

**University of Northern Colorado
School of Special Education
Office of Extended Studies**

EDSE 308-942: Fundamentals of Professional Writing in Education for Undergraduate Student (3 cr)

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Student Advisement Hours:

By scheduled telephone appointment and through online exchanges

Class Meeting:

Online Course: Blackboard Platform

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This elective, online course for undergraduate students prepares future educators to master effective and efficient professional and written communication, including grammar mastery, compositional skills and learning to write American Psychological Association style.

COURSE RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

The School of Special Education at UNC is supportive of providing teacher education candidates with a course in the fundamentals of professional writing. It is important for these future teachers to be effective teachers of integrated reading and writing instruction. It is also vitally important, as future educators, that these preservice teacher candidates be able to present themselves in a competent and professional manner through written communication. Learning more about the English language through improving writing skills enables students to be more effective writers and fosters better study skills. Also, teachers who write well pass this skill on to their students, thus creating a more literate society.

COURSE GOALS

Undergraduate Education majors will demonstrate competency in effective and efficient professional writing thus helping to prepare them to teach their future students to write more effectively.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Demonstrate mastery of basic elements of grammar, basic structures of composition, and basic genres of writing when reading and writing for various audiences, various styles, various purposes, and various academic assignments.

2. Demonstrate the ability to use electronic word processing and publishing, utilizing the stages of writing in the compositional process taught through the Author's Workshop format.
3. Appreciate the diversity of groups and the uniqueness of individuals in writing activities.
4. Utilize writing skills in a variety of types of professional writing.
5. Develop writing skills that promote life-long learning.
6. Utilize higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills in developing writing skills.
7. Demonstrate formative assessment/feedback to improve personal and peer writing skills.
8. Demonstrate the use of personal reflection to improve writing skills for various purposes.
9. Demonstrate effective written and professional communication skills for use in personal, peer, professional, and collaborative relationships.

COURSE TOPICS

1. Mastery of Basic Elements of Writing and Reading
 - Parts of Speech
 - Commonly Confused Words, Plurals, & Possessives
2. Mastery of Basic Sentence Structures of Writing and Reading
 - Sentence Structures, Grammar, & Usage
3. Mastery of Basic Paragraph Structures of Writing and Reading
 - Paragraph Structures and Organization of Ideas
 - Composition Structures & Organization of Information
4. Mastery of Basic Genres of Writing and Reading
 - Writing an Editorial
 - Distinguishing between Summaries and Conclusions
 - Writing a Compare and Contrast
 - Writing a Personal Opinion/Personal Reflection
 - Writing an Abstract
 - Writing a Brief Literature Review
 - Reporting Results
 - Writing a Discussion of Findings
 - Writing in the Style of the American Psychological Association (APA)
4. Mastery of Basic Genres of Writing and Reading
 - Self-Introduction
 - For Various Audiences
 - For Various Styles, Purposes, Parts, & Processes
 - For Various Academic Assignments
 - Narratives
 - Action Research Assignments
 - Editorial/Personal Opinion/Personal Reflection/Position Paper Assignments
 - Sequential Explanation Assignments

- Compare/Contrast Paper Assignments
- Abstract/Summary/Conclusion Assignments
- Basics of Writing in the Style of the American Psychological Association (APA)

TEXTBOOK & OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students are expected to keep up with the readings assigned for each class. Purchase required reading materials before the first class date. We use them all the time! Please refer to the class schedule for the material to be covered each session; read and track progress each week of the course.

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Buscemi, S. V., Nicolai, A. H., & Strugala, R. (2004). *The basics: A rhetoric and handbook (4th Ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Students learn to write professionally through writing assignments in this online Writer's Workshop where multiple drafts of assignments are written.
2. Through online threaded discussions, the entire class and small groups discuss writing techniques, conduct peer reviews of writing assignments and interact with classmates and the professor.
3. Students experience a variety of writing strategies and genres in whole class and small group interactions and discussions.
4. Students learn the various skill components of the mechanics of writing via editorial feedback from the professor, the readings, and through a series of online study practices and mastery tests.
5. The professor serves as editor and mentor providing electronic feedback and commentary on student papers including both guidance for the mechanics of writing and the art of composition.

COURSE POLICIES

Professionalism

All University of Northern Colorado students are expected to exhibit and to maintain a professional manner at all times, as they interact with other students in the class and with the professor.

Class Participation

Student preparation and class participation are essential for each class session. We will work collaboratively to learn from one another, to discuss, and to problem solve. All students are expected to have read the assigned readings PRIOR to class sessions and to participate actively and professionally in the online class discussions and activities, demonstrating their knowledge of the contents of the readings. Points will be deducted from the total number of class points if the expected level of class participation is not demonstrated. Assignments turned in late will result in loss of 3 points for each day of the week the assignment is late, except in unusual and documented circumstances.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments	Points
Online Class Participation	150 pts.
Online Skills Tests	200 pts.
Forum Exchange: Peer Reviewers	100 pts.
Journal	50 pts.
Writing Assignments: Participation in the Writing Process 4 Paragraphs (10 pts. each) 8 Papers (25 pts. each)	240 pts.
Writing Assignments: Best Three Papers (50 pts. each)	150 pts.
Writing in APA Style	50 pts.
Electronic Course Folder	20 pts.
Total Points	960

1. Online Class Participation 150 Points

Students participate in threaded class discussions and activities in a professional and positive manner, sharing ideas and receiving and responding to the ideas of others. The assigned readings are to be read PRIOR to the threaded discussion for which they are designated. A detailed scoring rubric will be provided to guide online class participation [10 points for each of 15 weeks].

2. Online Skills Tests 200 Points

Skills Tests cover the mechanics of writing as presented in the required textbook (Buscemi, Nicolai & Strugala, 2004). Students take electronic pre-tests prior to the topic being explored in threaded discussion, using an on-line testing system (www.mhhe.com/basics) as a means of self-assessment and being prepared to come to class with appropriate questions. After each topic is covered, students complete homework assignments to further practice the skills. Students then take electronic Skills Tests for each of the assigned topics. Each student must score 90% or better on each Skills Test. Students will continue to be tested on a given area until 90% or better is scored. An average of all attempts to master each Skills Test will be the one recorded in the grade book. Skills Tests will be given on the days indicated in the Course Schedule.

3. Forum Exchange: Peer Reviewers 100 Points

In a Group Forum online format students are assigned to editorial teams where they will provide feedback to one another on writing assignments prior to submitting papers for grading.

4. Journal 50 points

Students will make dated entries in a response journal as indicated in the Course Schedule. The entries should be personal reflections or responses to the class, education or the student's life. The journal will serve as a means of providing students opportunities to express ideas in writing, to explore possible topics for formal writing assignments and as one form of communication between the instructor and the student. Students are encouraged to make daily journal entries, as this practice will result in an improved and more confident writing style.

5. Writing Assignments: Working Drafts of Papers 240 points

During the course, students will learn to write 8 different types of papers (25 pts. each) and 4 different types of paragraphs (10 pts. each). For each paper, students will participate in the writing process, participating in Author's Workshop, and created revised drafts of the papers.

6. Writing Assignments: Best Three Papers (50 points per paper) 150 points

As various audiences and purposes for writing are studied, students will be given a variety of particular assignments. These assignments will be worked on and completed both in and outside of the class meetings. These assignments should be typed with word processing. A detailed scoring rubric will be provided to guide the writing. Students will select the assignments they want to submit for points.

7. Writing in American Psychological Association (APA) Style: 50 Points

Students will use the required Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association as a guide in learning to write in APA style. Guidance will be provided through the threaded discussions, as well as by professor and peer reviewer feedback.

8. Electronic Course Folder 20 Points

Students keep an electronic folder for the course with files for each of the following sections of the Course Folder:

- Course Syllabus
- Course Schedule
- Spreadsheet/Table on Skills Tests (dated chronologically) including Skill Tests Results
- Electronic Journal
- Class Notes to include in threaded discussions
- Writing Assignment Completion Schedule
- Working Drafts of Writing Assignments
- Final Drafts of Writing Assignments
- Guides for APA Writing Style

COURSE GRADING

Final grades will be assigned according to the following grading scale:

93%-100%	=	A	893 - 960 points (exceed expectations)
86%-92%	=	B	826 - 892 points (meets expectations)
78%-85%	=	C	749 - 825 points (below expectations)
70%-77%	=	D	672 - 748 points (unsatisfactory)
69% or below	=	F	671 or below (very unsatisfactory)

Note: ALL completed assignments must be turned in on time and meet the standards specified in the scoring procedures to receive full credit. Remember to focus on accumulated points

rather than on letter grades or percentages for individual assignments. The accumulated total number of points determines the final grade, not the percentages.

OTHER EVALUATION ISSUES – Guidelines for Written Work:

1. **TYPED.** All written work submitted for grading must be typed, double spaced, with a minimum of 1" margins, using APA (American Psychological Association) format and guidelines.
2. **PROOFREAD** your final drafts very carefully. Use Spell Check and Grammar Check.
3. **PEER REVIEWS.** Regardless of the assignment, it is always good practice to have a peer from the class critique your work and provide you with some helpful feedback so you can improve your assignment **BEFORE** you hand it in. Peer reviews serve as a "gate keeper" to make sure your paper is of high quality **BEFORE** instructor evaluation. On each assignment, identify your peer reviewer and make certain you have obtained that person's permission to be your peer reviewer. You will be assigned different peer reviewers on different assignments.
4. **AVOID PLAGIARISM.** Read your sources. Think about what you have read. Discuss what you read with your colleagues. Present the ideas in your own words much as you discussed the ideas with your colleagues. Appropriately cite in APA format all direct quotes and unique ideas. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and could be a reason for dismissal from the University of Northern Colorado.
5. **KEEP A COPY OF EVERY** written assignment you submit, in case an assignment is accidentally lost. Keep one hard copy and two electronic copies. This is the student's responsibility.
6. **PLAN AHEAD** by referring to the scoring rubrics, the Course Syllabus, and class instructions to be recorded in your Class Notebook/Binder **BEFORE** completing assignments.

Library Services for Distance Education and Off-Campus Students: Obtaining Materials from UNC Libraries

Off-campus students residing within 50 miles of the UNC campus are required to come to the library and borrow materials in person. Students residing more than 50 miles from campus may request that materials be delivered to them. All requests must include complete citations. We will supply materials from the UNC Libraries, as well as materials from other libraries obtained via Interlibrary Loan. Articles will be delivered via email. Books will be mailed first class. Delivery time by U.S. postal service is approximately 1 week. It is the responsibility of the student to return books by the date due. UNC does not pay return postage on books. For information on document delivery, call (970) 351-1446.

Requests for materials may be made through the following methods:

Online: <http://www.unco.edu/library/forms/distancerequest.htm>

By email: library.ocp@unco.edu

By fax: (970) 351-2540

Honor Code

All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: *Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility*. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

UNC's Policies

UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. For additional information, please see the Dean of Student's website, Student Handbook link <http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html>

Notice

The Office of Extended Studies reserves the right to cancel or reschedule courses based upon enrollment. Enrolled students will be contacted with information of any change.

Student Satisfaction Evaluation

Participants will be asked to evaluate the workshop for instructors' knowledge, interest and enthusiasm as well as providing additional information on classes or topics which you would like to see developed as a future offering from UNC.

Course Withdrawal Information

In accordance with University and Colorado Department of Higher Education policy, if you drop this class after the course starts you will be assessed a drop fee. The drop fee is pro-rated up to the half-way point in the class. You are legally responsible for payment of full tuition once 50% of this course has been concluded. In order to be eligible to receive any refund of tuition, you must contact the Office of Extended Studies (1-800-232-1749) to formally withdraw from your class. Your refund, if applicable, will be based on the date of contact with our office. Withdrawals received via telephone during non-business hours will be processed and dated on the next working day. Failure to notify us will result in UNC tuition being owed even though you do not attend or complete the coursework.

**SCHOOL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
POLICY ON PLAGIARISM
NOVEMBER 25, 2008**

Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting of a substantial or essential portion thereof (This is the UNC definition). In the preparation of written work, statements that paraphrase or summarize the work of another, along with other information that is not considered common knowledge, must be properly cited in the text of a document and cited in the reference list at the end of the document. If a direct quotation, the citation in the text must include the exact page numbers from the original source. The original source must also be listed at the end of work. Quotation marks or a proper form of indentation shall be used to indicate all direct quotes. All referencing is done, of course, according to APA Style. Regarding class projects, you are not to use *as the bulk of your presentation* the completed works of faculty members, imported documents from other authors, or works from websites, or any other body of work in which you are not the author. With proper referencing, students may import portions of such works and Web sites to enhance and illustrate presentations, and provide references to these other works for students who have an interest in pursuing a topic further (Examples of what constitutes unacceptable behavior in the realm of plagiarism are posted on the School's website.).

At the discretion of the course instructor, students who have engaged in the act of plagiarism will be assigned in an "F" in that course. The guiding philosophy of this policy is intended to provide opportunities for all students to learn about what constitutes plagiarism versus appropriate referencing of others' work. Each episode of plagiarism must be referred to the School's Review and Retention Committee. The decision of the Committee with regard to plagiarism includes the possibility that the student be dismissed from his or her respective program and from UNC. All incidences of plagiarism in the School of Special Education will be reported to the CEBS Dean's Office to be recorded in the college-wide database, as well as the Dean of Students Office to be recorded in the university-wide database.

Required Supplies for Class Sessions

- Access to computers, the Blackboard platform, the Internet and Microsoft word processing
- Thesaurus of choice (not more than 5 years old)
- Dictionary of choice (not more than 5 years old)
- A 3-ring notebook with dividers for storing class materials
- Floppy diskettes or CD's or USB flash drives for backing up writing assignments