

**PUB HLTH 445
WRITING AND PEER REVIEWING FOR PUBLICATION – 0.5 Credit**

Winter 2008 Quarter: January 9 – March 5, 2008

Wednesdays - 6:00 to 8:00 pm

(Please note: There will be No Class on February 6)

McGaw-1-401

Course Faculty – Phil B. Fontanarosa, MD, MBA

Prerequisites – PH 304 - Intro. to Epidemiology and PH 302 - Intro. to Biostatistics

Optional – but desirable – Prior research experience with some readiness to write your own research reports

Class size will be limited to 12 students. IF YOU SIGN UP FOR THIS COURSE, PLEASE PLAN TO BE AT EVERY CLASS. STUDENTS WHO MISS MORE THAN ONE CLASS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE COURSE.

Course Objectives

Students will demonstrate writing, reading, editing, and reviewing skills by submitting homework assignments and by discussing in class:

1. A literature search on an assigned topic.
2. A review of a manuscript.
3. An abstract of an assigned paper.
4. A detailed outline of a review or meta-analysis.
5. The methods, results, and discussion sections of a paper.
6. A letter to the editor responding to a critique.

Course Description

This course will review and discuss the steps involved in preparing, peer reviewing and revising manuscripts for publication. Students will be expected to prepare and hand in written work for each class and to participate actively in class discussion. Advance reading and writing are essential for

Spring 2007

Page 2

this course. The course should be of benefit to anyone interested in improving medical writing skills and communicating more effectively in medical settings.

Spring 2007

Page 3

Text - Required

Huth, Edward J. *Writing and Publishing in Medicine*, third edition. Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore, 1999.

Final Grade

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Class participation	35%
Written assignments for each class	65%

Course Evaluation

The Programs in Public Health administer web-based course evaluations to students for each course near the end of the quarter. Your completion of both the unit (course) and faculty evaluation components is required; failure to complete either of the evaluations will result in an incomplete grade until the evaluations are submitted. You will be sent the web link and instructions via email later in the quarter. You will have about two weeks time to complete the evaluations before grades are submitted.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity at Northwestern University is based on a respect for individual achievement that lies at the heart of academic culture. Every faculty member and student, both graduate and undergraduate, belongs to a community of scholars where academic integrity is a fundamental commitment. The Programs in Public Health abides by the standards of academic conduct, procedures, and sanctions as set forth by The Graduate School at Northwestern University. Students are responsible for knowledge of the information provided by The Graduate School on their Web page at <http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/ethics/>.

Class Schedule

Week 1 – WEDNESDAY – January 9, 2008

Topics:

1. Overview of course.
 - a. Review Syllabus
 - b. Review Schedule
 - c. Discuss Grades and Attendance Policy
2. Review backgrounds and goals of the members of the class.
3. Topic: What to do before writing a paper.

Assignments:

1. Read Huth, pages 3-55 (required). Optional assignment (Huth, pages 317-329).

Spring 2007

Page 4

2. Prepare – and bring to class – a literature search output on the following topic:
"Postmenopausal hormone therapy and risk of cardiovascular disease"
 - a. Be prepared to share and discuss your literature search with the class
 - b. Be prepared to describe the methods you used in your search.
 - c. Be prepared to describe the nature of the problem and to address the likelihood that a paper on this topic would be of interest to a leading medical journal.
 - d. Be prepared to hand in your assignment – so please bring it with you.

Spring 2007

Page 5

Week 2 – WEDNESDAY – January 16, 2008

Topic: The Peer Review Process

Assignments:

1. Read: Huth, pages 293-296, 297-315, and 257-264.
2. Read: Rennie D. Fourth International Congress on Peer Review in Biomedical Publication. *JAMA* 2002;287(21):2759-2760. (Available on Web)
<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/287/21/2759.pdf>
3. Read: Peter Cummings; Frederick P. Rivara. Reviewing Manuscripts for Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 2002; 156: 11-13.
(Available on the Web):
<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/156/1/11>
4. Prepare a review of manuscript
(**Manuscript will be given out during Week 1 Session**).
 - a. Be prepared to share your review in class
 - b. Be prepared to discuss the quality of your review and those of others in the class.
 - c. Be prepared to hand in your assignment – so please bring it with you.

Week 3 – WEDNESDAY -- January 23, 2008

Topic: Summarizing Main Points: Writing a Quality Abstract; Writing an Informative Title

Assignments:

1. Read: Huth, pages 131-138.
2. Read: Pitkin RM, et al. Accuracy of data in abstracts of published research articles. *JAMA* 1999;281:1110-1111. (Available on Web)
<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/281/12/1110.pdf>
3. Read: Winker MA. The need for concrete improvement in abstract quality. *JAMA* 1999;281:1129-1130. (Available on Web.)
<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/281/12/1129.pdf>
4. Read: Cummings P, Rivara FP, Koepsell TD. Writing informative abstracts for journal articles. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 2004 Nov;158(11):1086-8. (Available on the Web)
<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/158/11/1086>

Spring 2007

Page 6

5. Prepare an abstract of 300 words (not longer) and prepare an informative title for a manuscript
(Manuscript will be given out during Week 2 Session).
 - a. Be prepared to share your abstract and title in class
 - b. Be prepared to discuss the quality of your abstract and the quality of other abstracts in the class.
 - c. Be prepared to discuss the quality of your title and the quality of other titles in the class.
 - d. Be prepared to hand in your assignment – so please bring it with you.

Week 4 – WEDNESDAY, January 30, 2008

Topic: Writing a paper; reviews and meta-analyses.

Assignments:

1. Read: Huth, pages 59-73.
2. Read: Huth, pages 93-101.
3. Prepare a detailed outline of a review, meta-analysis, or original research paper on a medical topic of your choice.
 - a. Be prepared to discuss and share your work with the class.
 - b. Be prepared to discuss your strategy for formulating the outline
 - c. Be prepared to hand in your assignment – so please bring it with you.

Week 5 – WEDNESDAY – February 6, 2008 - NO CLASS

Week 6 – WEDNESDAY - February 13, 2008

Topic: Writing a paper; Reporting a clinical trial or observational study

Assignments:

1. Read: Huth, pages 63-73; pages 75-88.
2. Prepare the Methods, Results, and Discussion sections of a paper in a format for submission to a medical journal.
(Materials will be given out during Week 4 Session - you will have 2 weeks to complete this assignment)
 - a. Be prepared to discuss and share your work with the class.
 - b. Be prepared to discuss your strategy for writing these sections
 - c. Be prepared to hand in your assignment – so please bring it with you.

Week 7 – WEDNESDAY – February 20, 2008

Topic: Responding to a Review

Assignments:

1. Read: Huth, pages 257-264 (review material), and pages 161-195.
2. Read: Cummings P, Rivara FP. Responding to reviewers' comments on submitted articles. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2002 Feb;156(2):105-7.
Available on the Web: <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/156/2/105>
3. Read the paper and a critique of the paper, and prepare a cover letter to the editor responding to each point in the critique.
(Materials will be given out during Week 6 Session).
 - a. Be prepared to discuss and share your work with the class.
 - b. Be prepared to discuss your approach for responding to the critiques
 - c. Be prepared to hand in your assignment – so please bring it with you

Week 8 – WEDNESDAY, February 27, 2008 (LAST CLASS!)

Topic: Editorials and Letters to the Editor
Wrap-up Session

Assignments:

1. Read: Huth, pages 111-117.
2. Read: Rigotti NA, Lee JE, Wechsler H. US college students' use of tobacco products: results of a national survey. JAMA. 2000 Aug 9;284(6):699-705..
3. Prepare an editorial regarding the significance of this paper for health care in the U.S. Limit your editorial to no more than 1000-1200 words and no more than 10 references. Do not include an abstract.
 - a. Be prepared to discuss and share your work with the class.
 - b. Be prepared to discuss your approach for writing the editorial
 - c. Be prepared to hand in your assignment – so please bring it with you