignments missed due to emergency situations (illness, serious injury, or death in your immediate family) will be considered on an individual basis. Requests for an extension must be submitted in writing; verbal communication is not sufficient. Please use the following guidelines to prepare your request:

- 1) Your request for an extension must include your name, a detailed description of the nature of the emergency, and the assignment that you missed.
- 2) Your request must be emailed to me no later than one week after the assignment's due date.
- 3) If the emergency is due to a medical condition, you must include evidence that you have sought medical care.

Failure to comply with these guidelines could result in a zero recorded for the assignment.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted below, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process

as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or assignment will be imposed.

“The integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation on the part of faculty and honest academic conduct on the part of students. To this end, students are expected to conduct themselves at a high level of responsibility in the fulfillment of the course of their study. It is the corresponding responsibility of faculty to make clear to students those standards by which students will be evaluated, and the resources permissible for use by students during the course of their study and evaluation. The educational process is perceived as a joint faculty-student enterprise which will perforce involve professional judgment by faculty and may involve – without penalty- reasoned exception by students to the data or views offered by faculty.”  
Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom, February 1974.

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu), (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

### **E-mail Communication Policy**

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.