

Syllabus Addendum

Grading Standards for All Written Assignments

Psychology is a Social Science, and therefore the writing for this class will primarily involve exercise(s) in technical writing, as would be the case in any Science class. A grade in the C-range is considered to be an Average grade, with a grade in the B-range being considered as Above Average, and a grade in the A-range being considered as Excellent.

Content

The point total for a written assignment is based on content.

Complete, Essential Information

First and foremost, an assignment in technical writing for a science class needs to present all of the essential information on a subject. If an assignment is missing essential information, then point(s) will be lost.

Correct, Accurate Information

The information in technical writing assignments must be correct and accurate. If incorrect/inaccurate information is included in an assignment, then point(s) will be lost.

Specific word usage errors, such as incorrect uses of technical terms, relating to the actual content of the assignment, can lead to the loss of additional points.

Concise, Non-Repetitive Information

Technical writing assignments need to present information efficiently. It is not desirable to be overly elaborate or to attempt to present information in a highly creative fashion. Generally, information should be stated once, and not repeated. Although this will only be one (1) point in the actual grading process, it is still a good idea to pay attention to this factor.

Insurance Points

Insurance Points are small possible rewards earned by students demonstrating quantifiable forms of effort, that can be used to improve a student's grade on an assignment. Insurance Points can never be used to improve a student's grade above the maximum number of base points possible on that assignment, and total Insurance Points may never exceed 10% of the maximum number of base points possible on that assignment. Insurance Points can only be used on the specific assignment where they were earned, and will not carry over to other assignments.

Form

Language Usage

Grammar, Spelling/Typos, Basic Word Usage. Although having correct grammar, spelling/typographical accuracy, and correct basic word usage will not be requirements in this class, students who have one (1) or fewer errors in each of these areas on an assignment can earn one (1) possible insurance point for each area per assignment for doing so.

Formatting. All written assignments for this class must be fully typewritten, including the student's name and the basic course information (course name & number), must be submitted online as email attachments using the BC student email system, rather than other email addresses or Canvas, and need to be submitted in some form of file format that can be opened directly by MS Word (.doc and .docx files work the best); file formats that require the document to first be saved to a computer, before being opened, create additional computer security risks and will not be accepted.

The Writing Lab has excellent PDF files on tips for the use of punctuation and MS Word:
<http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/161/2014/09/punctuationmarks2.pdf>
<http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/161/2014/09/howtocorrectrun-ons.pdf>
<http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/161/2014/09/mswordtipsandtricks.pdf>

APA Formatting. The American Psychological Association created a set of formatting guidelines for written documents in psychology. The following web sites do an effective job of describing APA formatting:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

The following PDF file on APA formatting can also be found through the Bellevue College Writing Lab:

<http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/161/2014/11/apa2010styleessay.pdf>

Although these formatting guidelines will not be a requirement in this class, students who use all five (5) formatting guidelines and tips described below can earn one possible (1) insurance point per assignment for doing so.

- Set Paper Size to US Letter (8.5" x 11"), and set Page Margins at 1" on all four edges of your written assignments.

- Use the Times New Roman Font in 12 Point Font Size, in your written assignments.

- Paragraphs should be indented .5" on the first line. It is better to set the First Line Indent Marker at .5" for all of your paragraphs (rather than using the tab key or space bar to artificially create the indent on each paragraph).

- **Deviation from APA Formatting.** Normally, APA format requires double-spacing of content; this is mostly to create space for instructors to write comments between lines. Since I will be grading within the context of your word processed documents, double-spacing is unnecessary, and I am asking that you single-space the content of your assignments, with no added space(s) between lines or paragraphs.

- **Formatting Tip.** If you wish to move to an actual new page, please use the Insert Page Break command (rather than repeatedly pressing the return key).

Works Cited Page

If an assignment requires a Works Cited Page, students who use the formatting guidelines for the Works Cited Page described above and on the APA formatting websites listed above can earn one possible (1) insurance point per assignment for doing so.

The following PDF file on APA formatting for Works Cited can also be found through the Bellevue College Writing Lab:

<http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/161/2014/09/apaworkscitedpage.pdf>

Title Page

If an assignment requires a Title Page, students who use the formatting guidelines for the Title Page described above and on the APA formatting websites listed above can earn one possible (1) insurance point per assignment for doing so.

Note: This document, up to this point, generally follows correct APA formatting.

A Baker's Dozen of Tips for Writing Papers in Psychology Classes

1. Use the Spellchecker and Grammar Checker programs within your word processing program.
2. On the View options for your word processing program, set the document to Print Layout and turn on the Ruler; this allows you to see much of the formatting.
3. Have your paper proofread by someone proficient in the use of the English language, e.g., someone who routinely gets A's in English courses.
4. Read your paper out loud to yourself, and also to another person, preferably someone proficient in the use of the English language. This allows you to hear how it sounds, which often allows you to catch errors of grammar or logic.
5. Minimize your use of the word "that", which is probably one of the most overused words in the written form of the English language. The simple rule for "that" is, if leaving it out does not change the actual meaning of the sentence, then it should be left out.
6. Write something one time, rather than being repetitive; you can always refer to something you have written earlier in the paper.
7. Quote your sources explicitly, meaning use quotation marks or .5" indenting on the entire quote, and specifically cite the name and date of your source, otherwise it is plagiarism.
The Writing Lab has an excellent PDF file on the subject of plagiarism:
<http://s.bellevuecollege.edu/wp/sites/161/2014/09/avoidingplagiarism.pdf>
8. Use legitimate scientific references, preferably from within the last ten years, unless writing a paper specifically dealing with a historically-based topic.
9. If you choose to use personal experiences as examples, be sure to compare and contrast your personal experiences with what has been scientifically shown to be "average."
10. If you choose to make an assertion or claim, provide scientifically gathered information in support of your assertion or claim.
11. If you choose to take a position, then explain, in detail, the logic of the position you are taking, and provide scientifically gathered information in support of your position. Writing a position paper is often extremely challenging to achieve in psychology.
12. Remember, things in psychology rarely, if ever, always occur in only one way, and rarely, if ever, have single causes.
13. If you choose to talk about anyone you know in a writing assignment, even a family member, remember to maintain confidentiality, changing his/her name and any other identifying information.

Possible solutions, if Writing is a problem for you, as a student:

Writing Lab

The Writing Lab can often provide brief assistance with specific technical problems with various aspects of writing.

Tutoring Center

The Tutoring Center may be able to provide referral to individuals who can provide more extensive assistance with writing, in general, and sometimes with writing in relation to specific subject matter areas, such as psychology.

Counseling Center

For students who experience problems with "writer's block", anxiety relating to writing exercises, tendency towards procrastination, and/or other issues of a more personal nature that might be affecting their writing, the staff at the Counseling Center can often be of considerable assistance in addressing such problems.