

PROFESSIONAL WRITING (PROW)

The courses listed on this page are exclusive to the LPS BAAS degree (<https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/features/what-bachelor-applied-arts-and-sciences-degree/>) and LPS Online certificates (<https://lpsonline.sas.upenn.edu/academics/certificates/>).

PROW 1000 Fundamentals of Professional Writing

Using an immersive, scenario-based teaching style, this course is an introduction to critically analyzing any writing situation and making your writing a purposeful act of communication. You engage in a series of authentic writing scenarios and a range of activities that provide hands-on practice and instructor coaching and feedback. Coursework includes targeted exercises for improving grammar, mechanics, clarity, precision, and persuasiveness. This collaborative, problem-based learning approach provides you with the strategies and flexibility you need to adapt to an ever-changing multimedia communication environment. Fundamentals of Professional Writing serves as the foundation course for the Certificate in Professional Writing. It introduces the basic concepts and vocabulary that students will draw upon in all future writing tasks and build upon throughout the remainder of the certificate. You do have the option to enroll in this individual course without committing to the entire Certificate in Professional Writing.

1 Course Unit

PROW 1010 Fundamentals of Academic Reading and Writing

This course focuses on the fundamentals of academic writing and is designed to accommodate differing levels of expertise, from undergraduates who are new to academic writing, to those who are returning to college to complete their degrees and need a refresher, and to those who work with academic writers or are engaged in professional academic writing and seek individualized guidance and feedback. The course will introduce participants to the key knowledge domains in academic writing, including a review of academic genres. We will explore planning, reading, and research writing strategies, modes of academic reasoning and rhetoric; writing in the disciplines; context-specific writing processes; collaborative writing, and giving, receiving, and revising in response to professional-style peer review. All students will receive individualized feedback from the instructor as well as peer reviews from colleagues as a means of applying and accelerating skills by working with diverse readers and writers. Assignments will include readings drawn from different genres across the disciplines; writing assignments will be a mix of short, targeted pieces along with some source-based work.

1 Course Unit

PROW 1020 The Elements of Style

This course is for anyone who has been charmed by a novel, article, or tweet and wanted to have similar power as a writer. What makes a sentence pop? What makes a piece of writing seem effortless? Effective writers use words purposefully and grab their reader's attention by fulfilling—and sometimes disrupting—expectations. Grammar is not a set of rules so much as it is a set of tools that enable us to make meaning; it allows us to appeal to the senses by creating rhythm and helping readers to “feel” and “see” our ideas. In this course, we fill our collective toolbox through sentence-level choices such as arrangement of words, concrete versus abstract language, and sentence length. We provide customized exercises for those who wish to work on their grammar and mechanics alongside developing other strategies for powerful, effective writing. You have the option to enroll in the individual course without committing to the entire Certificate in Professional Writing, enjoying the flexibility and expertise offered by Penn LPS Online to suit your schedule and interests.

1 Course Unit

PROW 1030 Introduction to College Writing

This course is designed to prepare students for the kinds of assignments they will encounter in college. The goal of the course is to expand your skills and build your self-confidence as academic readers, researchers, and writers. The course will provide a series of short written exercises that cover the fundamentals: how to read scholarly texts; how to read for and write with a focus on logical validity and coherence as an academic writer; how to plan and organize a well-structured argument or explanation; how to find, synthesize, and cite sources; and how to edit, polish, and proofread your final draft to ensure readability. The final project will be a letter of reflection and a 3-5 pp research-based paper. Note: Experienced academic writers (e.g., post-bacs, graduate students, those with advanced degrees should take PROW 3030, Advanced Academic Writing)

1 Course Unit

PROW 1990 Independent Study in Professional Writing

Independent Study in Professional Writing

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

PROW 2000 Writing with Data

The rise of data-driven communication has placed increasing emphasis on data literacy—namely, the ability to produce and analyze a wide range of data visualizations, from illustrations and technical diagrams to complex graphs and tables. Many academic disciplines and professions rely on data as the basis for acquiring, building, and disseminating knowledge in their fields. Institutions and corporations, in turn, now collect data about individuals for everything from supporting students' learning to developing ever more targeted marketing campaigns. Others use open-access data for advocacy work, using data-based graphics to advance social and political causes. This course is designed to help you think critically and ethically about data and gain practical data literacy skills. Students learn how to use online data visualization tools to make data more understandable and develop rhetorical skills to make data more meaningful, by identifying and presenting the story they tell.

1 Course Unit

PROW 2010 Designing Effective Presentations

This class focuses on how to build powerful, persuasive presentations as well as to provide advanced insight and practice in the fundamentals of professional writing. We study the genre of presentations to familiarize you with major applications—PowerPoint, Keynote, and Google Slides—as well as basic presentation formats, including live group delivery; pre-recorded narration (for asynchronous presentations); and the recent trend of slides used on corporate and other websites to provide more detailed information about the organization or its products. We also explore different presentation subgenres, such as the Ted Talk, lightning talks, and Pecha Kucha (20 slides, 20 seconds each, auto-advance). Throughout, we focus on tailoring your presentation to target audiences and purposes as we explore and practice the design elements of building presentation: space, grids, choice of fonts, images, and animation. Finally and most importantly, we work on building a powerful message, teaching you how to develop ideas and translate content into a deck that exemplifies your understanding of information hierarchies and human cognition with the goal of engaging, informing, and persuading your audiences.

1 Course Unit

PROW 2020 Strategic Communication Skills for Fundraisers

Developing a targeted strategy for every prospect and/or donor is critical, but communicating it effectively is what gets you over the finish line. In this course, we will explore how strategic communications approaches were applied successfully to real-life scenarios. You will learn about and practice the full spectrum of donor-centric communication vehicles, from writing the email that gets past a gatekeeper, developing an executive briefing, and drafting a proposal, to preparing a press release, writing a formal thank you and stewarding a donor after the gift has closed. This course will be taught by seasoned development professionals. They will walk you through actual case studies, share some tricks of the trade, focus on specific challenges identified by class members, and provide feedback on assignments from their unique perspectives. Expect to be enlightened, entertained and pushed to think hard about how you communicate to build the productive relationships that result in impactful philanthropy.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

PROW 2030 Writing for Public Audiences: The Op-Ed and White Paper

Public writing involves extending beyond your professional, academic, personal or local activist community to reach a broader audience. The goals of public writing vary but most often the purpose is to inform and move readers to action. In most cases, we find ourselves at a loss in terms of how to translate our knowledge and understanding into writing that is accessible for an audience that has limited knowledge and awareness of the issue, whether it has to do with major concerns, such as a medical or environmental crisis, a new technology, a change in government policy, an abridgment of human rights; or with a more local concern, such as letting your neighborhood know about the value of adding native plants to their gardens or the need for street repairs. Genres of public writing are far-ranging and include opinion pieces, white papers, infographics, petitions, memes, protest signs, obituaries, social media posts, and blogging platforms such as Substack and Medium. This course will focus on how to narrow the topic of your writing to reach the “publics” that are your target audiences, how to analyze and write for the particular genre and audience you select, how to translate your own knowledge and expertise into more accessible writing, how to evaluate and construct your identity or that of your organization in relation to this public outreach, and how to take into account the possible uptakes of your writing, how it will be used and circulated, and by whom, as well as assessing its potential ongoing impact and migration to unintended audiences. The two major pieces students will develop in this course are an op-ed and a white paper, the first an excellent way to reach the public with a short, well-constructed argument; the second an outstanding way to reach a non-specialist public audience in the midst of deciding how and why to act upon something. White papers are used by everyone from politicians and bureaucrats to churches, academics, activists, and industry in an effort to inform a broader audience.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

PROW 2040 Promotional Writing

Includes emails, brochures, advertisements, and customer service.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

PROW 2050 The Elements of Style

This course is for anyone who has been charmed by a novel, article, or tweet and wanted to have similar power as a writer. What makes a sentence pop? What makes a piece of writing seem effortless? Effective writers use words purposefully and grab their reader’s attention by fulfilling—and sometimes disrupting—expectations. Grammar is not a set of rules so much as it is a set of tools that enable us to make meaning; it allows us to appeal to the senses by creating rhythm and helping readers to “feel” and “see” our ideas. In this course, we fill our collective toolbox through sentence-level choices such as arrangement of words, concrete versus abstract language, and sentence length. We provide customized exercises for those who wish to work on their grammar and mechanics alongside developing other strategies for powerful, effective writing. You have the option to enroll in the individual course without committing to the entire Certificate in Professional Writing, enjoying the flexibility and expertise offered by Penn LPS Online to suit your schedule and interests.

Fall

1 Course Unit

PROW 3000 Academic Writing

TBD

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

PROW 3010 The Power of Storytelling

From business and science to medicine and nonprofit organizations, storytelling is increasingly recognized as one of the strongest tools of communication and persuasion. This course introduces students to the use and art of storytelling, also known as narrative studies. Students review storytelling in academic and professional communities as both a research tool for gathering information about particular communities or types of individuals, and as an effective rhetorical strategy for generating emotional appeal and action, and brand identity. They also explore storytelling as a compelling means of conveying complex and memorable information. This course explores how storytelling may be variously used for inquiry, evidence gathering and persuasion. Lessons are reinforced through the examination of business anecdotes, case studies, narrative medicine, biographical notes, personal statements, and cover letters.

1 Course Unit

PROW 3020 Strategic Writing for Fundraising

Developing a targeted strategy for individual prospects and/or donors is critical, but communicating it effectively is what gets you over the finish line. In this course, we will explore how to successfully apply strategic communications approaches to real-life scenarios. You will learn about the continuous cycle of fundraising and get practice and coaching on how to write the full spectrum of donor-centric communication vehicles relevant to each cycle. Strategic Writing for Fundraising Professionals will walk you through case studies, share some tricks of the trade, focus on specific challenges, and provide feedback on your writing throughout. Expect to be enlightened, engaged, and pushed to think hard about how you communicate to build the productive relationships that result in impactful philanthropy.

1 Course Unit

PROW 3030 Publishing Your Research: Writing Journal Articles and Book Chapters

This course is intended for advanced academic writers, from undergraduates in the advanced year of their major to graduate students who wish to write an effective paper, to practitioners and others with terminal degrees who wish to write an effective manuscript for publication. The ability to translate your readings, research, and findings into meaningful academic content is a challenging, skill-intensive process that pivots upon learning good time management and mindfulness strategies, as well as grasping the nuances of academic genres and styles of writing and documentation. Our course will focus on these concerns, along with providing some strategies for efficient reading of densely written academic texts. (For students seeking an introduction to college writing, please see PROW 1030: Introduction to Academic Reading, Writing, and Research).

1 Course Unit

PROW 4000 Writing for Social Media

This course explores the use of social media campaigns for building organizational or brand identities for audiences including customers, interest groups and followers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We look at how to use social media to create coherent messaging, build a reputation and cultivate reader loyalty. We also explore how readers and designers approach multimedia texts as complex entities that bring together language, image, sound, and gesture to produce a coherent message. With its multiple modalities—visual, aural, and somatic—social media makes different types of demands of its creators and its audiences than those imposed by conventional top-down, left-to-right texts that one encounters in books, essays or letters, requiring an expanded understanding of rhetorical strategies and contexts. By the end of the course, students will have multiplatform portfolio of social content to show employers, colleagues, or clients.

1 Course Unit

PROW 4010 Composing a Professional Identity

This course is intended for those who would like to focus on building their individual professional identity for job searches as well as professional recognition and advancement. The course will examine how professional identities are constructed and networked across different media within professional communities of practice. Our particular focus will be on the primary discourse communities, genres, and media involved in professional identity construction, including cover letters, resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and web-portfolios; we will also touch upon the role of other social media in creating a professional identity. The course will support students in developing rhetorical fluency with regard to job searches and career advancement, including identifying and researching potential employers, networking, and cultivating mentors. This writing-intensive course will be a combination of theory, acquired through a series of readings and analysis, and practice, implemented through hands-on guided writing exercises, peer and professor feedback, and reflection. By the end of the course, students will have developed a professional profile, including a foundational cover letter and resume, a LinkedIn profile, and a web-portfolio (whether published or not will be up to the individual student).

1 Course Unit

PROW 4030 Writing in the Professions

Focuses on writing in a specific profession.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

PROW 4040 Advanced Academic Writing

Advanced Academic Writing

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit