

# PROFESSIONAL WRITING (PWRT1-GC)

## **PWRT1-GC 1000 Principles of Professional Writing (3 Credits)**

*Typically offered Fall and Summer terms*

This course introduces students to critical practices of professional writing through lecture/lessons, readings, and writing workshops in which students craft and edit a range of professional documents. Students develop writing and editing skills, as well as the language to discuss writing as a way to better advocate for revisions. In addition to a focus on vision and (re)vision, students will explore linguistic principles applied to word choice, sentence structure, and paragraph construction. The ethical, logical, structural, rhetorical, and grammatical dimensions of writing will be explored. Students will discuss the power of visuals to clarify or distort meaning. Students are also introduced to non-writing skills that are essential for professional writers, including considering audience need; interviewing subject matter experts; finding and analyzing reliable research; selecting appropriate formats for content delivery; and organizing information to maximize message effectiveness.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## **PWRT1-GC 1005 Writing for Digital Spaces (3 Credits)**

*Typically offered Fall*

This course prepares students to write effective and engaging digital copy across new and emerging communication technologies. Attention is given to understanding the affordances and challenges of writing for digital spaces and matching content to target audiences' shifting expectations. Students will learn to evaluate communication strategies critically, plan and draft strategic content, and track and evaluate the impact of published digital copy. Students will develop a range of multimodal writing samples that incorporate images, graphics, multimedia, purposeful links, and other interactive elements. Learning to write for online and social media platforms is central to this class, and students are asked to consider content strategies that maximize audience participation. Students will practice conceptualizing targeted communication strategies, pitching strategic concepts, and writing for digital spaces. Students will learn to think critically as content developers and marketers about consumer engagement, editorial consistency, and performance issues.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## **PWRT1-GC 1010 Business and Organizational Writing (3 Credits)**

*Typically offered Fall*

This course will deepen students' business writing skills while helping them see how individual pieces of content serve a larger organizational purpose, such as communicating mission, generating revenue, maintaining or gaining new customers, onboarding new employees, or launching products and services. Students will distinguish between writing for internal versus external organizational audiences. Likewise, students will develop their ability to communicate in an organization's voice for multiple audiences. The course will expose students to the differences between writing for B2B and B2C readers and how to systematically repurpose content to meet the needs of content-hungry organizations. Assignment will emphasize the creation of common professional documents used to connect, document, inform, and request. Students also will develop the ability to analyze such documents for the accuracy and integrity of their content.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## **PWRT1-GC 1011 Digital and Organizational Storytelling (3 Credits)**

*Typically offered Spring and Summer*

This course builds understanding and skill in the type of storytelling that influences, informs, persuades, and convinces. Developing the ability to craft compelling narrative for target audiences across a range of documents is critical in the competitive world of professional communications. This includes the appropriate use of storytelling and narrative elements in writing for digital media and promotional copy (such as advertising and public relations pieces) as well as traditional corporate documentation (such as annual reports, policy guides, and dynamic stakeholder presentations). Using the literature of structural analysis, students will explore literary, corporate, and historic examples in contexts ranging from for-profit and nonprofits businesses, educational institutions, activist movements, and political organizations. In assignments focused on writing, revision, and critical reflection, students in this course learn to identify, craft, and strategically employ storytelling and narrative elements in their professional writing practices. Leveraging demographic and psychographic research techniques to understand target audiences' needs and communication habits, students will engage proven methods of effective storytelling and narrative development to captivate and inform specific target audiences. Students will evaluate ways to ethically align the needs of their target audiences to best match the goals of their organizations. Finally, students will be able to clearly articulate the ways in which storytelling and narrative elements make digital communication strategies more memorable and effective.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## **PWRT1-GC 1015 Style and Rhetoric (3 Credits)**

*Typically offered Spring*

This course focuses on the two related disciplines of style and rhetoric as immediate and usable aspects of form and function in writing. We explore elements of style and rhetoric as tools readily applicable to students' work in other courses and professional projects. This exploration includes creating documents for specific rhetorical purposes and real-world functionality. While there will be some revisiting of classical Aristotelian rhetoric, we'll focus on exploring forms of contemporary organizational voice and persuasion. Students will develop the ability to analyze existing/modern content for style, intent, and impact on target audiences. Students will also learn how to analyze an audience's needs and skillfully shape their writing to persuade, inform, and influence. Students will consult well-known and established manuals of style so they can use them in everyday professional discourse.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**PWRT1-GC 1020 Document Design and Data Storytelling (3 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

Professional writers are expected to be highly visually literate and to communicate about aesthetics and design with a degree of clarity and sophistication. In addition to crafting the message, writers need to consider the holistic structure and elements of design that help readers understand, use, and retain information. The Document Design and Data Storytelling course offers students a robust introduction to content presentation with a focus on layout, design, and semiotic dimensions of visual communication. Engaging in individual and group/pair projects, students focus on document creation and developing graphical displays of abstract information to create memorable products. Attention is given to understanding the affordances and challenges of composing multimodal content that incorporates data, narrative, and graphical forms. Students are able to develop and strengthen basic design skills, learning strategies for storytelling with words and images across a range of media. Students are encouraged to experiment with modality and meaning-making across static and interactive projects. In addition to discussing ethical and theoretical foundations of design, students engage in a process of critique and revision to employ current design trends and develop stronger messages.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 1021 Media Production for Professional Writers (3 Credits)**

As the production of new media is made more accessible through a plethora of new and emerging communication technologies, writers must understand how to structure and guide the “production of messaging” while carefully considering the impact on target audiences. In this course, we focus on the intersection of writing, media production, and creative cultures. Merging discussions of theory with applied practice, students gain experience producing content across a range of media deliverables. From conceptualizing, scripting/storyboarding, capturing, editing, and showcasing, students engage in assignments that focus on text and image in digital contexts, aural presentations, and short video production. Students will also consume and review a range of media assets as a way to continually inform their content creation practices. Students work to unpack the dynamism and complexity of the numerous spaces, contexts, and formats that shape language, storytelling, representation, identity, and meaning-making. Embracing a workshop model, students will post work-in-progress drafts and give peer feedback across the semester. It is understood that students will enroll in the course with varying degrees of media making experience. All students will be encouraged to experiment with new tools and apply writing and communication acumen to multimodal media projects.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 1025 Principles of Information Architecture (3 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

Students in this course learn about information architecture from two vantage points: 1) by practicing the techniques used in the creation of digital media (such as Web sites) to create the hierarchy of information all such media follows, and 2) by exploring and using traditional and classic information architecture as it is presented in extensive databases and through the tools (such as search engines) designed to navigate data. The goal is to provide users with the most facile experience in the location and employment of data. Students learn the basics of populating learning systems with content through the development of tree systems of categorized knowledge. They also learn to create templates, wireframes, sitemaps, flow charts and diagrams and page elements and to design Web elements used to organize large data sets.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3000 Health and Medical Writing (3 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

Medical and healthcare information is created, shared, and communicated daily by and for researchers, medical practitioners, patients and their families, and the general public. Employed by hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, medical-device manufacturers, clinical-research organizations, medical technology companies, and non-profit organizations, Medical Writers produce an array of traditional and digital content for novice and expert audiences. These writers prepare regulatory documents; review and synthesize research for journal articles and popular publications; streamline sales, training, and educational materials; draft and share press releases; compose fact sheets and more. This course introduces students to medical and healthcare writing as a broad and evolving field. Through a mix of individual and collaborative projects across the semester, students concentrate on developing the research and writing skills needed to convey, ethically and accurately, technical health information to target audiences across traditional and digital platforms. Aiming to better meet target audience needs, students will explore where and how different audiences find, use, and evaluate medical information. Students in this course will be challenged to craft clear and purposeful writing that communicates information which can be complex, specific, and/or emotionally charged. A background in health, medicine, or science is not necessary for this course, but a willingness to learn about these areas is essential.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**PWRT1-GC 3005 Promotional Writing (3 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

The rise of digital communication technologies has had a profound impact on the public's relation to text. This shift has fundamentally altered the work of professional writers by providing many opportunities for communications experts to engage with their audiences in new and innovative ways. In addition, it has changed how individuals experience, consume, and absorb text-based information. In this course, students will learn some of the latest trends in promotional writing that aim to meet the shifting demands of content production in the digital age. Students will explore communications strategies and content production elements in digital environments, as well as analyze theories of persuasion in relation to social engagement. This course covers promotion of personal brands, individual clients, and organizations (both for-profit and non-profit). Students will study real life examples to gain knowledge of industry standards and best practices to both meet the needs of clients and to strengthen their overall communication practices. Through this work, students will build a repository of tactics, strategies, and tools to develop (1) promotional strategies that incorporate online and offline audience engagement techniques, and (2) relevant supporting documents and materials.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3010 Independent Study in Professional Writing (3 Credits)***Typically offered Fall, Spring, and Summer terms*

The independent study course is a valuable method for students to pursue special interests in depth, under the direction of a faculty member. It is intended to advance the student's knowledge and skills in ways clearly useful in professional writing settings. The course will focus on a significant contemporary question, issue, or concern in professional writing. It is the equivalent of a regular 3-credit elective course in the program, and contains a comparable quantity of academic and applied work. It can, for example, address pure research issues that potentially affect the theory and practice of professional writing; organizational, technological, or social challenges to the profession and possible practical innovations and solutions; or other issues. Students registering for this course meet with the Academic Advisor of the program to discuss and get approval for the planned independent study content and to select a faculty member qualified to direct the course. The faculty member will require a formal research proposal which includes a suitable bibliography consisting of a sufficient number of texts, including peer-reviewed and other academic papers. Student and faculty will establish a timeline for meetings and for individual assignments, and any other product or application. An academic research paper is required focusing on the significance and relevance of the study to professional writing, and highlighting the topical concern of the study. In addition, a student may propose to engage in a semester-long project demonstrating the professional application of the topic. Evaluation is based on meeting deadlines, stated expectations, and on the quality and quantity of the completed work. Students can take one Independent Study course during the duration of their degree.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**PWRT1-GC 3015 Technical Writing (3 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

This course is primarily concerned with the presentation of technical information in forms readily useable to a broad audience of laypersons and professionals. Students will hone their skills to write in clear, concise, and consistent ways with a focus on communicating unequivocal meaning and intent. Students will be expected to understand and adjust content to match the needs of their audiences. Students will focus on systematic ways to organize information and maintain documentation in professional contexts. Students will practice using writing and visuals in a variety of documents including emails, abstracts, procedures, and manuals. Within the technical context, students are expected to articulate enthusiasm for technology and platform development in their presentation of concepts, ideas, procedures, and instructions. We will also explore the evolving nature of the technical writer profession, including project management, documentation cycles, and collaboration across teams.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3020 Writing for Science and the Environment (3 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

This course explores the complexities of scientific and environmental writing. Students will practice and develop the skills to accurately explain scientific information clearly, concisely, and engagingly across various formats and topics. Students will evaluate research, synthesize findings, and interview subject matter experts during the semester. Students will craft copy for general audiences, experts, activists, and policymakers, focusing on producing accurate and evidence-based content. They will learn to support opinions and persuade target audiences using scientific data. A background in scientific or environmental fields is unnecessary for this course, but a willingness to learn about these areas is essential.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3025 Writing Proposals and Grants (3 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

The Writing Proposals and Grants course covers the fundamentals of fundraising and communication writing for nonprofits/non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By the end of this course, students will be able to write a full grant proposal and a Foundation Fundraising Plan for a nonprofit. They will also be able to describe the role that communication plays in the fundraising efforts of nonprofit organizations and articulate the key responsibilities of fundraisers within nonprofit organizations. Students will be able to identify common ethical challenges that fundraisers will encounter in their work and an appropriate framework for addressing those challenges. They will be able to research appropriate and realistic funding opportunities for actual nonprofit organizations.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**PWRT1-GC 3030 Writing for Finance (3 Credits)***Typically offered Fall*

This course is designed for students interested in advancing their ability to write within a professional financial context. It is expected that students will develop their ability to write in both a journalistic and a technical style. As part of this development, students will hone their skill in analyzing corporate literature, annual reports, financial prospecti, and other documents generated in the financial world. Financial strategy will be explored through corporate literature and objective journalism from the financial publications. Topics are introduced using articles and business cases as well as major investigative journalism and situations from the textbook. Students are expected to complete at least one major report on an approved topic and to provide a formal presentation with media to the online class. Students will become familiar with the financial markets, corporate communication, and the terminology of the global marketplace.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3035 Writing and Social Science Research (3 Credits)**

In today's data-driven world, professional writers are often tasked with critically reviewing, curating, and summarizing research findings across a range of documents for external and internal audiences. Likewise, professional writers are often asked to partner with research teams and data scientists to work on effective messaging of important findings for expert and novice audiences. In this course, students will become critical reviewers of research while they develop the skills to be ethical and persuasive writers of formal research documents. Focused on qualitative methods for research in the social sciences, students will learn to write about and with research in clear and effective ways. Though students will not be gathering data in this course, they will complete weekly graded assignments and activities, culminating in a final research proposal. In small groups, students will also build presentations of their research proposals for a virtual showcase at the end of the semester. This is an elective course in the MS in Professional Writing program.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3040 Persuasive Public Policy Writing (3 Credits)***Typically offered Spring*

Persuasive Public Policy Writing will help students learn how to use their writing to effect tangible change focusing on political and social movements. The course explores the complexities of public policy writing in today's digital and social media-driven society. At its core, persuasive writing relies on techniques and strategies that inspire and motivate public action. Students will practice and develop the skills to accurately and clearly explain public policy information across various formats and topics. In addition to analyzing compelling narratives in public discourse, students will craft evidence-based content for general audiences, experts, activists, and policymakers. Students will become comfortable supporting and debating topics using research, data, and subject matter expert opinions. A background in public policy is unnecessary for this course, but a willingness to learn about multiple perspectives to shape compelling narratives is essential.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3900 Portfolio/Thesis Requirement (3 Credits)***Typically offered Fall and Spring*

The Portfolio/Thesis Requirement course offers a unique pairing of a thesis project and a digital portfolio in the final semester of a student's experience in the MS in Professional Writing program. In completing both major assignments, students are able to showcase a significant body of work spanning the needs of the professional environment and the requirements of the academic system of evaluation. Each student will identify a thesis project topic in a particular discipline of professional writing (e.g. medical writing, writing for social media, finance writing, grant writing, etc.) or a combination. The self-identified topics must be approved by the faculty Instructor and will guide the development of the thesis project and (to a lesser extent) the digital portfolio. The digital portfolio will contain documents and media demonstrating the student's understanding of the principles, concepts, styles, formats, and critical content of coursework across the entire experience of the program. Reserved for the final semester of study, the thesis project is a culminating report designed to show original writing and critical thinking. The thesis project can take on several formats as outlined in the course site and must demonstrate academic rigor, including theoretical and practical knowledge of the principles professional writing and the self-identified topic/area of concentration. Students will contract with the faculty Instructor at the start of the semester regarding the topic and format of their thesis projects

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3905 Internship (3 Credits)***Typically offered Fall, Spring, and Summer terms*

This course combines the theoretical knowledge that you've developed in the MSPW program with the practical application of a professionally supervised environment. It is an additional requirement of the MSPW program, which asks you to choose between completing either an internship or a directed study case project. In both cases, you will complete specific tasks expected of a writer in a professional position. If you opt to complete an internship, you must find an appropriate and meaningful placement with an organization that needs the skills of a professional writer. All internships, including placement, work deliverables, and organization supervisor must be evaluated and approved by the course instructor before the second week of the course.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**PWRT1-GC 3910 Directed Study (3 Credits)***Typically offered Fall, Spring, and Summer terms*

This course combines the theoretical knowledge that you've developed in the MSPW program with the practical application of a professionally supervised environment. It is an additional requirement of the MSPW program, which asks you to choose between completing either an internship or a directed study case project. In both cases, you will complete specific tasks expected of a writer in a professional position. If you opt for the directed study, you'll complete a semester-long case project that mimics a freelance work experience. In this scenario, the course instructor will function as your client and you'll work to complete all deliverables by the set deadlines, offering your mock client the same professional considerations you would give to a real-life client.

**Grading:** GC SCPS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No