

Writing for the Health Professions

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WRT 305: Section 01  
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Office Hours: Monday, 12:00pm-1:00pm; Wednesday, 7:00pm-8:00pm; and by appointment

Course Description

This course will enable students interested in a healthcare career to strengthen their critical writing skills. While learning to gather information and to apply ethical principles in a logical, persuasive fashion, students will explore and write about various types of evidence concerning the healthcare needs of different populations: a field research project on a health issue affecting a local target population of their choice, a critique of government documents that contain data on that issue and population, and a review of scholarly research on the same issue as it affects the larger national population represented by that local one. Writing assignments will include drafts and final versions of a research proposal, field research results, numerical analysis, literature review and a final project incorporating all of the previous work conducted about that issue and population. Students will also write a reflective paper which can serve as the basis for a personal statement for medical or other health-related graduate school applications.

Course Prerequisite: WRT 102

SBC Requirement: Evaluate and Synthesize Researched Information (ESI)

SBC Learning Objectives for ESI:

- Locate and organize information from a variety of appropriate sources (all, except reflection paper);
- Analyze the accuracy of information and the credibility of sources (all, except reflection paper);
- Determine the relevance of information (all); and
- Use information ethically and responsibly (all).

Program in Writing and Rhetoric Learning Objectives for WRT 305:

- produce coherent texts within common college-level written forms (all);
- demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts (all, except reflection paper);
- research a topic, develop an argument and organize supporting details (research proposal, numerical analysis, semester project);
- evaluate and synthesize researched information (all, except reflection paper)
- analyze texts to understand how and why they communicate their messages and effects to audiences (literature review);
- achieve communicative purposes for different audiences and contexts (all);
- show evidence of careful sentence-level editing in final drafts at acceptable levels of accuracy in syntax, grammar, semantics, and punctuation (all); and

- exhibit awareness of the relation of one's writing practices and coursework to other academic, professional, and lived contexts (reflection paper).

### Course Assignments

Semester Project. Your semester project will be a significant paper that examines from multiple perspectives (i.e., scholarly, government, individual) how a target population of your choice is affected by a health issue of your choice. To produce this project, you will combine all of the data from the three papers that you will write: 1) a review of the scholarly literature, 2) a numerical analysis of health-related statistics from government, academic, and scholarly sources, and 3) interviews with members of your target population who are affected by this health issue. The semester project, then, is a thesis-driven piece of writing that makes an overall point about the relationship between what you, based upon your research, argue are the primary health determinants and risk factors that affect one measure of this population's health status, as well as the relevance to a particular objective of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Healthy People 2020*. It will require you to use multiple forms of evidence, some of which might be contradictory, to make an assertion about the current state of the field, supported by evidence, analysis and elaboration. You must use a minimum of 3 health determinants and 3 risk factors. You will use AMA citation format, unless you are working on a mental health issue, in which case you will use APA citation format.

So that you can complete this project in an organized, step-by-step fashion, you will write multiple versions of a research proposal and of each paper, and at least one required version of the semester project itself, prior to submitting the final version of it. You will receive feedback from me and from a small group of your classmates on each version of each assignment. *The final version of the semester project will be worth 25% of your final grade.*

Paper Structure. Unless otherwise noted, all versions of all papers, except for the research proposal, will be structured with only a slight modification of the standard format of scholarly articles: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion. We will discuss the structure of each paper in class.

The *Introduction* will be the same for each paper, and should include an overview of your health issue (e.g., what it is, how it affects the human body and/or emotions), overall incidence and/or prevalence rates, a justification for why you are focusing on it, a justification for selecting your target population (i.e., incidence and/or prevalence rates for that population), a brief justification for each health determinant and risk factor about which you will be writing, and a brief justification for your health status measure and for your *Healthy People 2020* objective, as well as any additional information about the health issue and/or target population that you think will be useful for your readers to know so that they can follow what you write in the subsequent sections.

For all papers, the *Methods* presents how you collected your data, including any problems you encountered in the data collection process and how you resolved them.

For the numerical analysis paper and the interview paper, the *Results* reports the data that you collected. The *Discussion* analyzes that data, including how any data collection limitations may have affected them; it also includes any other *limitations and suggestions for further research* that are based upon the findings in the *Results* section, as well as any *conclusions*.

The semester project will follow the same format, but *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research* will be a separate section, as will the *Conclusion*; they should follow the *Discussion* in that order.

The literature review will follow the same format as the other papers for the *Introduction* and *Methods*; like the semester project, it will end with separate sections for *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research* and the *Conclusion*. However, it will not have a *Results* or a *Discussion* section, but instead will be organized by risk factors, health determinants, and health status measure.

Research Proposal. We will discuss in class how to narrow your topic, and you will research various issues and populations before deciding upon a particular issue and population for your research project. The research proposal, then, will be an overview of the research you have conducted to date, with a rationale that explains the importance of this issue to the health status of this particular population, as well as its relevance to a particular objective of *Healthy People 2020*. While you obviously will discover much new information about your topic as you continue to work on your project after you have submitted your proposal, and your thoughts about it will continue to evolve, your proposal is a substantial piece of research, thinking and writing; it is not something to be done at the last minute. Be sure to give yourself sufficient time to conduct a significant amount of research in order to find a health issue and target population that interest you sufficiently to work on for the rest of the semester.

Your proposal should contain all of the following elements, but you can combine any of them into the same paragraph as you see fit: 1) A *description* of your health issue and target population; 2) an *explanation* of your preliminary focus for your research project—i.e., the 3 health determinants, 3 risk factors, and health status measure about which you think you will be writing, a brief justification of each, and an explanation of their relevance to a particular objective of *Healthy People 2020*; 3) a brief *statement* about the significance of that issue and population; 4) support for that preliminary focus and statement of significance from a) *numerical data* from at least two government/university websites, one of which must be *Healthy People 2020*, and b) a brief *literature review* of 6-8 scholarly sources that broadly summarizes the major health-related research on that issue and population in terms of the health determinants, risk factors, and health status measure that you will be using. The literature review should be the largest part of your proposal, as it demonstrates your knowledge of the topic and your ability to synthesize multiple sources; and 5) A *references* page, which should include the websites and scholarly sources used in your proposal.

The final version of your research proposal should be approximately 3-4 double spaced pages, excluding the references page. Prior to submitting the final version, you will submit a first version of it; this first version will count as a Journal grade, and you will receive feedback on it

from me and from your small group partners. *The final version of the research proposal will be worth 5% of your overall grade.*

Literature Review. A literature review is an in-depth description of the scholarly research conducted to date on how the health issue that you are researching affects your target population, primarily in terms of the health determinants and risk factors but also in terms of the health status measure. Conducting a review of the scholarly literature is key to the provision of evidence-based healthcare, to the development of evidence-based healthcare policy, and to conducting scientific research. Therefore, we will spend time working with the library databases and on how to read and write about scholarly articles. This scholarly research also will inform the development of your numerical analysis paper and of your interview questions.

The *Methods* section of the literature review will include a discussion of the databases you used, the search terms you used, and any additional ways in which you found scholarly materials. The *Results* and *Discussion* sections will be combined and formatted differently than in the other papers; instead of using those major headings, you will use the following major headings: *Health Determinants*, with a subheading for each determinant; *Risk Factors*, with a subheading for each risk factor (if you wish, you can begin with *Risk Factors* and follow with *Health Determinants*); *Health Status Measure*; *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research*; *Conclusion*.

The final version of your literature review should contain a minimum of 18 scholarly sources and should be 10-12 pages long, excluding the references page. Prior to submitting the final version of it, you will submit two required versions, on which you will receive feedback from me and from your small group partners, although I am happy to review additional versions (or parts of versions) as well. Your first version will build directly upon the final version of your research proposal, and should have 8-10 scholarly sources; it will count as a Journal grade. Your intermediate version should have 13-15 scholarly sources; *it will be graded with a letter grade, and will be worth 5% of your overall grade. The final version of the literature review will be worth 20% of your overall grade.* I will discuss the criteria by which I will grade each version, but as a version is, by definition, a work in process, the criteria will be different than those by which I will grade your final product. *Therefore, the grade on a version and on the final product do not necessarily bear a relationship to each other.*

Numerical Analysis Paper. Local, state and federal government agencies collect multiple forms of data to inform the provision of healthcare services and to assist in the development of healthcare policy. This data is published on both government and university websites, and is sometimes linked to on websites of organizations that are focused on the eradication or control of a particular disease or health issue (for example, the American Cancer Society). Therefore, you will spend time examining databases and websites to find data relevant to your research topic and then will write a paper which will include as many of the following tables as possible: 1) one or more table(s) of rates (incidence/prevalence, which is required, and any other that are appropriate to your health issue, e.g., morbidity, mortality, hospitalization), 2) a table for each health determinant, 3) a table for each health determinant and risk factor (again, if you wish you can begin with your risk factors and follow with your health determinants), and 4) a table for your health status measure. Whenever possible, each table should present local (i.e., Suffolk

County), state (i.e., New York State) and national data. These tables can be copied in their entirety from government and university websites or you can copy just the relevant part; you can also create your own tables by combining data from different websites. All sources of data should be cited.

The *Methods* section of the numerical analysis paper will discuss in detail which websites and databases you examined, where and how you found relevant numerical data, problems you encountered finding data, and any additional information about your data collection process. The *Results* section will present each table, with an appropriate citation under each one; following each table you will report the data in it before presenting the next table. The *Discussion* section will consist of two subsections, each with the appropriate subheading: 1) *within table analysis*, in which you analyze trends and relationships you see in the results of each table, and 2) *across table analysis*, in which you look at the relationships between rates, health determinants, risk factors and your health status measure across local, state and national levels, as well as how the data you have analyzed for this paper compares and contrasts to that in the scholarly literature. For example, you may notice a significant difference between mortality rates at the local and national level, a difference that could possibly be explained by differences in one or more of the health determinants; you may also find a research study that addresses regional differences. The point of this analysis is to discover trends and relationships. You will not be expected to do statistical analysis nor will you be expected to research the causes of any of those trends or relationships. You will end the paper with *limitations and suggestions for further research* and a *conclusion*, both of which will come at the end of the *across table analysis*.

You must use a minimum of five websites for this paper, three of which must be: 1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) general website, 2) CDC, *Health, United States, 2016*, and 3) *Healthy People 2020*. Using data from the NYS Department of Health “New York State County Health Indicator Profiles” or, if those are not useful to you, other statistical data from the NYS Department of Health website, is strongly encouraged but not required. Other good websites to examine are: 1) The US Census Bureau, 2) American Community Survey, 3) CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, 4) CDC, Weekly Morbidity and Mortality Reports, 5) University of Wisconsin County Health Rankings, 6) National Institutes of Health, 7) Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 8) Health Indicators Warehouse, and 9) uptodate (accessed through the Melville Library databases). There are numerous other avenues for finding useful and appropriate numerical data—e.g., websites of private organizations involved with your health issue, scholarly articles, other governmental entities. Part of the challenge of this paper is to find appropriate numerical data and to present it in a way that is readable and useful to your audience.

Prior to submitting the final version of this paper, you will submit a first version of it, which will count as a Journal grade, on which you will receive feedback from me and from your small group partners. *The final version of the numerical analysis paper will be worth 10% of your overall grade.*

Interviews. As part of your research, you will utilize information you have gathered from your literature review to design an evidence-based questionnaire, containing 12-15 questions, not counting any necessary demographic and/or screening questions, which aims to find out how

members of your target population are affected by the health determinants, risk factors, and health status measure that you are researching for your health issue. You will then interview 5 individuals from your target population who are affected by that health issue to gather information about their experiences with the determinants, risk factors and health status measure. This information will provide you with the invaluable personal perspective often lacking from the scholarly literature and numerical data; while you will use the scholarly literature to assist you with designing your questions, health ultimately involves real people. *Do not wait until all of your questions are finalized to start finding and scheduling interview participants, as this process can take some time.*

To assist you, we will have a workshop on effective questionnaire design. Prior to submitting the final version of your interview questions, you will submit a first version of them, with a 2-3 sentence evidence-based rationale for each one, on which you will receive feedback from me and from your small group partners; this will count as a Journal grade. Both the first and final version should include a list of your risk factors and health determinants, as well as your health status measure. The final version will not include the rationales from the first version, but you should include a rationale if you do not have at least one question for a particular risk factor or health determinant, or for your health status measure. *The final version of the questionnaire will be worth 5% of your overall grade.*

Prior to the questionnaire design workshop, you must pass the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) on-line research ethics education training on the protection of human subjects, which can be accessed at <https://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp>. There are two separate modules to complete; after you pass each one, a certificate of completion automatically will be generated for you in .pdf format. You can email me the two certificates prior to the workshop on questionnaire design, or you can print them and bring them to class no later than the workshop. If you do so, you will receive an A for completing and passing the training; if you do not do so, you will receive a 0. If you do not complete and pass this training, you cannot conduct the interviews; you therefore will not be able to write the interview paper, for which you consequently will receive a 0, nor will you be able to include interview data in your semester project, which will negatively impact your grade on that paper as well. *The CITI training will be worth 5% of your overall grade.*

You must register the first time you access the CITI training, but once you have registered you will have your own username and password, and can sign in multiple times to complete it at your own pace. Please follow these steps to complete the registration process:

- Click on “Register,” in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
- Step 1, “Select Your Organization Affiliation.” Type “Stony Brook,” and “SUNY—University at Stony Brook” will appear in the drop-down menu as you type. Click on that. Then click on “Continue to Step 2.”
- Step 2, “Personal Information.” Fill out all required fields, **using your stonybrook.edu email address as your primary email address**. You can use a different email address as the optional secondary email address. Then click on “Continue to Step 3.”

- Step 3, “Create your Username and Password.” Fill out all required fields, then click on “Continue to Step 4.”
- Step 4, “Gender, Ethnicity, and Race.” Fill out all required fields, then click on “Continue to Step 5.”
- Step 5, “Are you interested in the option of receiving Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credit for completed CITI Program courses?” Click No, then click on “Continue to Step 6.”
- Step 6, “Please provide the following information requested by SUNY - University at Stony Brook.” There are several required fields. For “Department,” put your major. For “What is your role in research?,” select “Student Researcher—Undergraduate” on the pulldown menu. For “Office Phone,” use my office phone: 2-7398. Provide your SOLAR ID#. Then click on “Continue to Step 7.”
- Step 7, “There Are Currently 6 Courses Available to you,” check BOTH “I want to complete an RCR Course at this time” AND “I want to complete the course in Lab Animal Welfare or the course in the Protection of Human Subjects.” Then click on “Next.”
- At the next screen, “Please indicate below if you want to take a basic course or a refresher.” Select “Basic Course.” Then click on “Next.”
- At the next screen, “Choose the course in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) that most closely relates to your discipline and/or research interests,” check EITHER “The Biomedical Sciences Course in the RCR” OR “The Social and Behavioral Sciences Course in the RCR,” depending on your health issue. Then click on “Next.”
- At the next screen, “Do you conduct studies with Laboratory Animals or with Human Subjects?,” check “Yes.” Then click on “Next.”
- At the next screen, “The Course in Human Subjects Protections,” select “NO, Although I DO conduct human subjects research, I have not completed the review of the Policies and Procedures document.” You must first review the “SBU Policies and Procedures” before you can proceed any further. Click on the “SBU Policies and Procedures” link and a new tab will automatically open. Please read the following policies and procedures especially carefully: “1. Human Research Protection Program (HRPP)” ; “2. Institutional Review Boards” ; “5. Obtaining Informed Consent from Research Subjects” ; “6. Vulnerable Subjects in Research” ; and “8. Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others.” When you have finished reading, return to the original tab and click on “Next.”
- At the next screen, “Yes, I have finished reviewing the SBU Policies and Procedures,” check “Yes, I have NOW completed the review of the SBU Policies and Procedures.”

Now I want to enroll in the appropriate human subjects protections training course.” Then click on “Next.”

- At the next screen, “Is this your first time undergoing human subjects training at Stony Brook University?,” depending on your health issue, click EITHER “Yes, this is the first time. I conduct Social or Behavioral human subjects research (e.g., Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, Social Welfare, etc.) and I work directly with human subjects (recruiting, consenting, procedures)” OR click “Yes, this is the first time. I conduct Biomedical human subjects research and I work directly with human subjects (recruiting, consenting, procedures) AND I do FDA regulated research (drugs, medical devices, biologics).” Then click on “Next.”

Interview Paper. After you have conducted all of your interviews, you will submit a paper in which you examine the data from each interview, analyze trends and differences in the data across interviews, compare/contrast interview data to scholarly and numerical data, and discuss what you have learned about designing a questionnaire and about interview techniques. The *Methods* section of this paper will discuss how you designed the questionnaire, how you made contact with the people whom you interviewed, problems and successes you had finding members of your target population, how you interviewed them (e.g., in person, via email, etc.), and any additional information necessary for your readers to understand your data collection process. The *Results* section should begin with a brief, general, deidentified overview of your participants. Then you will present each survey question, including the answer options for that question; following each question will be the response from each participant, and following that will be a *brief* report of all the responses to that question. The *Discussion* section will analyze the results across answers, both within and between participants, in order to examine trends and influences of risk factors and health determinants to the participants; you will also compare/contrast the interview results with the results of the literature review and of the numerical analysis, and make some preliminary hypotheses as to the causes of any similarities and/or differences. The section will end with *limitations and suggestions for further research* and a *conclusion*.

Prior to submitting the final version for this paper, you will submit a first version of it, which will count as a Journal grade, on which you will receive feedback from me and from your small group partners. The *Methods* section of the first version should not only include information on the interviews you have already conducted but should also discuss what you still need to do to conduct the remaining interviews. For both the first and final version of this paper, all personal identifying information from each participant must be removed. We will discuss this process in more detail. *The final version of the interview paper will be worth 10% of your overall grade.*

Semester Project Versions. After completing the above assignments, you will utilize all of the information you have gathered to complete your semester project. *The semester project will require no new research.* You will submit one required version of this project prior to submitting the final version of it, although I am happy to review additional versions (or parts of versions) as well. The project should be structured as follows: 1) the *Introduction* that you have been working on all semester for all three papers, 2) the *Methods*, with subheadings for each of

your three papers, 3) the *Results*, with subheadings for *risk factors* and *health determinants*, subsubheadings for each individual risk factor and health determinant, and subsubsubheadings within each risk factor and health determinant for each of the three forms of data, followed by a subheading for your *health status measure*, 4) the *Discussion*, with two subheadings: *within data analysis* and *across data analysis*. The *within data analysis* subsection will be formatted exactly the same way as the *Results* section; within each form of data for each risk factor and health determinant, you will analyze the results you reported in that section. The *across data analysis* subsection will be formatted differently; you will have headings for *risk factors* and *health determinants*, and subheadings for each individual risk factor and health determinant, but there will be no subsubheadings within each risk factor and health determinant for each of the three forms of data. Instead, within each risk factor and health determinant subsection, you will put the three forms of data that you have gathered into conversation with each other: For example, how do they reinforce each other and why do you think that is? How do they contradict each other and why do you think that is? What gaps exist in the data? Finally, you will have two additional sections: 1) *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research*, in which you discuss the limitations of your own research process, the limitations you have found in the published materials to date, and areas that you consequently think should be researched further, and 2) *Conclusion*, in which you pull together the research and analysis you have conducted in order to make larger statements about the current state of the field.

The first version of the semester project should be a full draft of the entire paper. The *Introduction*, *Methods* and *Results* will be copied from your previous papers, and some of the material from the *within data analysis* section of the *Discussion* will be copied from those papers as well. Most of the material from the *across data analysis* section of the *Discussion* will be new, and the material in *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research* and *Conclusion* will be both old and new. Therefore, for grading purposes on the first version, I will check the *Introduction*, *Methods* and *Results* sections to make sure that they are complete and formatted correctly, but I will provide little, if any, feedback on them, as I will assume that you have simply copied the material from the final version of each of your three papers, for which you have already received extensive feedback from me and from your small group partners. Instead, I will focus primarily on the *Discussion*, *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research*, and *Conclusion*, as these sections will contain most of the new material. *The first version of your semester project will be graded, and will be worth 5% of your overall grade.* I will discuss the criteria by which I will grade this version, as a version is, by definition, a work in process, not the final product.

For the final version of the semester project, make sure that you edit, copyedit and proofread every section of your paper based upon your own critical eye and your growth as a writer, as well as the feedback you receive from me and from your small group partners over the entire semester. *The final version of the semester project will be worth 25% of your overall grade.*

Reflection Paper. At the beginning of the semester, you will submit a brief (approximately 2 pages) narrative-based reflection paper in which you discuss what field of healthcare you want to pursue, why you want to pursue it, and how you see writing and research fitting into that field and into your career plans; in other words, this is a personal paper in which

you discuss your experience to date with the healthcare field that you think you want to enter, as well as with writing and researching in it. At the end of the semester, you will submit a 3-4 page paper in which you expand upon your original ideas, discuss your growth as a healthcare writer and researcher over the course of the semester, discuss what you have learned about healthcare and the role of writing and communication in it, and discuss how spending an intensive period of time focused on a particular health issue and target population has affected your perception of what it means for you to be a healthcare professional in the field that you want to enter, whether as a practitioner or a researcher or both. This paper, then, requires no research; it is a personal narrative of your experiences inside and outside the class and your reflection on them, but it should be detailed and convincing; if you intend to apply to a health-related graduate program, this paper can serve as a first version of your personal statement. *The first version of the reflection paper will count as a Journal grade and the final version will be worth a replacement 5% of your overall grade—that is, I will replace the lowest 5% of your grade with your grade for the reflection paper, assuming that that grade is higher.*

Journals. During the semester you will be assigned a number of low-stakes writing assignments that will enable you to practice the types of writing that you will have to do for the higher-stakes assignments described above. Collectively, these low-stakes assignments will be known as the “Journal”; some Journal assignments are on the syllabus and others will be assigned in class. Like all other writing assignments, Journal assignments are due at the beginning of class, and must be typed and double-spaced. If you are absent for any reason other than for a religious holiday or a University-sanctioned event, you are still responsible for any Journal due that day; please email it to me as an attachment or share it with me on Google Drive timestamped no later than the *beginning* of class or it will be considered late and will not be accepted. If you will be absent for a religious holiday or a University-sanctioned event, please let me know ahead of time so that we can make appropriate arrangements. Sometimes I will assign in class for the next class period a Journal that is not on the syllabus; therefore, if you are absent for any reason find out either from me or from one of your classmates if that has occurred, as you will be responsible for submitting that assignment on time.

Journal assignments will be graded check-plus, check, check-minus and check-minus-minus. A check-plus corresponds to an A, a check to a B, a check-minus to a C and a check-minus-minus to a D. You will receive a 0 for any Journal assignment that is not turned in, that is late, that is handwritten or that is single-spaced. Your final Journal grade will be based 25% on the number of assignments completed (completed all = A; missing 1 = B; missing 2 = C; missing 3 = D; missing 4 or more = F) and 75% on your Journal grades. You will have a grace of two Journal assignments—that is, I will eliminate your two lowest Journal grades and will then compute your semester Journal grade based upon the remaining Journal assignments. *The Journal will be worth 10% of your overall grade.*

Grading. Final versions of all assignments (other than Journals) are graded with letter grades (i.e., A - F), with a zero given for any assignment not submitted. We will discuss the grading criteria for each assignment, and I will write comments to help you improve your writing and to explain your grade. If you do not understand my comments or your grade, or if you disagree with them, you are always welcome to talk with me. At the end of the semester, I will take the letter grade that you have received on each assignment, convert it to its GPA equivalent

(e.g., A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, etc.), and calculate your final letter grade for the course with each assignment weighted as follows:

- Final version of research proposal: 5%.
- Completion and passing of CITI training: 5%.
- Intermediate version of literature review: 5%.
- Final version of literature review: 20%.
- Final version of numerical analysis paper: 10%.
- Final version of questionnaire: 5%.
- Final version of interview paper: 10%.
- First version of semester project: 5%.
- Final version of semester project: 25%.
- Journals: 10%
- Final version of reflection paper: replacement 5%.

Assignment Formatting and Due Dates. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced, with standard 1” margins and 12 point font; if you are submitting more than one page, please staple the pages together. Please type your name, the course name and number, and my name at the top of the left margin on the first page of all assignments; if you are handing in any version of a paper, please give it a title, which should be centered after the course information and above the first paragraph. *Double space everything, with no extra spaces between any paragraphs.* Put your last name and the page number on the upper right-hand corner of every page for every assignment. Proofread carefully, as the physical appearance of your essay gives the reader a first impression of you, and is therefore part of your credibility as someone whose argument has validity.

While I do not expect any problems with following these guidelines and due dates, please let me know as soon as possible if you are having any so that we can devise a workable solution, as failure to follow the above may result in your grade for any assignment being lowered by at least one minus. Please also be aware that all assignments—whether any version of any paper or a Journal—are due at the beginning of class. Otherwise, your assignment will be considered late; if it is graded, your grade may be lowered by at least one minus (for a paper) or you will receive a zero (for a Journal), and if it is ungraded, I will make a notation in my grade book, which can affect your semester grade. The grade for any paper not handed in by the end of class, whether a graded version or a final version, will be lowered by one full letter for each day late; please note that this means a 24-hour day, not each class day. Therefore, if you print your assignments on a public printer, please leave yourself sufficient time to do so and to get to class on time. The only exception to this policy is if you will be absent for a religious holiday or a University-sanctioned event, in which case we will make alternative arrangements.

Attendance. As WRT 305 is a workshop class, attendance is necessary and required; there are no excused absences, except for religious holidays or a University-sanctioned event. If you will miss a class for either of the above two reasons, please let me know ahead of time so that we can make appropriate arrangements. If you have more than four (4) unexcused absences you will fail the course. As with any class, you are responsible for any assignments due or given on days you miss.

Lateness. Please make every effort to be on time; it is disruptive if you come in late and you will miss crucial parts of the day's lesson. If you are not in your seat when class begins, you will be marked late. Any combination of two latenesses and/or early departures will count as one absence. If you are more than 15 minutes late, or leave more than 15 minutes early, that will count as an absence (unless excused). If you do not bring your materials or syllabus to any class, you will receive a warning; if you do that a second time, that will count as a lateness, as will each subsequent time that occurs.

Names and Pronouns: Stony Brook University affirms all gender identities and expressions. If you go by a name other than that on the class roster, and/or if you would like to be addressed with a specific pronoun, please inform me. It is the Office of the Registrar's policy that a student may set a preferred name through SOLAR to appear on the roster of all their classes. For instructions on how to do so, and for more information on the University's preferred name policy, go to <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/policies/namepolicy.html>. For further assistance with issues regarding name and pronoun usage, please contact Stony Brook LGBTQ\* Services at (631) 632-2941 or [lgbtqservices@stonybrook.edu](mailto:lgbtqservices@stonybrook.edu). Their website is <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/lgbtq/>.

The Writing Center. The Writing Center offers free, confidential, one-on-one tutoring on weekdays in Humanities 2009 to writers at all levels of competency. Standing weekly tutoring appointments are available. Writing Center tutors will not edit your work for you, but they can help you to generate and develop ideas, to organize your writing, and to learn how to find and to correct your own sentence errors. When visiting the Writing Center, please bring this syllabus, the relevant writing assignment, and all corresponding readings, notes and drafts, and ask your tutor to email me a report of your session. Plan ahead, as availability can be scarce, especially at the end of the semester. The Writing Center's phone number is (631) 632-7405 and its website can be accessed at <https://www.stonybrook.edu/writingcenter/>.

Blackboard. I have set up a page for us on Blackboard where I will post articles and handouts, leave messages for you, and where we can continue our discussions. *Any assigned reading on Blackboard must be printed out and brought to class; failure to do so will result in you being marked late for that class.* Please check Blackboard every night before class. I will post by 10:00pm the night before class any last-minute changes to the syllabus or something important that I expect us to discuss the next day. If I do make a change and you come to class unprepared, that will count against you: either as a 0 for a Journal assignment, or as a lateness, or both, depending on the type of change I have made. *Please note: If you change your email address, contact DoIT so that they can make that change on Blackboard; otherwise, you will not receive emails that I send out and your work (and your grade) may suffer unnecessarily.*

Electronic Communication: Email, and especially email sent via Blackboard, is one of the ways I will officially communicate with you for this course. It is SBU policy that all emails from me will be sent to your official University account. It is your responsibility to make sure that you read your email in it, *otherwise you will not receive emails that I send out and your work (and your grade) may suffer unnecessarily.* You may verify your official Electronic Post

Office (EPO) address at: <http://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/checking-or-changing-your-mail-forwarding-address-in-the-epo>.

If you choose to forward your official University email to an off-campus account, I am not responsible for any undeliverable messages to it, but you will be responsible for any missed assignments, changes to the syllabus or any other information. You can set up email forwarding using these DoIT-provided instructions found at: <http://it.stonybrook.edu/help/kb/setting-up-mail-forwarding-in-google-mail>.

Student Technology Services: DoIT provides academic technology support to all students. If you require assistance with Blackboard or other academic technologies, please contact DoIT at: [helpme@stonybrook.edu](mailto:helpme@stonybrook.edu); Phone: 631.632.9602; Chat: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/helpme>; or visit a SINC Site.

Students who need assistance with their personal devices can contact DoIT's service desk at: 631.632.9800; submit an online request; or visit the Walk In Center on the 5th floor of the Melville Library (West Campus), Room S-5410. For more information, visit: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/students>.

Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Student Accessibility Support Center (SASC), ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. For more information, please go to the Student Accessibility Support Center website at <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/index.shtml>.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity. Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at [https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic\\_integrity/index.html](https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html).

Critical Incident Management: Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of University Community Standards any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. Further information about most academic matters can be found in the Undergraduate Bulletin, the Undergraduate Class Schedule, and the Faculty-Employee Handbook.

Cell Phones and Laptops. Cell phones and smart phones must be turned off or muted, and put away during class. If I see your phone during class, I will ask you to put it away until class is over; I will mark you late the second time that happens and absent for a third and any subsequent occurrence, and I may ask you to leave the class for that day. If it rings because you forgot to turn it off or to mute it, you must quickly silence it and apologize to the class. You will receive a warning the first time this happens, I will mark you late the second time this happens and absent for a third and any subsequent occurrence, and I may ask you to leave class for that day. *However, if you are having a family emergency and need to check your phone if it vibrates, please let me know prior to class.*

Similarly, laptops, while not encouraged except for a SASC-documented need, are to be used only for coursework: note-taking, writing, researching, peer critiquing. They are not to be used for social media or surfing the web. If I see that you are doing so, you will receive a warning the first time this happens and the second time this happens I will mark you late; for a third and any subsequent occurrence, I will mark you absent and may ask you to leave class for that day and may prohibit you from using a laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.

Appointments/Seeking Help. My office hours are for you. You do not need to make an appointment but can come in at any time during them to go over material or comments of mine that you do not understand, to work through parts of essays, or to wrestle with ideas. I will be happy to assist anyone who seeks help. Students who do so improve significantly in their ability to write clearly and effectively, and learn much more than do students who stay home and sulk. If you cannot make my office hours, let me know and I will try to set up another time to meet.

### Syllabus

Aug 27 M Introduction to class; review syllabus.

- 29 W Go to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Healthy People 2020* (<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/default.aspx>) and explore the website. For your Journal, answer the following questions *in your own words*: 1) What is *Healthy People 2020*? 2) What is health status? 3) What is a health determinant? 4) What is a health disparity? 5) How is the data for the website gathered? 6) Under “Topics and Objectives,” pick a topic area to explore. What kinds of data are included in that topic area and how are the data organized? What did you learn when exploring that topic? 7) Pick a specific objective in that topic area; what statistical data do you find and what strikes you about those data? Then, on a separate sheet of paper, and as a separate Journal entry, write a one-page response in which you discuss what you think of the website, the information on it, its usefulness, and any reactions you have while exploring it.

Sep 3 M Labor Day. No class.

- 5 W Go to the website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/>) and explore the website. For your Journal, answer the following questions *in your own words*: 1) What types of information are on the

website? 2) How do you see this information reflecting the CDC's mission? 3) Compare the CDC's definition of health determinants to that of *Healthy People 2020*; what do you see as similar and as different? 4) In general, how does the information on this website differ from that on the *Healthy People* website? Then, on a separate sheet of paper, and as a separate Journal entry, compare/contrast the coverage of a disease/condition for which there is information on both websites (i.e., under "Diseases & Conditions" on the CDC website and under "Topics and Objectives" on the *Healthy People* website). What do you find out when you do that? *Initial reflection paper due.*

- 10 M NYS Department of Health, "Map of County Health Indicators by Race/Ethnicity" (<http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/community/minority/county/>). For your Journal, click on 3 different counties on this map (Suffolk County, a county in the New York City metropolitan area, and an upstate county [i.e., north of Rockland and Putnam Counties]), pick a health indicator that interests you from within one of the health indicator *categories* (i.e., the rows with a purple background) and analyze the data for it in paragraph format across those three counties. You will do this by writing one paragraph per county that reports the data, and then at least one additional paragraph comparing the summaries and drawing conclusions from them, for a minimum of 4 paragraphs. Then go to the CDC website; on a separate sheet of paper, as a separate Journal entry, compare/contrast national figures for that health indicator to each of those county figures; be sure to cite precisely where on the CDC website you get your data. What similarities and/or differences do you find? Why do you think they exist?
- 12 W Library session. Meet in library, Lab B, Central Reading Room.
- 14 F *Due by 11:59pm, either as an email attachment in Word or shared on Google Drive in Google Docs format, a minimum of one page about your potential semester project topic: What it is, what you know about it, why you want to do it, why it matters. Please cite your sources in either AMA or APA format, depending on your topic.*
- 17 M From Blackboard, print out and read the student model research proposal and bring it to class prepared to discuss.
- 19 W *First version of research proposal due.* Bring in a copy to be submitted to me and a copy for each of your small group partners. Peer critiquing workshop. *Literature review handout to be distributed.*
- 24 M From Blackboard, print out and read Pettit, M.L., & Neinhaus, A.R., "The Current Scope of Health Disparities in the U.S.: A Review of Literature." For your Journal, use the literature review handout as a guide to write an analysis of the structure of the article. Be sure to answer the following question: Why do you think the authors created the particular headings that they created? *In-class workshop.*

- 26 W In-class workshop on research proposals. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320.
- Oct 1 M Presentation on questionnaire design. *CITI training must be completed by this date, with certificates of completion provided to me no later than the beginning of class. Final version of research proposal due. Bring in a copy to be submitted to me and a copy for each of your small group partners.*
- 3 W From Blackboard, print out and read the student model literature review and come to class prepared to discuss. *Critiques on small group partners' research proposals due.* In-class workshop.
- 8 M Fall Break. No class.
- 10 W *First version of literature review due.* Bring in one copy to be submitted to me and a copy for each of your small group partners. Peer critiquing workshop.
- 15 M *First version of interview questions due, with a 2-3 sentence rationale for each one.* Bring in one copy to be submitted to me and a copy for each of your small group partners. As a separate Journal assignment, discuss your outreach plan for finding and contacting members of your target population to be interviewed. In-class workshop.
- 17 W Using 2 different government and/or university health-related websites, including, but not limited to, the ones we have studied in class, find 2 tables (1 from each website) that contain health data about the same type of rate (e.g., incidence, prevalence, mortality, hospitalization) related to your target population and health issue. For your Journal, present the data in the following format: 1) Table 1; 2) one paragraph reporting the data in Table 1; 3) Table 2; 4) one paragraph reporting the data in Table 2; and 5) at least one paragraph comparing/contrasting the data in the two tables and drawing conclusions. Then find a table of information about a health determinant or risk factor for your target population and health issue; as a separate Journal entry, report the data in the table in the same way as you did the data in the other tables and then write a minimum of one paragraph discussing how the data about that health determinant or risk factor could affect the data in those other two tables, as well as the conclusions you have drawn from them. All sources of data should be cited. In-class workshop on numerical analysis paper.
- 22 M From Blackboard, read the student model numerical analysis paper and come to class prepared to discuss. In-class workshop. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320. *Final interview questions due.*
- 24 W From Blackboard, read the student model interview paper and come to class prepared to discuss. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320.
- 29 M *Intermediate version of literature review due.* Bring in one copy to be submitted to me and a copy for each of your small group partners. Peer critiquing workshop.

- 31 W *First version of numerical analysis paper due.* Bring in one copy to be submitted to me and a copy for each of your small group partners. Peer critiquing workshop.
- Nov 5 M *First version of interview paper due.* Bring in one copy to be submitted to me and a copy for each of your small group partners. Peer critiquing workshop.
- 7 W In-class workshop. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320.
- 12 M In-class workshop. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320.
- 14 W In-class workshop. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320. *Final version of literature review due.*
- 19 M In-class workshop. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320. *Final version of numerical analysis paper due.*
- 21 W Thanksgiving. No class.
- 26 M From Blackboard, read the student model semester project and come to class prepared to discuss. In-class workshop on semester project. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320. *Final version of interview paper due.*
- 28 W In-class workshop on semester project. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320.
- Dec 3 M In-class workshop on semester project. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320.
- 5 W In-class workshop on semester project. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320. *First draft of semester project due via email or Google Drive by 11:59pm.*
- 10 M In-class workshop. Meet in SINC Site, Harriman 320. *Reflection paper due. Final version of semester project due TBA.*