Course Title (in English) | Academic Writing Essentials
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Course Title (in Russian) | Основы научного письма
Lead Instructor(s) | Severinov, Konstantin

Status of this Syllabus | The syllabus is a work in progress (draft)
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1. Annotation

Course Description
With the growing demands for every scientist to publish and not to perish, the quality of academic writing is of utmost importance. Successful writing presupposes the skills to communicate ideas, theories and findings as efficiently and clearly as possible. The way ideas are communicated is different in Russian and English Academic discourse. The course will discuss successful strategies and typical tactics to communicate science in English.

The aim of the course is to help the students plan the written work, understand its major parts, use the rhetorical devices, and master the linguistic repertoire appropriate in biological academic discourse. The integrative approach unites the top-down and the bottom-up ones. The general logic as well as the minute linguistic devices for presenting, advancing, and reformulating the argumentation will be given.

The course teaches how to write, revise and edit your own work in a lingua franca of modern science. The course will familiarize the students with major problems the Russian authors have in the English formal writing as well as the ways to overcome them.

Extensive writing, listening to lectures, self- and peer- editing and getting feedback from the lecturer will provide grounds for future autonomous writing in the discipline of biology (including papers and a Master Thesis).

Course Prerequisites
Students should have at least “upper-intermediate” level + refresh thier knowledge of parts of speech and functions in the sentence

2. Structure and Content

Course Academic Level | Master-level course suitable for PhD students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Summary of Topic</th>
<th>Lectures (# of hours)</th>
<th>Seminars (# of hours)</th>
<th>Labs (# of hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic English and Academic Writing: what do we mean by these terms?</td>
<td>Week 1/ topic 1) Discussing the writing process, the reasons to write in science and the major genres in scientific discourse. What is the English we use in scientific discourse of biology? Proper style and its place in the overall picture of getting published: the rule of three C’s. The structure of a typical paper and linguistic peculiarities of its parts: an overview. Drafting your paper: when to start writing, what to start writing with? How many times and how to edit? Editing the draft: the levels and linguistic hints. Typical problems and errors of early career writers and the ways to overcome them: an overview. A sentence as the main building block of a clear and concise text. The concept of a good English sentence: not too long and not too short. Variation of syntax. The word order in academic English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language of science as a dynamic system+Sentences and clauses</td>
<td>Sentences and clauses. Writing and science: introducing the concept of language evolution. Including the language of science. The major tendencies of modern English in science. Genres and types of writing. Understanding critical comments of the reviewers: how to interpret negative remarks and how to improve your writing through them. The structure of a typical clause: what makes a sentence really good and well-read in science. How to vary the sentence length and type to make your writing more attractive and less monotonous. How to write in a good style, how to shorten the sentences and to coordinate your ideas properly. Emulating good writing. How to choose the target (text or style) to emulate and how to do it properly. What can and what can not be emulated in science. Stylistic peculiarities of various scientific genres: the first sentence written for a review, experimental paper, review article. Targeting the audience. Introduction to clauses. your ideas properly. Emulating good writing. How to choose the target (text or style) to emulate and how to do it properly. What can and what can not be emulated in science. Stylistic peculiarities of various scientific genres: the first sentence written for a review, experimental paper, review article. Introduction to clauses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraph+ Zombie nouns</td>
<td>Varying clauses in a paragraph. Infinitives used to overcome with most typical syntactic problems. Introducing the structure of a paragraph. The notion of a sentence within a paragraph: the first sentence, the thesis statement and the concluding one. How to use linking words properly. Restructuring and rewriting clauses in terms of the importance of ideas. Theme-Rheme (the actual division of a sentence). Making your writing more fluent and more appealing. Parallelism and its function in scientific writing: from grammar to syntax. The notion of Classical Prose and its implementation in scientific discourse. How to punctuate your piece properly: rules and tips. Zombie-nouns and different ways to rewrite the sentence. When not to rewrite: terminology. How to avoid monotony in lexis: synonyms, collocations and useful expressions grouped in topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing, writing a summary, plagiarism</td>
<td>From a paragraph to a text. Linking words and discourse markers. Zombie-nouns ( continuation). Paraphrasing a paragraph, summarizing a paragraph. 4 steps in making a paragraph different. Academic integrity and misconduct. Avoiding plagiarism: the most serious and the most widely recognized ethical lapse. It can occur in many forms and some of the more subtle instances: types of plagiarism. How to identify and how to avoid plagiarism. Double and secondary publication: what is possible and what is completely forbidden in scientific ethics. Quotations, referencing, reporting issues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>The structure and style of a decent summary. Writing a Comparing and contrasting pieces of a text. Quotations, referencing, reporting issues. Writing about the major theories in biology: presenting grand notions in simple and cohesive texts. Phrasal verbs in academic writing Using corpora for successful writing, Synonyms</td>
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</table>
Passive voice and its function in scientific discourse. The only possible answer to the controversy of whether to use or not to use passive voice is to understand this grammar phenomenon in terms of its purpose within the language in general and academic writing in particular. The latest tendencies towards passive voice in academic writing. Interpreting the comments of the reviewers and correcting the text as the journal prefers.

A general shift to active voice in introduction and abstract. Passive voice remains in methodology sections. Foregrounding an object or a subject.

Typical mistakes and self-correcting.

Discussing varying attitudes to passive voice in British and American journals.

Types of passive voices constructions in academic writing: bare, be+, Progressive

Perfective (have + been + Ven)

Modal (modal + be + Ven)

Modal perfective (modal + have + been + Ven)

To-infinitive (to + be + Ven)

Editing

Becoming a scholar of the journal you want to target. How to adjust to what is expected by the editorial board.

Writing an abstract. Writing an abstract for a thesis.

Peer-editing

editing wordiness

Essay writing

Essay types. Argumentation and language. Cause/Effect Essays. Varying your language

Essay writing

Essay types. Comparison and contrast blocks of text

Essay writing

Controversial issues of modern biology. Preparing for debates.

Writing the final text

getting feedback on the final draft

3. Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Type</th>
<th>Assignment Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
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</table>

4. Grading

Type of Assessment

Pass/Fail

Grade Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Activity weight, %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale

5. Basic Information
6. Textbooks and Internet Resources

**Required Textbooks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISBN-13 (or ISBN-10)</th>
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</thead>
</table>

**Recommended Textbooks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISBN-13 (or ISBN-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. Facilities

**Equipment**

- computer, loudspeakers, slide projector

8. Learning Outcomes

**Knowledge**

Students will get knowledge of 1) Academic English used in biomedical studies, 2) various genres of academic writing, their structure and linguistic peculiarities, 3) various levels of formality and creativity possible for formal writing 4) how to overcome the most typical problems and choose the most appropriate variant (e.g. passive-active voice, modal verbs, tenses ...)
### Skill

Students will get skills of 1) analyzing critically the professional texts they read and to take those features and blocks, that they can use in their own writing, 2) writing a scientific text following the genre requirements, 3) editing the text on various levels, 4) identifying the strengths and weaknesses of peer drafts and to suggest possible ways to improve them., 5) discuss a range of issues connected with writing and publishing process.

### Experience

Students will get experience of writing a good text for special purposes in a proper English.

Do you want to specify outcomes in another framework?

Knowledge-Skill-Experience is good enough

9. Assessment Criteria

10. Additional Notes

Free Style Comments (if any)

It is impossible to learn how to write without practice. Doing homework is essential.