Brandeis University
The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Syllabus: Professional Writing (193HS 240B-1) Fall, 2019
For Students in:
Master of Arts in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence (COEX)
Master of Arts in Sustainable International Development (SID)

Class Time: 12:30pm-1:50pm in Schneider Building, Room 163

Instructor: Professor Naomi Blumberg David, MPH
Email: nblumberg@brandeis.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00pm – 2:00pm
Room: G47 (next to computer lab)

Teaching Assistant (TA): Abdishakur Ahmed
Email: abdishakur@brandeis.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30pm-1:30pm
Room: TBD

University Notices
1. If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please inform the professor immediately.

2. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty are subject to possible judicial action. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. If you have any questions about these expectations, please ask.

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher or your roommate – without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

Acknowledgements Professor Naomi Blumberg David would like to extend a special thank you to Professor Joan Dassin for her generous input and suggested resources for this syllabus.

Course Information
This course is designed to support first year students in the COEX and SID programs in reaching the Heller School’s core competency in professional writing.

This is a full-semester, 2-credit course. The instructor may alter the curriculum as needed.
Students will develop their professional writing skills by working with a variety of formats used in the field of international development including essays, case statements, effective office communications, grant proposals and job search writing.

Regular writing assignments and utilization of online resources will allow students to strengthen these basic writing skills. The course uses hands-on exercises to improve students’ fluency and confidence in their writing ability. This will be achieved by building skills in critical reading and analysis, learning about structure and organization, and practice using tools conduct literature reviews, find and evaluate sources and editing your own work.

All required readings are posted on LATTE, available online and/or have been placed on reserve at the Brandeis Library. Assignments may be adjusted during the semester at the instructor’s discretion based on the class needs. Students will be advised of any changes in advance.

Course Requirements
1. Attendance at all sessions; prompt arrival.
2. Participation in class discussions and small group work.
3. Timely submission of all assignments.
4. Preparation of all readings.
5. Submission of final writing assessment.
6. Contributing to a classroom environment that welcomes and demonstrates respect for the diversity of classmates’ backgrounds, perspectives, opinions, questions and abilities.

Student grades will be calculated as follows:
Attendance, class participation and in-class exercises: 45%
Written assignments: 45%
Final writing assessment: 10%

Grading criteria for the writing assignments will include:
❖ Clarity and concision
❖ Demonstrated critical thinking and analysis
❖ Structure and organization
❖ Evidence to support your main arguments
❖ Spelling, grammar, sentence structure and paragraphs
❖ Proper use of citations

Final Core Competency Writing Assessment
On December 6, 2019 you will be assessed for your Core Competency in Professional Writing at the Heller School. This assessment will constitute 10% of your grade.

Assignment Submissions
All writing assignments must be posted on LATTE by the date and time noted in this syllabus. Please bring hard copies with you to class and be prepared to discuss your work. The instructor will make every effort to return assignments within a timely manner. Points will be deducted for late submissions at the instructor’s discretion.
Assignment Format
✓ Assignments must be well formatted with minimal spelling or grammar errors.
✓ Each assignment must include the following information at the top left of Page 1:
  a) student’s name, b) name and number of assignment, and c) submission date
✓ Font: Times New Roman, 12-point font
✓ Title: Centered at the top of the paper
✓ Spacing: 1.5
✓ Margins: 1 inch on each side

Texts and Online Resources for the Course:


The Purdue OWL Online Writing Lab. Retrieved from: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)


Harvard University Writing Center. Retrieved from: [https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/](https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/)

Important Brandeis Resources for Professional Writing students:
1. Heller Librarians: Maric Kramer and Aimee Slater are the designated Heller Librarians. They will hold regular office hours at Heller two times per week to provide support. These are drop-in sessions that are held in G-50, the Heller Alumni Lounge.
   - Maric Kramer email: maric@brandeis.edu / Tel: 781-736-4667
     Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2:00pm Heller Room G50
   - Aimee Slater email: aslater@brandeis.edu / Tel: 781-736-4673
     Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-2pm Heller Room G50

2. Additional library resources for writing and research support include:
   - [Schedule a Research Appointment](https://i.library.brandeis.edu/schedule-appointment) online through the library calendar system.
   - Library Chat function (‘Bubble Chat’)
   - Drop-in support is available Mondays-Fridays, 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the library’s main information desk.
   - Inter-library loan service (free).

3. Brandeis Writing Center: Room 232, Goldfarb Library
   The Writing Center offers writing support services to graduate students working on seminar papers, essays, applications, business writing and ESL concerns. Individual consultation services are collaborative and client-centered, focusing on focus on individual writing needs. Tutors
provide feedback to help students develop their writing projects and address issues ranging from style and grammar to nuanced argument and citation concerns. Sessions are 45 minutes; extended sessions are available if needed to work on longer papers and projects. Appointments can be made online. Hours: Mon-Fri 10:30am-6:00pm and 6:00-9:00pm. For questions please contact: writingcenter@brandeis.edu / www.bradieis.edu/programs/writing/writingcenter/

4. Brandeis English Language Program (ELP)
ELP will be offering support services for English Language Learners during the Fall semester. This is a free, consultant-led drop-in service for Heller students. Services will focus on improving your skills in a range of areas such as: Grammar, Sentence Structure, Critical Thinking, Analytic Writing, Writing Conference Abstracts and Pronunciation.

Dates, Times and Room TBD.

4. Academic Integrity Online Workshop

5. Food Security Resources for Brandeis Graduate Students:
➢ Brandeis Food Pantry; Warner Farms Community Supported Agriculture (CSA); Free Food Notifications; Community Resources.

Brandeis IT Help Desk: Email: help@brandeis.edu or Call 781-736-4357 (HELP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION #1 Introduction to Professional Writing (August 30, 2019)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session #1 Topics:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Topic 1: Review syllabus, course learning objectives, course requirements.</td>
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<td>➢ Topic 2: Class introductions: “What’s your story?”</td>
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<td>➢ Topic 3: What is professional writing and why does it matter?</td>
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<td>➢ Topic 4: Class Discussion 1) What is the most frequent kind of poor writing you read in your professional work? 2) What are your biggest writing challenges? 3) What areas of writing do you want to improve?</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Topic 5: “What’s Your Story?” The Personal Narrative. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuCUgD3Si-M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuCUgD3Si-M</a> Mins: (0:00 to 7:46)</td>
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<td>➢ Topic 6: Preview of Writing Assignment #1 (Personal Narrative)</td>
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**Assignment #1: ‘Personal Narrative’**
People become more effective agents for positive change when they understand their own motivations for engaging in the work of the community, the work of service, the work of politics and the work of leadership.

The purpose of this assignment is to help you in this exploration by writing a personal narrative. In a maximum of 2-pages, your essay should present clear connections between why you have chosen to pursue your work/studies, and the events in your life that have led you to this decision.

✓ Note: You may not submit your Brandeis application essay for this assignment.

Following are illustrative questions to help guide your writing:
1. What was the social justice issue that motivated you to choose your current path?
2. What were your experiences that led to this decision?
3. What experiences have you had in being a change agent?
5. How do you hope to continue your work in this area after your studies at Heller?

➢ DUE DATE: Assignment #1 must be posted on LATTE by Thurs. September 5th Close of Business (COB).

Session #1 Required Reading
2. Understanding Writing Assignments: Copyright ©1995-2017 by The Writing Lab & The OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. [Link to article]

SESSION #2 The Writing Process (September 6)
Session #2 Topics

➢ Topic 1: Symptoms and cures for writer’s block
➢ Topic 2: Understanding the writing assignment (with in-class exercise)
➢ Topic 3: The Writing Task Resource List
➢ Topic 4: Jump-starting the writing process
➢ Topic 5: Quiz: Avoiding Plagiarism
➢ Topic 6: Preview of Writing Assignment #2

Assignment #2: Understanding and Planning your writing assignment
Select an important writing assignment from one of your other courses. Using what you have learned, describe your understanding of the assignment and develop a plan for how you will complete your work. Your plan should:

a. Include a description (your understanding) of what is required in the assignment. This should be broken down by component.

b. Include a calendar of tasks and due dates that will lead you to complete the assignment by its due date.

➢ DUE DATE: Assignment #2 must be posted on LATTE by Thurs. September 12 COB

Session #2 Required Reading:
1. Walden University: Academic Skills Center (ASC) Success Strategies: Reading Retention and Comprehension. [Link to article]

2. Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*: Pages 15-33. Please also familiarize yourself with the Glossary (pages 89-95) for future reference.

SESSION #3 Increasing Reading Retention and Comprehension (Sept. 13)
Session #3 Topics

➢ Topic 1: Active reading strategies
➢ Topic 2: Surveying and Questioning
➢ Topic 3: Summarizing
➢ Topic 4: Preview of Writing Assignment #4 Active Reading
Assignment #3 Active Reading
• Select an article you need to read for another class. Based on what you have learned, ‘survey’ (pre-read) the article. This should include scanning the title, abstract, section headings, visuals and references. Note what stands out for you during your survey.
• Develop your active reading questions based on your survey.
• Briefly, answer the questions you have developed (1-page maximum) for your article.
Example: For a research article your questions may include:
  ➢ Why was this article written and what was the main thesis being explored?
  ➢ What were the results of the study, and how was it conducted?
  ➢ Why is this topic important?
Example: For a reading with two topics:
  o How does topic A relate to topic B?
Example: For a reading that is in a sequence of other readings:
  ➢ If I understand that X is true from other sources I have read, how does this new information support, contradict, or complicate that understanding?
• What are the key take-aways from the article?

Questions adapted from: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/ASCsuccess/ASCreadingretention

DUE DATE: Assignment #3 must be posted on LATTE by Thurs. Sept. 19 COB

Session #3 Required Reading:
1. Hacker & Sommers, Outlines (pages C: 14-16; A: 76, 78 and 87; 443
2. Graff & Birkenstein, They Say/I Say Chap. 2 Her Point Is-The Art of Summarizing pp.28-38.
4. Hacker & Sommers, Pages 16-21, 80-87, 91-116

SESSION #4 Tools & Skill for Finding Resources (September 20, 2019)
This is the 1st of 3 library sessions led by Heller Librarian Marie Kramer

Session #4 Topics
➢ Topic 1: Introduction to library resources
➢ Topic 2: Finding sources (popular sources, scholarly literature, gray literature, etc.)
➢ Topic 3: Gathering evidence

Assignment #4 Finding Sources:
• Chose a research paper you are working on for another class. Using what you have learned, search for a range of 8-10 relevant sources needed for your research.
• Prepare a properly cited list of these sources
• Draft a paragraph describing your experience finding these sources.
➢ DUE DATE: Assignment #4 must be posted on LATTE by Thurs. Sept. 26 COB
SESSION #5 Writing Academic Essays (September 27)

Session #5 Topics:
➢ Topic 1: Types of essays: Argumentative, Descriptive, Narrative
➢ Topic 2: Organizing your social science research paper: Paragraph Development
➢ Topic 3: Paragraphs and Topic Sentences
➢ Topic 4: Thesis statements
➢ Topic 5: Essay Structure: introduction, body and strong conclusions
➢ Topic 6: Using visuals to support and amplify your message
➢ Topic 7: Preventing, contextualizing and avoiding plagiarism (video)
   https://owl.excelsior.edu/plagiarism/plagiarism-how-to-avoid-it/

Assignment #5 Essay Writing
On the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2018, Secretary General António Guterres quoted a statement by former Secretary General Kofi Annan: “The human family will not enjoy development without security, will not enjoy security without development, and will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.”


In a 5-paragraph essay, explain why you agree or disagree with this statement. Use examples to support your position.

DUE DATE: Assignment #5 must be posted on LATTE by Thurs. October 3 COB

Action Required: In preparation for Session #6, download Zotero onto your computer. Consult ITS if you require assistance. This software is free for students.

Session #5 Required Reading:
1. Please read material on Templates and Transitional Devices. (See postings on LATTE page)

2. Please review the following online OWL resources on Avoiding Plagiarism:
   ➢ Overview:
      https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/index.html

   ➢ Is it plagiarism?
      https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/is_it_plagiarism.html

   ➢ How to avoid plagiarism Open Polytechnic

3. Hacker & Sommers, Pages 16-21, 80-87, 91-116

SESSION #6 Introduction to Zotero and Citations (October 4)

This is the 2nd of 3 library sessions led by Heller Librarian Maric Kramer

This class will be held in the Heller Computer Lab

Session #6 Topics
➢ Topic 1: Introduction to Zotero (workshop)
➢ Topic 2: Mastering citations

Session #6 Required Reading
1. Content Areas for Case Statements
2. Case Statement template

Assignment #6: Zotero Practice
Please complete the Zotero practice worksheet that will be distributed by Maric Kramer.
DUE DATE: Assignment #6 must be posted on LATTE by Thurs. COB October 10

Office Hours will be held Thursday October 10th from 12-2pm in G47. (No classes on Oct. 9)

SESSION #7 Developing Case Statements (October 11)

Session #7 Topics:
➢ Topic 1: What is the purpose of a Case Statement?
➢ Topic 2: Case Statement components
➢ Topic 3: Developing compelling arguments

Assignment #7 Case Statement: Creation of a new program on forcibly displaced people at Heller
There are 70.8 million forcibly displaced people in the world. Together, they would form the world’s 20th most populous country in the world. Of these, 41.3 million are internally displaced, persons, 25.9 million are refugees and 3.5 million are seeking asylum.1 Individuals, families and communities who have been forcibly displaced face a set of highly complex challenges. Their needs are both urgent and long-term.

Using what you have learned about Case Statements and developing persuasive arguments, write a Case Statement advocating for or against the creation of a new program at Heller focused on Forced Migration. (Maximum 2 pages)

DUE DATE: Assignment #7 must be posted on LATTE by Thurs. COB October 17

Required Reading Session #7

SESSION #8 Effective Office Communications (October 18)

**Session #8 Topics:**
- Topic 1: How to write a professional email
- Topic 2: Email ‘etiquette’
- Topic 3: Elements and Format of a Professional Memo
- Topic 4: Discussion of Food and Housing Insecurity article; preview of Assignment #8.

**Assignment #8: Memo on Food and Housing Insecurity in Higher Education**
You are a top advisor to the Dean of Student Affairs at your university. Write a 1-page memo the Dean outlining food and housing insecurity concerns among students, and your proposed strategy for addressing this issue on campus.

- **DUE DATE:** Assignment #8 must be posted on Latte by Thurs. October 24 COB

**Session #8 Required Readings:**


SESSION #9 Evaluating Sources and Literature Review (October 25)
This is the 3rd of 3 library sessions led by Heller Librarian Marie Kramer

**Session #9 Topics**
- Topic 1: Evaluating Sources
- Topic 2: Elements of a Literature Review

**Session #9 Required Reading:**
1. Sample Proposal Excerpt will be provided by the guest speaker scheduled for Session #10
2. OWL Purdue: Introduction to Grant Writing. Retrieved from: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/981/1/


No written assignments for Session #9

SESSION #10 Proposals and Grants (November 1)

This session will be taught by a guest lecturer: Ms. Bea Bezmalinovic

Session #10 Topics:
- Topic 1: Interpreting an RFA/RFP (What does the donor want?)
- Topic 2: Your organization’s strategic advantage and partnering
- Topic 3: Components of a proposal
- Topic 4: Strategic Frameworks
- Topic 5: Developing a technical approach
- Topic 6: Partnering, Workplans and Organizational Charts

Session #10 Required Reading:

Assignment #9 Grant Writing
1. Complete the free online webinar and online course on introductions to grant writing, sponsored by The Foundation Center and available at: http://grantspace.org/training/courses/introduction-to-proposal-writing

Prepare a brief summary (2-3 paragraphs) about what you have learned.
- **DUE DATE:** Assignment # 9 must be posted on Latte by Thurs. November 14 COB

NO CLASS ON FRIDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2019
(No Office Hours Wed. November 6, 2019)

SESSION #11 Job Search Writing #1 CVs (November 15)

Session #11 Topics
- Topic 1: Developing your Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Topic 2: Developing your Personal Statement

Assignment #10 CV
Update your CV using what you have learned from the readings and class discussion on Job Search Writing. (maximum 2 pages)
- **DUE DATE:** Assignment #10 must be posted on Latte by Thurs. November 21 COB
SESSION #12 Job Search Writing Cover Letters (November 22)

Session #12 Topics
- Topic 1: Networking correspondence
- Topic 2: Assessing job postings
- Topic 3: Developing tailored cover letters and CV to specific job applications

Session #12 Required Reading:
1. UNC Chapel Hill Cover Letter Guide. Retrieved from:
   http://career.uncc.edu/sites/career.uncc.edu/files/media/cover-letter-guide.pdf

Assignment #11 Cover Letter
Using what you have learned about job search writing, write a 1-page cover letter for a position you would be interested in applying for. Please include a copy of the position description in the same document with your cover letter.

- **DUE DATE:** Assignment #11 must be posted on Latte by Thurs. December 5 COB

REMINDER: NO CLASS ON THURS NOVEMBER 28
HAPPY THANKSGIVING

SESSION #13 Final Writing Assessment (December 6)
Students will be assessed on their core competency in Professional Writing at the Heller School. This assessment will be held during the regular class on December 6, 2019. Students will be given an article ahead of time and will be asked to write an essay answering one of three questions.