



O.P. Jindal Global University
A Private University Promoting Public Service
NAAC Accreditation - 'A' Grade



Course Title: Academic Writing

Course Instructor(s): Dr. Shivani Kapoor

Course Credits: 2+1

Course Length: 15 Weeks

Class Times:

Classroom

Contact Hours:

Instructor Office: Room 62B, First Floor, OH Building

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Course Description

This course is aimed at postgraduate students at the Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA) as an introduction to critical reading and writing strategies. The essence of any kind of writing lies in knowing how to write and knowing what we want to write. This knowledge often comes from an engaged and sustained practice of reading. Reading for this course is thus understood as a method in writing. This course will focus on developing skills such as critical and close reading, identifying arguments, building original arguments and using evidence. **The course aims to enable the students to do two things – first, be able to read and analyse any kind of text for its**

form and argument. Second, and more importantly, to be able to write their own arguments which are original, convincing and legible.

Why would a postgraduate student in International Affairs want to do this course?

The skills of **interpretation, analysis and argumentation** are crucial for understanding complex political and economic contexts across the world, for being able to identify problems and lastly, propose solutions through policy making, diplomacy and/or processes like mediation and negotiations. Working in the field of international relations requires being able to make sense of information provided in a text and gather evidence, often at short notice. Ultimately to be able to efficiently express oneself through sustained argument, and depth and complexity of thought is a necessary skill for any professional on the field. Further, it is necessary that students of international affairs can navigate through a vast range of subject knowledge to be able to make sense of layered and dense social and political phenomenon. For this it is necessary to have the skills of parsing a text, reading between the lines and critical analysis. This course will not only equip the students with these skills but will also provide them with frameworks to navigate unfamiliar subjects during their professional practice in the future.

This course will address the intertwined issues of reading and writing by breaking it down into the following components -

Identifying the Problem/Questions: A crucial component of any form of writing, is being able to identify problems, gaps and concerns either in existing literature or in the empirical world. Through the pedagogy of close and critical reading, this course will equip the students in being able to parse texts and experiences by enabling students to read analytically and get under the skin of the complex arguments being made in the text. Students will thus be able to deconstruct complex thought structures eventually leading them to ask questions of the existing material and create new ideas out of the same. This component will also specifically address the issues of voice, agency and ownership of writing.

Working with Evidence and Sources: Being able to create and work with evidence lies at the heart of any public form of writing. This component of the course will thus focus on understanding how evidence can be employed in making arguments, the various forms which it takes and finally how to create evidence for one's writing. Students will be trained in mining

evidence from texts discussed in class, which will constitute a range of writing including academic texts, journalistic pieces, government documents, web-based sources and literary texts. This will ultimately enable the students to be at ease with the different forms of sources available to them and have the practice of using them as evidence for their argument.

Building Arguments: With the skills of critical reading and finding evidence, the students can then proceed to building their own arguments through different modes of writing. It will be emphasised that these arguments have complex thought, flow and substantiation to make it readable and credible. This component of the course will thus focus on honing student skills in creating a narrative flow and argument through both the content and the style of writing.

Pedagogy of the Course

The course will be conducted through a discursive classroom pedagogy. Since, this is a course on writing, students will be expected to read, write and engage in classroom activities in every class.

The course operates by creating the classroom as a safe space where students and the instructors feel encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas and writing with their peers. It is also equally important that all the participants are able to receive and incorporate feedback and suggestions from peers and instructors in a non-hierarchical manner, in order to hone one's skills of reading and writing. Ultimately the course works on creating a community of writers, authors and thinkers who work as individuals located in thick communitarian contexts and networks which allows them to sustain thought and creativity in a collaborative manner.

Course Intended Learning Objectives(Aim)

Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
Ability to understand and critically evaluate dense and complex texts and arguments.	<p>Identifying and working with keywords</p> <p>Reading comprehension exercises; Guided reading and reading with prompts.</p> <p>Class presentations on specific parts of the readings, Reading multiple texts together.</p> <p>Connections</p> <p>Work on writing summary, analytical summary and analysis.</p>	Class assignments
Work with a diverse range of academic and literary sources and use them as evidence for one's argument.	<p>Learning formatting, referencing/citations and annotated bibliographies</p> <p>Identifying and writing claims</p> <p>Discussing the relationship between claims and evidence</p> <p>Learning Quote usage</p> <p>Learning Citation</p> <p>Different forms of evidence and bringing them into writing.</p> <p>Mining texts for evidence</p>	Class Assignments
Write nuanced and substantiated arguments with original thought.	<p>Introduce Thesis Statement</p> <p>Work with Paragraphs - Introductory, Body and Conclusion</p>	Class Assignments

	Introduce Peer Review and reworking of drafts Revision Working with Transitions Writing Abstracts	
Ease of writing across genres and forms.	Workshop with editing skills aimed at writing precisely Learning to work with different materials and genres.	Class Assignments
Have a grasp over writing academic papers, of publishable quality at the end of the course.	Learning revision, reworking and redrafting	Paper submissions

Scheme of Evaluation and Grading

Assignments: This course will follow a scheme of continuous assessment. **Students will write a series of three essays of 1500 words each** which will be arranged incrementally in terms of the skills required and grading criteria. Students will be guided in this process through class-discussions, exercises, peer-reviews and instructor feedback, to assist the student in developing thoughts and ideas into arguments. Additionally, since this class will be held in the workshop mode, it means that we will be doing extensive reading and writing in class. Students will thus have to maintain a portfolio of class exercises for 30 marks. The details of the portfolio are mentioned in the class schedule. Assignments will be graded according to the following -

Essay I - 20 marks

Essay II - 25 marks

Essay III - 25 marks

Portfolio - 30 marks

Class Participation and Attendance: Since this will be a workshop-based course it is essential that the student attend all the classes and participate in them actively. In keeping with JGU policy, the course demands a minimum of 75% attendance. Missing classes is not encouraged, except for documented medical emergencies.

GRADE TABLE:

Letter Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Value	Grade Definitions
O	80% and Above	8.0	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability
A+	75%-79%	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability
A	70%-74%	7.0	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyse existing materials and originality in thinking and presentation
A-	65%-69%	6.0	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills
B+	60%-64%	5.0	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55%-59%	4.0	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of study and reasonable critical and analytical skills
B-	50%-54%	3.0	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials and, poor critical and analytical skills
P1	45%-49%	2.0	Pass 1: Pass with Basic understanding of the subject matter

P2	40%-44%	1.0	Pass 2: Pass with Rudimentary understanding of the subject matter.
F	Below 40%	0	Fail: Poor comprehension of the subject matter; poor critical and analytical skills and marginal use of the relevant materials. Will require repeating the course

Plagiarism

In keeping with the JGU policy, this course operates on a zero-tolerance approach towards journalism. All student writing has to be rigorously cited and referenced and all sources have to be acknowledged. Copying from each other, or even passing of the same assignment for two different courses constitutes plagiarism and will be strictly penalized. The course instructor shall discuss the methods of citation and referencing with the students.

Disability support

JGU endeavors to make all its courses accessible to students. All students with a known disability needing academic accommodations are required to register with the Disability Support Committee dsc@jgu.edu.in. The Committee has so far identified the following conditions that could possibly hinder student's overall well-being. These include: physical and mobility related difficulties; visual impairment; hearing impairment; medical conditions; specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia; mental health. The Disability Support Committee maintains strict confidentiality in its discussions.

Policy on Deadlines

All deadlines will be announced well in advance and must be adhered to in the strictest sense. Since the course is based on a steep learning and grading curve, it will be in the student's interests to keep up with the assignments and class discussions. There is no possibility of retests or late submissions, except in the case of a documented medical emergency. **Additionally, students will not be allowed to enter the class after ten minutes from the beginning of class time.**

Use of Technology in the Classrooms: Students are expected to silence all electronic devices during the class. Cell phone use is to be avoided completely. Although the course allows the use of laptops, this has to be kept to reasonable limits.

Class Schedule

Week	Class Plan	Assignments/ Submissions
Week 1	Introduction to 'Academic Writing' and Reading I	Portfolio Exercise I (3 Marks)
Week 2	Critical Reading Strategies I - Annotations	
Week 3	Reading Strategies II - Close Reading	
Week 4	Writing Critical Summary and Analysis/ Essay Question I	Portfolio Exercise II (4 Marks)
Week 5	Peer Review Essay I (Portfolio Exercise III - 5 Marks)	Submission - Essay I (20 Marks)
Week 6	Introduction Reading II/ Thesis Statement and Claims	
Week 7	Writing Thesis Statement I - Thinking about Connections	
Week 8	Writing Thesis Statement II	
Week 9	Claims and Thesis Statement/Essay Question II	Portfolio Exercise IV (4 Marks)
Week 10	Peer Review Essay II (Portfolio Exercise V - 5 Marks)	Submission - Essay II (25 marks)
Week 11	Introduction Reading III/Evidence	
Week 12	Working with Evidence I - Quote Usage	

Week 13	Working with Evidence II - Quote Analysis	
Week 14	Working with Evidence III/ Essay Question III	Portfolio Exercise VI (4 Marks)
Week 15	Peer Review Essay III (Portfolio Exercise VII - 5 Marks)	Submission - Essay III (25 Marks)

Tentative Readings

1. Emily Martin, The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles, *Signs*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring, 1991), pp. 485-501.
2. Anne McClintok, "No Longer in a Future Heaven": Women and Nationalism in South Africa, *Transition*, No. 51 (1991), pp. 104-123.
3. Laura J. Shepherd and Laura Sjoberg, Trans- Bodies In/Of War(S): Cisprivilege and Contemporary Security Strategy, *Feminist Review*, No. 101, Conflict (2012), pp. 5-23