COURSE SYLLABUS

This course is first in the 300-level Skills sequence of the undergraduate psychology curriculum as a requirement for the major. The course also meets the university Advanced Writing and Oral Communication requirement and thus is designed to accomplish the following official learning outcomes:

(a) Rhetorical knowledge. Students will demonstrate that they can write clearly, focus on a well-defined purpose in writing, use conventions of format and structure appropriate to their discipline, and adopt a voice, tone, and level of formality suited to multiple purposes and audiences, including audiences both within and outside the discipline in which the course is offered.

(b) Disciplinary writing. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the roles that writing plays in their particular discipline, major, or career as a way of learning, as a way of demonstrating and evaluating what one has learned, and as a way of communicating with others.

(c) Writing processes. Students will develop productive and flexible individual and collaborative writing processes, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading. These processes could include the following: Collecting data, finding supporting evidence, and creating good arguments; organizing the materials for a paper, writing successive drafts of the same paper; group writing, seeking and using peer responses; revising; editing grammar, usage, and punctuation; and using conventional formats. These processes will reflect processes of inquiry within the student’s discipline.

(d) Processes of disciplinary research. Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate research tools and processes of research within their particular discipline, including library research. Students will demonstrate their ability to identify and evaluate sources, retrieve and evaluate data, take notes, and follow conventions of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. They will cite sources properly and demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues related to research, including how to avoid plagiarism.

(e) Knowledge of conventions. Students will understand the genres, forms, styles, and documentation conventions of writing for their discipline. They will also demonstrate knowledge of edited syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Along the way, there will be considerable exchange within class meetings about writing and reading. And there will be assigned writing projects across a variety of topics in multiple drafts as well as two essay exams. In addition to your role as author, you will also be expected to serve as co-author, peer reviewer, and co-presenter.

Be forecautioned that the pace of assignments will increase over the semester.
Required Texts

The following texts are required for the course:


There will be additional assigned readings available at the Learning Suite website for the course.

You should complete the assigned readings before the in-class conversation when they will be considered. As a hedge on deferring completion of the reading you are advised to prepare at least one substantive question about the reading in advance of the conversation. Questions will be invited during class meetings. With each of the two exams, you are welcome to submit a sampler (at least six) of your questions for bonus points.

Occasionally, the New York Times publishes a column in a series entitled “The Draft”, which is devoted to confronting the challenges of writing. Should you wish to write a brief (one-page, double-spaced) response to a recent column and submit it with your response to each exam, bonus points will be applied to your score on the exam.

Writing Projects

There will be four writing projects that ask you to assume various authorial roles. Each project is listed below together with a specific indication of your role, the approximate length (in words), and the points available for the first and final drafts, respectively:

(a) A letter to the editor; public intellectual; 500; 25 and 50
(b) One of the following:
   An archival research paper; subject-matter analyst; 1,500; 50 and 100; or
   An empirical research proposal; empirical researcher; 1,500; 50 and 100
(c) A book review; public intellectual; 500; 25 and 50; and a peer review with cover letter and edited manuscript; peer reviewer; 300 (letter); 20 (letter) and 40 (edited manuscript)
(d) An original Wikipedia article or a revised article; subject-matter analyst and Wikipedia contributor; to be determined; 50 and 100

Each project will be accompanied by specific instructions. Failure to submit a draft by the appointed date and time will result in a 20% penalty from the final score per day. Drafts completed for Projects 1-4 should be submitted in Microsoft Word files directly to me (not through Learning Suite).

I will read and grade each assigned draft and exam, and will use Microsoft Office Track Changes to do so. For initial drafts (Draft 1) and for the Mid-semester Exam, in addition to inserting comments in the margins, I will apply recommended in-text edits in the interest of further clarity and economy. These recommendations are meant as a courtesy in drawing your attention to possibilities for deletion and other reworking of the text. I will not provide the same detail for the final drafts (Draft 2) or the Final Exam. However, if you wish to have that detail for those items, please request it, and I will provide it.

Advanced Library Writing Instruction (if required)

You should complete the Advanced Writing Library Instruction during the first month of the course. It has two components: The online Advanced Research Tutorial and Assignment (http://guides.lib.byu.edu/advancedwriting), and a library session that will be conducted by Rachel Wadham, the Lee Library Social and Behavioral Sciences Reference Librarian. I will notify you of the location of the latter.

Final Grades

The assignment of final grades will be based on the course assignments and the scheme shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor Project</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archival research paper or empirical research proposal</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book review</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer review of book review</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia project report</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-semester (40 points) and final (80) exams</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Research Session</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>650</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A, A- 90% and above
B+, B, B- 80-89.9%
C+, C, C- 65-79.9%
D+, D, D- 55-64.9%
E Below 55%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Assignment to be completed by the class meeting on the date shown; other assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W, 3 Sept</td>
<td>Introduction and overview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 5 Sept</td>
<td>Syllabus review; introduction to Graff &amp; Birkenstein textbook; conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Course syllabus; Graff &amp; Birkenstein—Preface 3rd ed. and Original Preface, Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 8 Sept</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading; introduction to Project 1</td>
<td>Graff &amp; Birkenstein Chapter 1; Project 1 Assignment posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 10 Sept</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 12 Sept</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Graff &amp; Birkenstein, Chapters 2-3; Angell “The epidemic of mental illness: Why?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 15 Sept</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Graff &amp; Birkenstein, Chapters 4-5; Angell, “The illusions of psychiatry”; “Letters to the editor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 17 Sept</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Graff &amp; Birkenstein, Chapters 6-8; Initial draft of Project 1 due before midnight on Saturday, 20 Sept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 19 Sept</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Graff &amp; Birkenstein, Chapters 9-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 22 Sept</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Graff &amp; Birkenstein, Chapters 11-12; Project 2 Assignment posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 24 Sept</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Pinker, “Science is not the enemy”; Wieseltier, “Don’t let science invade the liberal arts”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 26 Sept</td>
<td>In-office Consultations on Project 1 Initial Draft (no class meeting)</td>
<td>Project 2 Proposed Topic due to Dr. Miller before midnight on Tuesday, 30 Sept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 29 Sept</td>
<td>In-office Consultations on Project 1 Initial Draft (no class meeting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 1 Oct</td>
<td>In-library Presentation by Rachel Wadham</td>
<td>Roster of Project 2 author-pairs posted; final draft of Project 1 due before midnight on Saturday, 4 Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 3 Oct</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Szuchman, Chapters 1-3 and affiliated content in APA Publication Manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>M, 6 Oct</td>
<td>Project 2 author-pairs optional meeting (no class meeting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Reading/Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>W, 8 Oct</td>
<td>Project 2 author-pairs optional meeting (no class meeting)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F, 10 Oct</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Szuchman, Chapters 4-6 and affiliated content in APA Publication Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 13 Oct</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Szuchman, Chapters 7-8 and affiliated content in APA Publication Manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 15 Oct</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Szuchman, Chapters 8-10 and affiliated content in the APA Publication Manual; Mid-semester Exam posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 17 Oct</td>
<td>Project 2 author-pairs optional meeting</td>
<td>Initial draft of Project 2 due before midnight on Thursday, 23 Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 20 Oct</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Zinsser, Introduction and Chapter 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 22 Oct</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
<td>Response to Mid-semester Exam due before midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 24 Oct</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading; introduction to Project 3</td>
<td>Frankfurt, pp. 1-33; Project 3 assignment posted, including author-peer reviewer pairings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 27 Oct</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Frankfurt, pp. 34-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 29 Oct</td>
<td>In-office consultations on Project 2 Initial Draft (no class meeting)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F, 31 Oct</td>
<td>In-office consultations on Project 2 Initial Draft (no class meeting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 3 Nov</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Zinsser, Chapters 1-3;</td>
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<tr>
<td>W, 5 Nov</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Zinsser, Chapters 4-6; Initial draft of Project 3 due to Dr. Miller and the Peer Reviewer before midnight on Thursday, 6 Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 7 Nov</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading</td>
<td>Zinsser, Chapters 7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M, 10 Nov</td>
<td>In-office consultations on Project 3 Initial Draft (no class meeting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W, 12 Nov</td>
<td>In-office consultations on Project 3 Initial Draft (no class meeting)</td>
<td>Project 3 Peer Review due to author and Dr. Miller before midnight on Thursday, 13 Nov</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F, 14 Nov</td>
<td>Conversation about assigned reading; introduction to Project</td>
<td>Zinsser Chapters 15 and 20; Final draft of Project 2 due before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
midnight on Saturday, 15 Nov; Project 4 assignment posted

M, 17 Nov
Conversation about assigned reading
Zinsser, Chapters 22 and 25; Szuchman, Chapter 11; Project 4 author-pairings due to Dr. Miller before midnight on Tuesday, 18 Nov

W, 19 Nov
Project 4 author-pairs optional meeting (no class meeting)
Final draft of Project 3 due to Dr. Miller before midnight on Thursday, 20 Nov

F, 21 Nov
Project 4 author-pairs optional meeting (no class meeting)

M, 24 Nov
Project 4 author-pairs optional meeting (no class meeting)

Tu, 25 Nov
Project 4 author-pairs optional meeting (no class meeting)

M, 1 Dec
In-office consultations on Project 4 (no class meeting)
Initial draft of Project 4 due before midnight on Tuesday, 2 Dec

W, 3 Dec
In-office consultations on Project 4 (no class meeting)

F, 5 Dec
Project 4 Poster Preparation (no class meeting)

M, 8 Dec
Project 4 Poster Preparation (no class meeting)

W, 10 Dec
Project 4 in-class presentations
First Final Exam item posted; Final Draft of Project 4 due before midnight on Thursday, 11 Dec

F, 19 Dec
Final Examination, 7-10 a.m.

The Instructional Staff
I am a professor of psychology. My primary research interests are behavioral economics, evolutionary psychology, and innovative methods for the assessment of academic learning. I will have consultation hours at my office (1074 SWKT) on Wednesdays, 1-1:50 p.m. and Thursdays, 4-4:50 p.m. (except when I am out of town), or at other times by appointment. You can also each me at harold_miller@byu.edu or 422-8939.

Suggestions for improving the course are welcomed at any point. Also, please draw my attention to any errors in the syllabus or project assignments.

The College Writing Lab
To get help with organization, structure, focus, tone, and documentation style, you can go to the FHSS Writing Lab in 1049 JFSB to meet one-on-one with a peer
advisor. All advisors are students from the college who are trained in APA, Turabian, and some AMA and MLA publication formats.

To prepare for meetings with the peer advisors, take
- a copy of the assignment
- a hard copy of your draft, whatever stage it may be in
- a list of questions and concerns you have about your paper

Walk in Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or make an appointment online: http://fhsswriting.byu.edu. For more information, go to the Web site or e-mail fhss-writinglab@byu.edu.

Department of Psychology Expected Student Learning Outcomes for Majors

The objectives of the department’s undergraduate curriculum are closely matched to those advocated by the American Psychological Association, the discipline’s primary professional body. Graduates with a B.S. degree in psychology will:

(1) Be able to demonstrate that they understand and can apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation of results in light of previous findings.

(2) Be able to use computers and other research-related technology to competently collect, access, and manage information, communication, and other purposes.

(3) Be able to express realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological understanding, skills, and values in occupational and family-related pursuits in a variety of settings.

(4) Be able to critically reflect on the content of psychology as well as on disciplinary values in light of their knowledge of and commitment to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and to sustain personal values that are true to the gospel while maintaining their serious study of psychology.

Department of Psychology Expected Student Learning Outcomes for Psych 307

- Students will demonstrate that they can write clearly, focus on a well-defined purpose in writing, use conventions of format and structure appropriate to their discipline, and adopt a voice, tone, and level of formality suited to multiple purposes and audiences, including audiences both within and outside the discipline in which the course is offered.

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the roles that writing plays in their particular discipline, major, or career as a way of learning, as a way of demonstrating and evaluating what one has learned, and as a way of communicating with others.
Students will develop productive and flexible individual and collaborative writing processes, including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading. These processes could include the following: collecting data, finding supporting evidence, and creating good arguments; organizing the materials for a paper, writing successive drafts of the same paper; group writing, seeking and using peer responses; revising; editing grammar, usage, and punctuation; and using conventional formats. These processes will reflect processes of inquiry within the student’s discipline.

Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate research tools and processes of research within their particular discipline, including library research. Students will demonstrate their ability to identify and evaluate sources, retrieve and evaluate data, take notes, and follow conventions of quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. They will cite sources properly and demonstrate an understanding of ethical issues related to research, including how to avoid plagiarism.

Students will understand the genres, forms, styles, and documentation conventions of writing for their discipline. They will also demonstrate knowledge of edited syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

University Policies

Honor Code Standards
In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university.

Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university’s expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

Preventing Sexual Discrimination or Harassment
Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to the professor. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-240C ASB) or with the Honor Code Office (4440).

Students with Disabilities
If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the University Accessibility Center (2170 WSC) 801-422-
This office can evaluate your disability and assist the professor in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

About You

The following excerpt from a recently-published article (Twenge, 2013) describes the general characteristics of the contemporary generation of college students (known as Generation Me). As the semester unfolds, I will be interested in whether your own observations validate the author’s findings.

These studies have consistently found significant generational differences, especially in attitudes and traits connected to individualism. Recent generations of young people are higher in self-esteem, agentic traits, assertiveness, and high expectations for the future (Gentile et al., 2010; Reynolds, Stewart, Sischo, & MacDonald, 2006; Twenge, 1997, 2001; Twenge, Campbell, & Gentile, 2012b). Narcissistic personality traits are also higher in more recent generations across four data sets (Stewart & Bernhardt, 2010; Twenge & Foster, 2010). One data set that originally showed no change in narcissism (Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2008) demonstrated a significant increase once a confounding variable was controlled (Twenge & Foster, 2010).

Perhaps most relevant for the classroom, entering college students are increasingly likely to believe they are above average in attributes such as academic ability, writing ability, intellectual self-confidence, and drive to achieve (Twenge et al., 2012b). These increases are not due to changes in actual ability, as objective measures such as standardized test scores have either remained stable or decreased over time. The increases are also not due to greater effort, as recent high school and college students report studying for fewer hours than their predecessors. One reason for students’ inflated self-perceptions might lie in the more subjective feedback they receive in the form of grades: Twice as many high school students in 2010 (vs. 1976) graduated with an A average. This also means that high school students have been given better grades for doing less work.

This generation also has unrealistically high expectations. Twice as many high school seniors in 2000 (vs. 1976) said they planned to earn a graduate degree; by 2000, fully half of high school seniors aimed for graduate education, and this rose to 59% by 2010. The number of people who actually earned graduate degrees, however, remained about 9% (Reynolds et al., 2006). The number of students who expected to work in a “professional” job also increased, with 75% of high school seniors expecting to work in such a job by the age of 30. Reynolds, Stewart, Sischo, and MacDonald (2006) concluded that recent generations had become too ambitious, with many setting goals that might not be right for them. Data on college students suggest the same: Three of four expect to earn an advanced degree, many more than actually will.

Young people are also increasingly optimistic about how they will perform in the future. In 1975, only one of three high school students predicted they would be a “very good” spouse or parent (the top choice offered), but by 2006, one of two predicted the same stellar outcome. Even more striking, two of three students in 2006 predicted they would be “very good” workers on a job (compared to one of two who guessed so in 1975). So by 2006, two thirds of students
predicted that they would perform in the top 20% in their adult jobs (Twenge & Campbell, 2008).

Other generational shifts may also have implications for classroom teaching. Scores on a standard measure of creativity have declined, particularly since 1990 (Kim, 2011). College students are now more likely to say they value becoming very well-off financially and that they are attending college to make more money. They are also less likely to say they think about social issues or care about politics and government affairs (Twenge et al., 2012b).

On the positive side, today’s students are more likely to believe in racial and gender equality and are markedly more supportive of gay rights than previous generations (for a review, see Twenge, 2006). Younger generations also score higher on intelligence tests, particularly those measuring reasoning ability and math skills, though much of the gain occurred at the lower end of the IQ distribution (Flynn & Weiss, 2007). At the same time, fewer young people read books (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004), suggesting a decline in the ability to read long passages of text. Instead, young people read e-mails and short bits of text on web pages much more regularly than they read books.

Of course, not all variables show generational differences. Few generational differences appear in the importance of making a contribution to society, feeling hopeless, skipping school, wanting to own a business, and engaging in antisocial behavior (Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010; Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman (2012)). High school students often do not show the generational increase in self-esteem found in middle school and college students (Gentile et al., 2010; Trzesniewski & Donnellan, 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2001). The lack of change in these variables led Trzesniewski and Donnellan (2010) to conclude that generational changes do not exist; however, the majority of studies, including their own, have shown generational differences on many variables. For example, Trzesniewski and Donnellan found generational differences larger than one tenth of a standard deviation on 20 of the 31 variables they analyzed. Generational differences also vary in size, and there is usually more variance among groups than between groups. Thus, as with any study of group differences, the average differences do not apply to every individual. (pp. 66-67)

Reference


A Final Note

Please contact me at any point you are unsure of expectations, seek encouragement, or want to talk about psychology and your future pursuits more generally. I will be anxiously engaged in promoting the refinement of your writing. A knock will always bring the opening of my office door (provided I am inside). Same-day replies to e-mail are customary (provided I am in town).

Remember that writing well is not a single achievement but comes with exposure to good writing and with extended practice. Few skills are more consequential in
enhancing one's understanding and efforts to invite others' understanding. For that reason, writing well is seldom easy and may remain elusive. Shall we agree simply to write better?

Hal Miller