

Tel Aviv University
Division of Foreign Languages

Academic Writing in English for PhD Students

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This course is designed to help students acquire strategies to improve their academic and scientific writing in English required for their PhD studies in the various genres as required by journals, grant/academic committees and scientific conferences.

Students will go through the process of writing and revising their papers, which may be based on their current research. They will also prepare an oral presentation.

Course Objectives– During the weekly sessions we will:

- Discuss the principles of academic/scientific writing and writing conventions (including citation methods and generators)
- Analyze a variety of genres (e.g. journal articles, abstracts)
- Establish and practice elements of style (e.g. conciseness, sentence variation)
- Demonstrate principles of English grammar (e.g. appropriate verb tenses) and vocabulary commonly used in academic papers
- Explore the social context of scientific/academic discourse (e.g., hedging, modesty)
- Discuss extra-textual elements in scientific texts (e.g., presentation of figures, tables)
- Practice peer evaluation of writing
- Develop revision strategies
- Practice professional writing for academics (grant proposals, personal statements, email etiquette, etc.)
- Develop oral skills - for an academic “elevator pitch” and for presentations
- Explore various tools for academic research (RefWorks, Zotero, EndNote, Mendeley)

Course Assignments

Four out five of the following tasks:

- Introduction section of a scientific article including a literature review
- Methods and Materials section together with the Results section (or the equivalent)
- Discussion and/or a Conclusion section (or the equivalent)
- Abstract of a research article and/or conference presentation
- Personal statement/apology email (professional writing)

And an Oral Presentation about your research at the end of the course

The major writing tasks will be done in 3 stages:

1. The student prepares a **DRAFT** of a writing task and submits it to the teacher.
2. The paper is **REVISED** taking into consideration the feedback on the draft and/or discussed at a personal conference.
3. Individual conferences where the major emphasis is on an open dialogue between student and teacher, about the drafts and process of the assignment.

Weekly Sessions

- Students will receive individual feedback on their tasks on a regular basis.
- During the semester, students will have brief meetings with the instructor to get input on their writing as well as discuss the topics of their writing tasks.

Materials

- Teacher will maintain a **website in Moodle** <http://moodle.tau.ac.il> and provide additional instructional materials and excerpts from professional books and sources.
- Students will be responsible to bring to class **3 model articles** from top level journals in their field preferably written by a native writer of English. These can be stored on your email, Dropbox or other cloud-based sites.
- University level dictionary and thesaurus are recommended online/offline.

Evaluation of Student Work

- **Teacher Assessment of student work in progress** – Emphasis is on the process of improvement.
- **Peer evaluation** – peer revision and evaluation of one of the written assignments, and feedback from students in class discussions

GOOD LUCK FOR AN ENJOYABLE AND SUCCESSFUL SEMESTER!