

**San José State University**  
Justice Studies  
FS 100W  
**Forensic Science Writing Workshop**  
Fall 2022

**Course and Contact Information**

Instructor:	Samantha Peek
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Canvas Website	<a href="https://sjsu.instructure.com/">https://sjsu.instructure.com/</a>
Office Hours:	Tuesdays 11:00AM-1:00PM, <a href="#">Zoom Appointments Only</a> email or chat to schedule appointment
Class Days/Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays – 3:00PM-4:15PM
Classroom:	Dudley Moorhead Hall 347
Prerequisites:	FS 11, GE Area 3, WST, upper division standing, FS or JS declared major.
<b>JS &amp; FS Library Liaison</b>	Nyle Monday <a href="mailto:nyle.monday@sjsu.edu">nyle.monday@sjsu.edu</a>
<b>FS LibGuide</b>	<a href="http://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=230074&amp;p=1526987">http://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=230074&amp;p=1526987</a>

**Course Description**

Effective written communication skills are vital to success in any career, and are particularly important to the criminal justice professional. This is an integrated writing and research course designed to develop advanced communication skills, both written and oral, with emphasis on laboratory and crime scene report writing, and court testimony. A scholarly paper, written in APA format and informed by research, is also required. Students must earn a grade of “C” or better to pass this course. Satisfies SJSU Studies Area Z. Declared major: FS or JS. Note: Must be passed with C or better to satisfy GWAR.

**General Education Learning Objectives (GELO), Area Z**

**GELO1:** Students shall be able to produce discipline-specific written work that demonstrates upper-division proficiency in:

- language use
- grammar
- clarity of expression

**GELO2:** Students shall be able to explain, analyze, develop, and criticize ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse

**GELO3:** Students shall be able to organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences

**GELO4:** Students shall be able to organize and develop essays and documents according to appropriate editorial and citation standards

**GELO5:** Students shall be able to locate, organize, and synthesize information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose, and to communicate that purpose in writing

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

**CLO1** : Students will demonstrate the essential steps in the writing process (pre-writing, organizing, composing, revising, and editing). They will demonstrate their ability to (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) ideas effectively by offering peer reviews.

**CLO2** : Students will write papers that use correct grammar (syntax, mechanics, and citation of sources) at a college level of sophistication. They will write papers that demonstrate their proficiency in writing for different audiences (both specialized and general).

**CLO3** : Students will express (explain, analyze, develop, and criticize) their ideas effectively, including ideas encountered in multiple readings and expressed in different forms of discourse.

**CLO4** : Students will organize and develop essays and documents for both professional and general audiences, including appropriate editorial standards for citing primary and secondary sources.

## Required Texts/Readings

- Gilpin, A. A. & Patchet-Golubev, P. (2000). *A guide to writing in the sciences*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Strunk, W. I. (1999). *The Elements of Style* (4th ed.). Pearson.
- Feder, H. A. & Houck, M. M. (2008). *Succeeding as an expert witness*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- NIJ Legal Guide for the Forensic Expert
- Links to additional readings will be posted on the Canvas class website. It is the student's responsibility to check the website frequently for new postings, and download and print documents as needed for class.

## Other Readings

- APA Tutorial: <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>
- Owl at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- APA Manual, 6<sup>th</sup> edition

## Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Report writing exercises (25%): Students will write scientific/lab reports and crime scene reports that use appropriate terminology and style, are clear and free from mechanical error, and that meet the standards of the profession. (CLO1)
2. Mock court and expert testimony (25%): Students will analyze rules of testimony, develop critical questions for cross examination, and participate in mock court exercises. (CLO2,3)
3. Research paper (25%): Students will write a research paper in APA format on a forensic science topic. (CLO4,5)
4. Exams/quizzes (25%): There will be one quiz for each major component of the course (crime scene reports, lab reports, court testimony, and research/APA). (CLO1-5)

## Grading Scale for All Assignments

A plus	97-100
A	94-96.9
A minus	90-93.9
B plus	87-89.9
B	84-86.9
B minus	80-83.9
C plus	77-79.9
C	74-76.9
C minus	70-73.9
D plus	67-69.9
D	64-66.9
D minus	60-63.9
F	<60

*All assignments are graded based on adherence to directions, thoroughness, thoughtfulness, effort, accuracy, clarity, and logic.*

### Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities may be available throughout the semester and will be used to augment the final grade up to 3%.

- Attend a workshop or private tutoring session at the Writing Center (126 Clark Hall) and provide proof of attendance.

### Class Policies

- No cell phones in class: Turn them off and put them away. If you must use your phone during class, please step outside of the room to do it.
- Plagiarized work and/or cheating on assessments will result in a 0 grade on the assignment, and the incident will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.
- Late work will be marked down 10% one week after it is late. Assignments will be marked down 20% each week after the first week.
- Make-ups for exams will generally not be possible unless extraordinary, documented circumstances exist.
- Handle personal business before you begin an exam. A student who leaves the classroom *for any reason* during an exam will be presumed finished with the exam.

### ACCESS Success Center

The Academic Counseling Center for Excellence in the Social Sciences (ACCESS) provides General Education advising for undergraduate students majoring or intending to major in any of the departments in the College of Social Sciences (CoSS). ACCESS Academic Advisors are committed to helping you develop a clear path to graduation and supporting your academic success. Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM and Friday 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. You can schedule an appointment and find more information at [sjsu.edu/access](https://sjsu.edu/access).

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>"

## FS 100W Forensic Science Writing Workshop Fall 2019 Course Schedule

*Schedule is subject to change.*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines	Homework and Assignments
1	1/25	Introductions, class overview Research paper assignment overview Types, purpose, audience, sections, style of forensic reports	Review docs on Canvas Start thinking about research topic
2	1/30 2/1	Crime report types (face pages, continuation pages, etc.), Note-taking and observations Report writing rules: first person, past tense, active voice, Facts, opinions, inferences Report writing rules	Research topic and research question  Extra credit: Grammar worksheets
3	2/6  2/8	Content and format of evidence lists, scene descriptions, and narrative summaries Practical exercises  Review research topic and research questions	Submit tentative research topics and questions
4	2/13 2/15	Practical exercises  Quiz #1	Extra credit: Grammar worksheets.
5	2/20 2/22	Science, protocols & methodology, notes Admissibility of scientific evidence (case law: <i>Frye, Daubert, Kumho Tire</i> )	Read GWS Ch 1 Read "Confirmation Bias in Forensic Science"

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>	<b>Homework and Assignments</b>
6	2/27  3/1	Ethical issues: Certainty, uncertainty competency, bias, selective reporting, error objectivity vs. subjectivity  Practical exercises	Read “Minimizing Contextual Bias in Forensic Casework” Quiz #2  Finalize research topic and research question
7	3/6  3/8	Court players, processes, and terminology  Types of witnesses, Federal Rules of Evidence	Feder & Houck readings  FRE 701-706
8	3/13  3/15	Subpoenas, pre-trial and evidentiary meetings and hearings, preparing court exhibits  Court room demeanor, credibility and competence, direct and cross examinations, do’s and don’t of testifying	Feder & Houck readings Read “Defense Challenge to Fingerprints”  Canvas: Locate videos of forensic science expert and crime scene testimony
9	3/20  3/22	Critique forensic testimony: overconfidence (Michael West) and uncertainty, misspeaking, weighting evidence, truthfulness and perjury	Feder & Houck readings Prepare defense questions
10	3/27  3/29	Spring Break – No Class	
11	4/1  4/5	Mock court exercise: Student presentations  Quiz #3	Feder & Houck readings
12	4/10  4/12	Role and purpose of research in forensic science, APA format Annotated bibliography Thesis statements	Read GWS Ch 2 & 3 Read “Importance of Research Culture in FS” Locate and read articles on your research topic: Complete CRAAP sheets and annotated bibliography)
13	4/17  4/19	Thesis statement workshop  Writing a literature review Writing and introduction and conclusion	Refine thesis statement Complete first draft of lit review

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>	<b>Homework and Assignments</b>
14	4/24 4/26	Thesis Statement Workshop Lit Review Workshop	Complete first draft (intro, thesis, lit review, conclusion) in APA format
15	5/1 5/3	APA Quiz Introductions and conclusions workshop Peer review exercise (first draft)	Complete abstract
16	5/8 5/10 5/15	Individual meetings Individual Meetings Final Paper Due	Complete Final Essay