

## Writing 20: Academic Writing on Ocean Acidification Fall 2011 Course Syllabus

Time and Location: MW 8:30-9:45 Art 116 (Sec. 12)  
MW 1:15-2:30 White 106 (Sec. 13)  
MW 2:50-4:05 White 106 (Sec. 14)

Instructor: Dr. Sandra L. Cooke  
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Office hours: Mon/Tues 10-11 and by appointment  
<http://www.duke.edu/~sc153>

Course Blog: [http://sites.duke.edu/writing20\\_12\\_f2011/](http://sites.duke.edu/writing20_12_f2011/)

The blog will serve as the organizational hub for our course. The day-to-day schedule, assignments and announcements, and blog can be found under the "Schedule," "Announcements & Assignments," and "Home" tabs, respectively. Check this site frequently for updates (but don't worry – I'll also notify you of updates in class). Please consider the final due dates of the major projects to be firm.

### Required Texts and Poster Fee

- *Ocean Acidification: A National Strategy to Meet the Challenges of a Changing Ocean.* National Academy Press, 2010. This book can be purchased in the Duke bookstore or downloaded free:  
<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12904.html>
- Other texts will be provided on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.duke.edu>), e-mailed, or distributed in class.
- A poster printing fee of ~\$15-20 will be required later in the semester.

### Purpose of Writing 20

Welcome to Writing 20! Why are all Duke undergraduate students required to take Academic Writing? Writing 20 offers you a foundation for and introduction to the rigorous analysis and argument that will be asked of you as you pursue academic study at Duke. Writing 20 courses are designed and taught by scholars trained in disciplines across the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, but all sections share an emphasis on writing as a social process and a commitment to helping students generate effective academic arguments. To these ends, all Writing 20 courses are structured around a common set of "Goals and Practices", which are detailed below.

### Course Goals and Practices

In this course we will learn to communicate the science, policy, and societal implications of ocean acidification through writing that informs, provides new insights, and raises important questions. Sometimes referred to as "the other carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) problem," **ocean acidification** is the process by which excessive amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> – mainly produced by fossil fuel burning – dissolve into the world's oceans and acidify the water. This change in ocean chemistry can directly harm corals, mollusks (e.g., oysters), and other organisms that build shells or skeletons. Although the direct and indirect effects of ocean acidification are complex and uncertain, a rapidly growing body of scientific research suggests that these changes may impact fisheries, ecotourism, and other socioeconomic sectors on which many people depend. Addressing such a critical (and in some cases, controversial) issue requires clear, accurate communication among scientists, governments, other stakeholders (e.g., commercial fishermen), and the public. Beyond communicating what others have already said, however, ocean

acidification also provides an exciting opportunity to add our own analyses and viewpoints to important and emerging scholarly conversations.

To these ends, our goals will be to **(1) engage with the work of others**, which we will do through analyzing and responding to news and commentary articles, a documentary film, primary scientific literature, secondary scholarly literature, and our peers' writing; **(2) articulate a position**, or provide your own original insights and analysis, a process which will be facilitated by our class discussions and activities; and **(3) situate writing in specific contexts**, which we will do by learning how to write for different readerships, for different purposes, in different formats, and by following different processes. We will work towards these three goals through the practices of **researching, workshopping, revising, and editing**. Please refer to <http://uwp.duke.edu/students/writing-20/course-goals-and-practices> for elaboration of these Writing 20 Goals and Practices. I hope that after completing this course you will be better able to critically analyze texts, develop new insights into an issue, and articulate those insights through writing that is purposeful, clear, and concise.

### Sustainability and Duke's Curriculum

Duke University is committed to making sustainability a part of the curricular experience of all students. Sustainability is often defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, but we'll elaborate on this brief definition in our class discussions! As a "Sustainability Across the Curriculum" faculty fellow, I am committed to incorporating sustainability into the content and delivery of this course. To that end, I'll do my best to minimize paper use (e.g., most materials will be posted on the blog instead of distributing hard copies), minimize energy use (e.g., remind me to turn off the projector if we're not using it!), and highlight connections between ocean acidification and sustainability in our discussions and course work. For more information on Duke's sustainability commitment visit <http://sustainability.duke.edu/>

### Course Activities

*Short Writings (SW)* – We will begin our work by reading and writing press releases, brief commentaries, and other texts for broad readerships as we learn the science and policy aspects of ocean acidification. We will do much of these SWs on our publically viewable class blog. SWs will also include written peer reviews and reflective essays on the writing process. There will be approximately 12-14 SWs over the course of the semester (23% of course grade)

*Major Projects (MP)* – These three papers will form the backbone of the course. They'll be taken through multiple drafts and workshopped by your peers.

- *MP1: Rhetorical Analysis* – You'll make a critical claim regarding the rhetorical strategies used in the film *A Sea Change* and other media directed to a non-specialist audience (~2500 words; 22% of grade)
- *MP2: Perspectives Paper* – You'll use recent scientific research on a specific topic of your choice (e.g., coral reefs, salmon fisheries, shellfish industry) to make and support an original claim (~1500-2500 words; 25% of grade)
- *MP3: Group Research Project* – This project has three parts (1) 2-page pre-proposal (written as individuals), (2) research paper (8-10 pages) and (3) poster presentation. You'll collaborate in groups of 3-4 on the research paper and poster (30% of grade)

### Course Policies

*Attendance Policy* – This is a small, seminar-style class, and thus I expect that everyone will attend every class, but I understand that conflicts sometimes arise. I allow each student two absences (one week of class) without penalty (but note these exceptions: absences for small group workshops and days on which your writing will be discussed in seminar will be penalized). Each absence after the second – regardless of the reason – will result in a *partial step down of your final course letter grade* (e.g., an A- becomes a B+). I also expect you to be on time to class: three late arrivals (more than 5 minutes) will constitute one absence. If an emergency or other situation

arises that forces you to miss more than two classes it is your responsibility to discuss the situation with me. Because of this stiff penalty for missed classes I strongly encourage you to save your absences in case of illness or true emergencies. If you do miss a class it is your responsibility to learn what happened in class (check the blog and consult your peers before consulting me for missed material). Absences do not excuse you from submitting assignments on time unless you have arranged an alternate due date with me *well in advance*. Why such a strict attendance policy? It is important for you to be in class. Writing 20 functions as a seminar, where each participant's contributions help us learn together. Your colleagues depend on you for your thoughts on a topic or issue, your feedback on their writing, and the development of an academic community.

*Submitting Work* – Nearly all assignments for this class will be submitted electronically, usually as an upload to Blackboard, attached to an e-mail to me, or as a post or upload to the blog. We may occasionally use hard copies of drafts for workshopping sessions, in which case I encourage you to use double-sided printing. All work must be submitted by the due date and time; late work will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, but will probably lower your grade (usually a third of a letter grade per day – e.g., A to A-). For papers longer than one page, please number the pages. Also, for workshopping papers in class please use double-spacing and line numbering (in Microsoft Word 2007 click on “Page Layout”). Please submit all papers as Word documents. Microsoft Office 2010 is freely available to all Duke students (<http://oit.duke.edu/comp-print/software/index.php>), but if you insist on OpenOffice or Word Perfect, I ask that you still submit files with the \*.docx or \*.doc extension.

*Back-up Your Work* – It is always good practice to save your work in multiple places besides your hard drive. Hard drives can crash and flash drives can easily be lost. Consider using Webfiles, an online storage service provided to the Duke community. Duke students receive 5 GB of personal file space for free. Find out more about Webfiles here: <http://www.oit.duke.edu/comp-print/storage/webfiles/index.php> Additionally, Duke has partnered with Iron Mountain to provide a reduced-cost PC back-up and recovery plan: <http://www.oit.duke.edu/comp-print/storage/backup/index.php> I urge you to consider these options because computer problems WILL NOT BE AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE for late or missing work.

*Editing and Proofreading* – This is not a course in the mechanics of writing. Students in Writing 20 are expected to be able to write reasonably correct prose. This means you are responsible for making sure that your work is presented with care and thought – even first drafts. I am willing to help you with any questions you may have about points of style, usage, or grammar, but I should not be the first reader of your work. So, ask friends, classmates, or roommates to look over your work. I will not accept any writing that strikes me as hurriedly or carelessly prepared, so make sure to review, edit, and proofread all the work you do for this course before you turn it in.

*Course Grade* – I will distribute detailed grading rubrics for the MPs. The SWs will be graded simply as 3 pts (you followed instructions and put in good thought and effort to do the work), 2 pts (you put in effort, but may not have followed all instructions), 1 pt (work appears half-hearted or instructions were not followed at all), or 0 (missing or incomplete). Please remember that I may modify our list of SWs as the semester progresses. Also, note the following grading policy: failing to turn in any of the MPs will result in a failing grade for the course (i.e., you cannot receive a zero on one of these and pass the course).

To compute your final grade, I will assign the letter grade received on each paper a percent according to Table 1. For example, let us say a student receives grades of an B, A-, and B+ on MP1, MP2, and MP3, respectively. Let us also assume the student receives 39/39 on 13 SWs (remember each SW is 3 points). Table 2 shows how that student's grade would be computed.

Table 1		
Letter Grade	Percent equival.	Range for final grade
A+	100	100
A	95	>92 to <100
A-	92	90 to 92
B+	88	88 to <90
B	85	>82 to <88
B-	82	80 to 82
C+	78	78 to <80
C	75	>72 to <78
C-	72	70 to 72
D+	68	68 to <70
D	65	>62 to <68
D-	62	60 to 62

Table 2				
activity	weight	letter grade	percent equivalent	weight x percent equiv.
MP #1	22%	B	85	18.7
MP #2	25%	A-	92	23.0
MP #3	30%	B+	88	26.4
SWs	23%	39/39	100	23.0
Sum:				<b>91.1</b>
Course Grade:				<b>A-</b>

*The Writing Studio* – The Writing Studio has three locations on East Campus: room 219 of the Academic Advising Center, the second floor of Lilly Library, and room 106 of the Art Building. There is also a location on the West Campus: room 112 in Perkins Library. (Go to <http://uwp.duke.edu/wstudio/index.php> for more information.) You can go to the Writing Studio for free help with drafting, revising, or editing any writing assignment you are doing for any course at Duke. The professional writing consultants will work with you on a one-time basis, or they can help you with your writing regularly throughout the term. I encourage you to visit the Studio – every writer, no matter how experienced or inexperienced, needs readers, and the consultants at the Studio are good ones. Be sure to take with you a copy of the assignment you are working on and any drafts with my or your colleagues' comments.

*Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism* – Please familiarize yourself with the Duke Community Standard (<http://www.integrity.duke.edu/standard.html>) if you have not done so already. To misrepresent the work of someone else as your own is to plagiarize. When you quote, paraphrase, build upon, respond to, or in any other way draw upon the texts or ideas of others in your writing—as you will surely do in this course—you must properly note your use of their work. We will use different citation styles for each assignment, as I will explain in detail later. Please visit <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/index.html> or speak to me for additional guidelines, and I will be happy to help. I do not anticipate problems with plagiarism in this course, but the penalty for plagiarism would be a failing course grade.

*Other* – Please do not hesitate to speak to me if you have a learning disability, physical condition, or any other situation that may hamper your abilities in this course. I want us all to have a smooth semester, and I look forward to working with you!

**Addendum to tardiness policy** – I expect you to be on time to class: Three late arrivals (more than 5 minutes) constitute one absence. However, if you arrive late because of delayed travel from a class on west campus that ends 20 minutes before Writing 20, your lateness will be excused and will not count towards any absences. Please quickly inform me of your delayed travel from class and speak with one of your peers after class to find out what you missed.