

Department: HDFS

Course No.: 4007W [293W]

Title: Professional Communication in Human Development and Family Studies

Credits: 3

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WQ: W

Catalog Copy: 293W. Professional Communication in Human Development and Family Studies. Either semester. Three credits. Prerequisite: HDFS 205W and an additional 12 credits completed in 200-level HDFS courses. Open only to HDFS majors.

Development of advanced written and oral communication skills required for professional careers and graduate studies. Emphasis is placed on appropriate presentation and writing styles for the diverse audiences and purposes encountered in research and practice.

Course Information: After completing this course student will:

- Have developed skills in professional communication both written and oral.
- Recognize the various needs and appropriate presentation and writing styles for diverse audiences, including marginalized and/or oppressed groups.
- Demonstrate effective communication in oral presentations, written assignments, group settings, and through email.

Course Requirements:

- Email Assignments – 5%
- Professional Paper Assignments and Revisions – described below – 50%
- Oral Presentations and Supporting Materials – 15%
- Career Guidance and Application Paper Assignments – 10%
- In Class Participation and Peer Reviews – 10%
- Professional Portfolio – 10%

Topic Outline: The following is a tentative list of topics to be discussed during the semester. The order and specific content of these will be established later this year by appropriate faculty members as well as by the specific instructor of the course.

- Review of writing styles in field of HDFS

- Writing and presenting to diverse audiences
- Professional correspondence – email, letters, memos
- Newsletter articles
- Informational web pages
- Pamphlets and informational handouts
- Observational reports
- Research Summaries
- Poster presentations at professional conferences
- Oral presentations
- Use of overheads, AV aids
- Multimedia presentations
- Handouts
- Advocacy efforts
- Letters to editor
- Testifying before state and federal committees
- Career and Employment
- Resumes and Cover letters
- Curriculum Vitae
- Graduate school statements and applications
- Development of a professional portfolio (this effort will be coordinated with the University's e-Portfolio efforts for students)

W Criteria: Writing assignments for the course focus on helping students develop skills in some of the types of professional writing that are related to work or continued study in the field of Human Development and Family Studies. In this capacity students will be asked to complete the assignments listed below. Dates for first drafts and for final drafts will be listed on the course schedule. Details concerning each assignment will be handed out in class. All papers/assignments must be handed in on time. Guidelines for professional writing are presented in the Szuchman (APA format) book. In preparing assignments students are to focus on format, grammar, and professional appearance, as well as content. All papers are to be proofread very carefully; and students will be informed to not depend on a

computer spell check program to do their final proofreading. In order to pass the class each of the writing assignments must be completed with a passing grade. Points will be deducted for late papers. All returned papers are to be kept by the students until after they have turned in their professional portfolio and received a final grade for the course.

Professional Paper Assignments and Revisions

Letters Students will be asked to write several letters over the course of the semester. (3-4 pages, combined)

Newsletter article Students will identify a topic in their chosen area of study. They will then be required to write an article for a newsletter that is aimed at their target population. The information presented in their article must be carefully researched and written in a language and manner appropriate to their audience. (3-6 pages)

Pamphlet Students will identify a specific issue of interest to them. They will be asked to develop a resource (brochure, guide sheet, informational handout) on that topic for a lay audience. In Part I of this paper they will: describe their target audience, explain why they chose this topic and this specific population, and explain what needs of this target population their resource would address. (2-3 pages). In Part II of this paper they will create a resource using an attractive layout and language appropriate to their audience. The information presented in this resource should be carefully researched and accurate but written simply and clearly. (2-4 pages depending on format)

Informational web page Students will take the subject matter from their pamphlet and turn it into an informational web page. The web resource must include links and pages consisting of: overview of topic, list of suggestions or applications based on research information, explanation/definitions of appropriate terms/concepts, additional resources and links that would be helpful to their target audience, references used in creating the web pages, and other appropriate information. The information presented on these web pages must be carefully researched and accurate but written simply and clearly. The pages must also use an attractive layout and language appropriate to their audience. (Anticipated 5-10 pages of information, not including references)

Observational report Students will write an observational report from their experiences observing an individual, dyad, or family in a public setting. Exact content of this assignment will be created after consultation with IRB and other appropriate university officials (3-4 pages)

Advocacy letter Students will write either a letter to the editor or a letter to a representative on an issue of their choosing (1 page)

Presentations and Supporting Materials

Oral presentation at a conference or workshop Students will prepare a short 20-minute informational presentation designed for an audience of their choice. They will give the presentations in their discussion sections. They must submit a list of references used in creating their presentation and a short statement of the Purpose and Goals of their presentation to the instructor. (2 pages – not including reference list)

Supporting materials for presentation Students must create a handout for their intended audience that is appropriately written for the target population of their presentation. Students must also create either overheads or other AV materials to use in their presentation. (Handout 2-8 pages, overheads not included in this count)

Poster Presentation Students must use the information from their oral presentations to create a poster presentation that would be appropriate for a conference or informational display. These will be displayed during a poster presentation session at the end of the semester. (Poster should contain 4-6 pages of information in large print.)

Career Guidance and Application Paper Assignments

Career Goals and Interests Paper Students will prepare a short paper describing the desired position or graduate study they plan to seek upon graduation. In the paper they will be asked to describe their goals for such a position/program of study, to list the reasons why they are interested in this type of job or area of study, and to briefly describe their personal strengths and weaknesses related to their chosen career/academic focus. (3-4 pages)

Cover letter and resume/Vita and application statement for graduate school Students will have a choice either to complete a resume and cover letter for two specific jobs to which they would be interested in applying, or to complete a cover letter and graduate application statement for two graduate programs. They must specifically tailor each letter/statement to fit with the job description or degree program. (3-8 pages)

Professional Portfolio : At the end of the semester, all students must submit a portfolio (exact form of this will be determined at a later date, would like to coordinate this final assignment with the e-portfolio available to UConn students). This will include revised and clean copies of all course assignments.

The faculty coordinator will provide detailed guidelines for each writing assignment. Students will write at least two drafts of each written assignment. The Graduate Teaching Assistants will review the first draft. Some papers also will be reviewed by other students, with a focus on helping them develop editing skills. The Teaching Assistants also will provide detailed feedback on the final draft, and students will be encouraged to use feedback from earlier papers to prepare future papers. A book on Writing APA style will be assigned to help students learn the writing skills relevant to their future careers. In addition, *The Elements of Style* will be used as a guide to help students improve the overall tone and clarity of their writing. Students will be encouraged to visit the Writing Center as needed. At the end of the semester, all students will be required to submit a professional portfolio with revised versions of all assignments from the course.

Role of Grad Students: The class will involve one hour of lecture each week with the faculty member and two hours a week in a discussion section of 19 with the TA. Graduate Teaching Assistants will attend the main lecture, hold office hours to talk with students, and meet with students for two hours each week in discussion sections of 19 students each. Each assistant will be required to complete the training for “W” course TAs that will be offered through the Writing Center. They also will be required to

complete the training programs for TAs offered through the Institute for Teaching and Learning. TAs for this class will be advanced graduate students whose writing has been evaluated by the faculty.

Writing assignments will be discussed in the discussion sections. Graduate students will be supervised by the faculty member in charge of the main lecture and will meet regularly with that faculty member to discuss the course and the students. Teaching Assistants will be mentored regarding how to edit and grade student papers/assignments. The instructor will provide guidelines for editing and grading papers, including a grading rubric and specific instructions for evaluating student writing. For each assignment the instructor will hold a meeting with all TAs. In this meeting everyone will edit and grade the same papers and then compare editing comments and evaluations.