**ANTHROPOLOGY 590**

**WRITING SKILLS AND PUBLICATION**

Spring 2020

Science 1 - 143: 3/4 to 4/22, Wed (1:10-4:10)

Instructor ‑ Randy McGuire office Sci 1 228, x7-2100

hours: T 2:30-3:30 PM, W 10:30-11:30 AM or by appointment  rmcguire@binghamton.edu

# *“Novelists and poets are the landscape artists and portrait painters; academic writers are the people with the big paint sprayers who repaint your basement” (Silvia 2007:45)*

# Instructor Information

I am a SUNY Distinguished Professor of Anthropology with a PhD from the University of Arizona who has taught at Binghamton University since 1982[[1]](#footnote-1). As an anthropologist, I use the craft of archaeology to explore the impact of the material world on the most diverse realms of human life.  My research seeks to understand how objects and landscapes have joined with human actions, emotions and relations to make and remake society and culture from ancient times to the present. This exploration has taken me to Prehispanic Trincheras Tradition ruins in the Sonoran Desert, to the 1914 Ludlow Massacre on the plains of Colorado, to a 20th century Yaqui battlefield in Sonora, México, and to the modern border wall that separates Ambos Nogales. I practice my craft in a praxis that seeks to know the world, critique the world and ultimately change the world. I am a prolific academic writer with over 160 published articles and book chapters. I haves been author or co-author of five books and nine monographs and editor or co-editor of nine books. Each one of these publications has been a step in my ongoing attempt to become a better writer.

## Communication Policy

I prefer students to contact me by e-mail or in person during my office hours. I strive to respond to e-mail messages within 24 hours of receiving them. This course will make use of MyCourses both to access course content and to communicate within the class.

**Course Information**

**Description**

This seminar will assist graduate students in writing projects in the social sciences, from initial conceptualization to the writing and completion of a master’s thesis, dissertation, or research article. Students should be currently working on, or ready to begin, a major piece of writing. Weekly progress on projects is expected. We will focus on two writing goals: (1) creating good expository writing; and (2) getting the job done. Expository writing[[2]](#footnote-2) explains, describes, gives information or informs. Academic expository writing is usually also rhetorical. Rhetorical writing[[3]](#footnote-3) seeks to modify the perspectives of other people. The author uses a logical and consistent organizational structure to accomplish expository and rhetorical goals. The author builds this organizational structure at the global level (the entire paper or project) and at the local level (a chapter, section, or paragraph). The author strives to consciously design the writing project to make it easy for readers to understand. Good expository writing is accessible and comprehensible to someone who just reads sections of the work rather than the entire piece. Often, however, the biggest hurdle that confronts us in writing is simply finishing the job. The course will help students to “write a lot” and to overcome the impediments to finishing writing projects.

## Prerequisite(s)

Students in Anthro 590 must have graduate standing and a writing project (dissertation, thesis, article etc.) to complete during the course.

## Course Objectives

Writing is hard. Anth 590 cannot make students great writers, landscape artists or portrait painters. It can, however, help them become more adept at painting the basement. At the end of this course, students will better understand the process and importance of scholarly/professional writing in anthropology. This course will help them develop as professionals in academic and non-academic contexts that require them to write a lot. Students who complete this course will:

* Improve the grammar and style of their writing
* Improve the organization of their written work
* Have strategies for overcoming “writers block”
* Understand the process for publishing articles and books
* Have a better understanding of how to review the writing of others
* Have completed a writing project such as a thesis or article or made significant progress on a larger project such as a dissertation

## Format and Procedures

The format of the course is a three-hour seminar. Some material will be presented in a lecture style, but most meetings will be discussion-based. Regular, informed discussion is expected of all students in a seminar, and you should come to each session prepared to talk about any and all of the readings. Lack of participation in class discussions will have a negative effect on your grade and on your learning. You must do the readings and the written assignments, but more importantly, you must **THINK** about this work before you come to class.  I will try to give you an idea of the issues and questions before each session to help you do the readings.

# Course Requirements

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## Required texts

Becker, H. S. (2007) *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Second

Edition. (In a pinch, the first edition will do.)

Silvia, P. J. (2007) *How to Write a Lot*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Strunk, W. and E.B. White (2000) *The Elements of Style.* Boston: Pearson. Fourth Edition (any earlier edition will do).

Becker first published *Writing for Social Scientists* in the 1980s and his 2007 revision still has much to teach us. It offers graduate level practical advice on how to write and how to get the job done. Silvia’s *How to Write A Lot* identifies many of the barriers that writers create for themselves and discusses how to overcome them[[4]](#footnote-4). *The Elements of Style* is the classic little book on writing with style. Some writers love it, many hate it but I find it a reference that I reread each time that I undertake a major writing project.

In addition to these books, I will also be assigning readings on websites. I will provide the links for these readings on this syllabus and in MyCourses.

## Other Requirements

We will be using MyCourses to mediate most course assignments, and you will be using websites for some of our work in the course, so you must have reliable internet access to take this course*.*

## Credit Hours and Expectations

# This class is a 2-credit course, which means that students are expected to do at least 6 - 6.5 hours of course-related work or activity each week during the semester. This includes scheduled class lecture/discussion meeting times as well as time spent completing assigned readings, studying for tests and examinations, participating in lab sessions, preparing written assignments, and other course-related tasks.

# Assignments and Grading

Grades in Anth 590 will be satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U). Students will earn a satisfactory grade by completing all written work in and through class participation. Satisfactory written work will reflect appropriate effort and show improvement over the semester. Satisfactory class participation entails coming to class and actively contributing to the class discussion. Satisfactory class contributions will be informed and reflect students thoughts on the readings and writing assigned for the class meeting.

The writing project that each student brings to the class will be the main required assignment of the class. In the case of MA theses and articles, I will expect the student to complete the project by the end of the spring term. For larger projects such as dissertations or books I will expect the student to have completed several key chapters.

Students will be asked to do peer review of other students work. They will submit these reviews in writing to the instructor and the student whose work is being reviewed.

# Course Policies

### Penalties for Late Work and Requests for Extensions

Students are expected to make the deadlines for all course assignments. Only in exceptional circumstances (illness, injury, family emergency etc.) will I accept late assignments.

### Absences Due to Religious Holidays

If you anticipate being absent because of any religious observance, please notify me at least one week in advance. We will work together to accommodate.

### Attendance & Participation

I expect all students to attend seminar meetings, arrive in class on time and to participate in class to the end of the class period. Absences and tardiness will be acceptable only in exceptional circumstances (illness, injury, family emergency, professional meetings, blizzards, alien invasions, zombie apocalypse etc.) I also expect all students to comport themselves in a professional manner and exhibit respect for both the instructor and their fellow students at all times.

### Use of Mobile Devices

As research on learning shows, unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means you are affecting everyone’s learning experience if your cell phone, tablet, laptop, etc. makes noise or is visually distracting during class. For this reason, I will allow you to take notes on your mobile device, but you must turn the sound off so that you do not disrupt other students' learning. You may not do anything other than taking notes on your mobile device, and you will be asked to leave the class if I find you doing something other than taking notes.

### Understand When You May Drop This Course

### The withdraw deadline for the Spring 2019 semester is April 2. Incompletes will only be given for cases of the most exceptional and extreme circumstances (illness, injury, family emergency etc.).

### Academic Integrity

I expect all students to read and comply with Binghamton University’s Academic Honesty Code (see the [University Bulletin - Academic Policies and Procedures for All Students).](http://www.binghamton.edu:8080/exist/rest/bulletin/2010-2011/2_academic_policies_and_procedures_all_students/academicPoliciesAndProcedureAllStudents.xml?_xsl=../xsl/compose.xsl) I expect the work you submit for grading to be yours and yours alone. Not acknowledging another's work with proper references, taking credit for someone else's work, letting your work appear in another student's paper, or fabricating "results" are grounds for failing the course and being subject to further penalties as prescribed in the policy. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please review the definitions of plagiarism and cheating in the honesty policy.

## Disability-Related Equal Access Accommodations Statement

Students wishing to request academic accommodations to insure their equitable access and participation in this course should notify the instructor as soon as they are aware of their need for such arrangements. Authorizations from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) are generally required. We encourage you to contact SSD at (607) 777-2686 to schedule an appointment with the Director or Learning Disabilities Specialist. The [SSD website](http://www.binghamton.edu/ssd/) (www.binghamton.edu/ssd/) includes information regarding their Disability Documentation Guidelines. The office is located in UU – 119.

# Campus Help for Students

## ITS Helpdesk/MyCourses Support

Walk-in: Located in the Computer Center first floor lobby.

Call: 607-777-6420; E-mail: helpdesk@binghamton.edu.

<https://www.binghamton.edu/its/>

## Libraries

The Libraries offer a wide variety and range of services including research assistance, instruction, user-friendly interfaces, digital preservation, digital scanners, and resource sharing.

Text: 607-205-8173; Call: 607-777-2345; Email: refquest@binghamton.edu

<http://www.binghamton.edu/libraries>

## Offices for Help

If you are experiencing undue personal or academic stress at any time during the semester or need to talk with someone about a personal problem or situation, I encourage you to seek support as soon as possible. I am available to talk with you about stresses related to your work in my class. Additionally, I can assist you in reaching out to any one of a wide range of campus resources, including:

1. Dean of Graduate School Office: 607-777-2151
2. Decker Student Health Services Center: 607-777-2221
3. University Police: On campus emergency, 911
4. University Counseling Center: 607-777-2772
5. Interpersonal Violence Prevention: 607-777-3062
6. Harpur Advising: 607-777-6305
7. Office of International Student & Scholar Services: 607-777-2510

## University Counseling Center

At some point during their college experience, students may encounter personal, social, or developmental issues that call for assistance beyond the advice provided by friends and family. That’s where the University Counseling Center (UCC) can help. The UCC provides a variety of free and confidential counseling services delivered by professional counselors. All currently enrolled Binghamton University undergraduate students, graduate students and affiliated entities are eligible to receive these services free of charge. Services and programs available through the center include individual and group counseling, consultation, referral, and psychoeducational programs. For more information or to make an appointment, visit <https://www.binghamton.edu/counseling>.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**March 4**  Introduction to the class. You should come prepared to discuss your writing project, describe what it is, discuss the progress that you have made and what issues or problems that you see to completing it. Today we will discuss grammar, style and common problems with graduate level writers. We will also discuss how to organize a thesis.

 **Read** Becker Chs. 1-5, Strunk & White entire book, Structuring a Thesis

 **Visit** the following website: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2>

 **Assignment:** Meet with your advisor and discuss the production schedule for your thesis with reference to the class schedule. Report on this discussion in class.

**March 11** Focus today will be on developing good writing habits and how to overcome writer’s block. We will also discuss each person’s progress and brainstorm problems. We will do a mock peer review in class.

 **Read** Silvia Ch.1 to 4, Becker 6,7, & 8, & How to Avoid Writer’s Block.

**Assignment:** Bring to class three copies of your introduction and background chapters.



**March 18** We will do peer review today of the pages that you turned in last week. We will also discuss each person’s progress and brainstorm problems.

 **Read** peer review template and peer review practice document

 **Visit** the Guide to Writing for Anthropology website.

 **Assignment:** Bring to class three copies of your methods and analysis chapters

**March 25** We will do peer review today of the pages that you turned in last week. We will also discuss each person’s progress and brainstorm problems.

 **Read** peer review template and peer review practice document

 **Visit** the Guide to Writing for Anthropology website.

 **Assignment:** Bring to class three copies of first draft.

**April 1** We will do peer review today of the first draft that you turned in last week. We will also discuss each person’s progress and brainstorm problems.

 **Read** peer review template and peer review practice document

 **Visit** the Guide to Writing for Anthropology website.

**April 8 Spring Break – no Class**

**April 13 Applications for graduate degree due.**

**April 15** Today you will submit a 2nd draft of you writing project. You will include with it a revision memo. You will also submit it to your advisor and reader.

 **Read** Becker Ch. 10, Silvia Ch.9

 **Assignment** You will peer review one of your class mates writing projects.

**April 22** Peer reviews returned to each student and we workshop them in class. I will also return my reviews at this time.

**April 29** You will submit the final version of your writing project to your advisor and reader. We will discuss publishing and RPA certification.

 **Read**. Silvia 6 & 7, How to get an article published parts 1 & 2,

##### **May 5 Deadline for Thesis/Dissertation Electronic Submissions, Forms and Fees**

<https://www.binghamton.edu/grad-school/resources/graduation/submitting-thesis-dissertation.html>

**May 18 Submission of Department Recommendation for Award of Degree.**

1. <http://bingweb.binghamton.edu/~rmcguire/index.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/issues_in_depth/10WritingSkillsIdeas.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/rhetorical_situation/index.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://phdlife.warwick.ac.uk/2015/11/18/review-paul-j-silvia-how-to-write-a-lot>

<https://thesiswhisperer.com/2010/06/10/how-to-write-a-lot> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)