



**JINDAL SCHOOL OF
LANGUAGES & LITERATURE**
India's Global School of Language & Literature Studies



Course Code/ **On Academic Writing: Theories, Practice, & Strategies**
Jindal School of Languages and Literature, Fall 2026

Course Information:

Programme and Cross Elective Course

Course Duration: 15 weeks

Credits: 4

Location: TBA

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Dr. Niyati Sharma

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Course Description:

The course will introduce students to a range of reading and writing techniques oriented towards improving academic writing skills. To this end, the course attempts to break down and demystify the conventions of academic writing that are often not explicitly stated. The course will familiarise students with different genres of academic writing and train them to attentively identify the differences between these genres. Further, through a close reading of academic works (and other non-academic writings), students will be encouraged to think more deeply about the structural/logical coherence and the rhythmic movement of their own writing. The course will also train students to identify a range of rhetorical and argumentative strategies commonly used by academic writers. Broadly, the course will train students to understand the essentials of effective writing, the basics of research and argumentation skills, and editing and revision techniques.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) To learn to write clear and elegant academic prose and construct sophisticated academic arguments
- 2) To understand the conventions that inform different genres of academic writing
- 3) To identify argumentative strategies used by academic writers to improve one's own writing
- 4) To learn techniques to structure one's essays/longer pieces of writing

Indicative list of readings:

Helen Sword. *Stylish Academic Writing*. Harvard University Press, 2012.

Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. W.W. Norton and Company, 2010.

(The rest of the readings are mentioned in the weekly schedule)

Grading Scheme:

Continuous Assessment:

- Short descriptive essay (based on a visual prompt) (10 marks)
- Short compare and contrast essay (20 marks)
- Identifying/building/critiquing an argument in-class test (in-class exam) (20 marks)
- Identifying rhetorical strategies in academic writing (20)
- Research paper (30 marks)

Note: A set of academic/theoretical readings will be provided to the students. These will act as the foundational texts through which students will be encouraged to reflect on and improve their reading and writing skills. Please note that the readings mentioned below (both theoretical and practice-oriented readings) are tentative suggestions at this stage.

Readings to accompany practice-oriented readings:

- Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird* (1994)
- Binyavanga Wainaina's 'How to Write about Africa' (2019)
- Brian Dillon's *Suppose A Sentence* (2020)
- Selections from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978)
- Ali Behdad. 'Orientalism after 'Orientalism.' *L'Esprit Créateur*, vol. 34, no. 2, 1994, pp. 3–11.
- James Clifford, 'On Orientalism,' *The Predicament of Culture*. Harvard University Press, 1988, pp. 255-276

Schedule

Detailed Schedule:

- Week 1: How to Write? (Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird*)
- Week 2: Understanding Genres of Academic Writing (journal articles, monographs, book chapters etc.)
- Week 3: Basics of Descriptive Writing (Kirin Narayan's *Alive in the Writing*; short story by Anton Chekhov)
- Week 4: Binyavanga Wainaina's How to Write about Africa/Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'The Danger of a Single Story'
- Week 5: Identifying/Constructing Arguments (Gregory S. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Wayne C. Booth's *The Craft of Research*; Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*)
- Week 6: The Big and the Small Picture: The Sentence and the Paragraph (Stanley Fish's *How to Write a Sentence*; Excerpts from Brian Dillon's *Suppose A Sentence*)
- Week 7: From the Abstract to the Concrete (George Orwell's 'Politics and the English Language')
- Week 8: Moving beyond the Five Paragraph Essay (Rethinking the Introduction, Body, and Conclusion paradigm; Zadie Smith 'The Art of the Impersonal Essay')

Week 9: In-Class Test

Week 10: Edward Said's *Orientalism*

Week 11: Edward Said's *Orientalism*

Week 12: Ali Behdad, 'Orientalism after 'Orientalism' & James Clifford, 'On Orientalism,' in *The Predicament of Culture*

Week 13: The Art of Editing (tips on effective revision; how to reverse outline; Gerald Gross, Ed. *Editors on Editing: What Writers need to Know about What Editors Do*)

Week 14: Compiling the Research Paper

Week 15: Compiling the Research Paper

Prerequisites: None

Academic Integrity**Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism in any form is strictly prohibited across assessments. Academic writing and thinking involve being in conversation with others' works and thus any words and ideas borrowed from others should be properly cited. Direct quotations and even paraphrasing of ideas should be given due credit. Similarly, the use of AI while producing written or presentation related work will not be deemed acceptable.

Participation/Attendance Policy

Students are strongly encouraged to attend most of the classes. Assessment dates will be announced in advance and students are expected to adhere to the schedule of assessments. In keeping with the discussion led-pedagogical model of the classroom, students are expected to do the reading in advance.

Use of phone/ texting/ laptop

While laptops are permitted in the classroom, students are expected to engage with the technology primarily to facilitate classroom learning.