Course Overview:

English 395 is an advanced writing class designed to help students transition from college-level writing into “real world” professional wiring and communication. You will be exposed to advanced research resources and strategies unique to the health professions, and learn how to produce high-quality professional documents such as cover letters and resumes, personal statements, project proposals, and review articles. In all of these writing endeavors, the focus will be on tailoring the specific document to meet the needs of its specific audience. Finally, this class will give you the opportunity to reacquaint yourself with foundational writing issues (drafting, revising, and editing), as well as the essentials of style and grammar.

Reflecting a long-standing concern of the University of Maryland, sustainability issues will be used as a lens to develop critical thinking skills relevant to writing about medicine and health.

Prerequisites: English 101 or equivalent and a minimum of 60 credits.

Required Texts:
Researching, Writing, and Thinking About Ecological Medicine and Public Health (Portland, OR: Northwest Earth Institute, 2016)(customized ebook for this course: https://nwei.org/product/ecological-medicine-ebook/)

Learning Outcomes:

This course fulfills the University’s Fundamental Studies Professional Writing Requirement. As stated in the University’s Plan for General Education (http://www.provost.umd.edu/GenEdReport/GenEdPublic-Dec2010.pdf, see Appendices p. 35), students should be able to perform the following tasks upon completing this course:

1. Analyze a variety of professional rhetorical situations and produce appropriate texts in response.
2. Understand the stages required to produce competent, professional writing through planning, drafting, revising and editing.
3. Identify and implement the appropriate research methods for each writing task. Students do research for each writing assignment.
4. Practice the ethical use of sources and the conventions of citation appropriate to each genre.
5. Write for the intended readers of a text, and design or adapt text to audience who may differ in their familiarity with the subject matter.
6. Demonstrate competence in Standard Written English, including grammar, sentence and paragraph structure, coherence, and document design (including the use of the visual) and be able to use this knowledge to revise texts.
7. Produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.

The learning outcomes associated with each major writing assignment are listed in parentheses after each assignment description (e.g., “6” would indicate that the assignment focuses on improving Standard Written English).

**Course Philosophy: Health, Medicine, and Sustainability**

If you are taking this particular section of Professional Writing, then you presumably intend to enter one of the health professions—medicine, an allied health field, or public health. In your future day-to-day work lives, you may often think about very specific issues—how do I treat this particular patient, how do I implement this particular public health policy etc. This individualistic focus is very much part of the culture of the health care field. There is ample evidence, however, that the current health care field is broken. In medicine, expensive high-tech care is not necessarily the “best” care; in public health, expensive campaigns sometimes do little to move the general population toward more health-promoting activities. What is missing is system thinking: how should all the components be arranged to benefit not only individual patients, but also not waste society’s finite resources—both now and in the future? Without this shift in focus, our current health care delivery system is unsustainable.

As a campus, the University of Maryland is in the vanguard of sustainability issues; the university received a “Gold Rating” from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. One aspect of this focus is the Chesapeake Project, which is a professional development activity that encourages faculty to integrate sustainability issues “across the curriculum.” In May of 2014, your instructor took part in the Chesapeake Project, and has revised this course accordingly.

While sustainability issues are often discussed in terms of preserving the environment, they are just as central to health promotion and the delivery of medical care. Furthermore, environmental concerns impinge directly on health issues—both negatively and positively. Changes in the environment can transform the “ecology of disease” in ways that lead to new health threats; conversely, sustaining the environment is necessary to ensure an adequate food supply. As some scholars have argued, cleaning up the environment and increases in agricultural productivity have actually been more “health promoting” (in terms of increased longevity) than specifically “medical” interventions after patients have become sick.

In the writing assignments for this course, I have provided you with opportunities to reflect on how sustainability themes impact medical practice or public health. When writing about clinical medicine, you can reflect on how system thinking can improve the efficiency, delivery, and long-term sustainability of health care services; when writing about public health, you can reflect on how sustainability ideas interact synergistically with health promotion (e.g., food production), or how changes in the environment can impact the ecology of disease.
In all your writing, you should focus on developing a series of arguments that can anticipate (and rebut) the traditionally individualistic focus of much clinical thinking; by introducing a “systems approach,” you are implicitly introducing a paradigm shift in this field of professional endeavor. In executing these tasks, you will have to practice many of the learning outcomes listed above—for instance, adapting text to audience and “produce cogent arguments that identify arguable issues, reflect the degree of available evidence, and take account of counter arguments.”

Course Expectations: Writing, Revising, and Thinking (an interactive loop)

Writing is learned through practice, which means (as a consequence) that there will be multiple writing assignments throughout the semester. As the Professional Writing Program website indicates, “In every PWP course, students write and revise four to six major assignments for a total of approximately 25 pages of formal graded writing per student.” The specifics for each of these writing assignments are provided in the Assignments section on ELMS/Canvas. As you will see, many of these writing assignments involve the completion of a first draft, which will then be commented on by one of your classmates. There are (at least) three reasons for getting feedback prior to final submission of any written document:

1) Every piece of writing can be improved with revision;
2) Writing is an inherently social activity (between a writer and a reader); and
3) The best way, as a writer, to enhance the likelihood of being understood is to craft text in ways that conform to your readers’ expectations.

In all of the writing assignments, the ability to tailor information to suit the needs of an audience will be primary in determining the grade, with individual grades determined based on the following general rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Criteria Used To Determine Letter Grades on Individual Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written papers will be awarded a grade of “A” if They introduce information that is directly relevant for the audience, and package it in a way that explicitly addresses the needs of the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written papers will be awarded a grade of “B” if They introduce information that is directly relevant for the audience, but they force readers to “connect the dots” to see why the information is relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written papers will be awarded a grade of “C” if They introduce information that is only partially relevant for the audience. The readers not only have to “connect the dots” for information that is relevant, but also sift through what information that needs to be discarded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above criteria will be used as a general guide to assign grades based on the quality of content in written assignments. However, I reserve the right to lower the assigned grade by up to a letter if the submitted product is professionally substandard (e.g., it has spelling, punctuation, or grammar error, has inadequate citations etc.). How these general criteria will be applied in assessing specific assignments is discussed in more detail in the Assignment section of the course space on ELMS. General description of undergraduate letter grades can be found at http://www.umd.edu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1584/s/1534.

Each assignment will be given a numerical score (including fractional values) with 100 points possible at the end of the semester. Your final numerical score will be translated into a final course letter grade based on the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-76</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I do “round up” final grades to the nearest integer when scores are “0.5” or higher. In other words, a final grade of “93.5” would be awarded an “A” and an “89.5” would be awarded an “A-.”

Course Schedule based on Modular Construction

As an asynchronous online course, you will have to take an active role in mastery of the material. However, I have provided a modular structure. Although there will be some overlap in due dates (because of the drafting/revision process), each module is scheduled to last about one week. The final module is scheduled to last two weeks to give you additional time to work on the final term project. Although everyone will be working on the same module during a given week, you will have to budget your time individually; there will be no designated “class time” when everyone would be online.

To further ensure uniformity of experience, each module has been set up in the same way. In particular, you will always be asked to perform the following specific tasks:

1. Review the learning objectives
2. Complete all assigned readings & viewings
3. Complete all lecture materials
4. Participate in the Discussion Board and/or Voice Thread (usually both)
5. Complete and submit all assignments by the due dates specified.
As a general approach, I would recommend that you first skim the contents of the module (paying particular attention to the learning objectives), and then listen to my lecture before proceeding to the assigned reading/viewing materials and the written responses. As you will see, my brief lectures are meant to provide an overview of how you should be processing the material in the module; in other words, the lectures provide the “glue” that holds all the other parts together conceptually. Some of the lectures have been recorded specifically for this course whereas others have been recorded for Northeastern University where I also teach a writing course (periodically) in an online graduate program.

Here is the weekly schedule for completing the modules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Module</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Number of Weeks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader Expectation Theory</td>
<td>5/31-6/5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review Process</td>
<td>6/6-6/8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Application Packet</td>
<td>6/6-6/12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing Arguments &amp; Ecological Medicine</td>
<td>6/13-6/19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critiquing &amp; Designing Popular Websites</td>
<td>6/20-6/26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning a Public Health Campaign</td>
<td>6/27-7/8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Paper/Exam:** Because this is a writing course, the final paper will serve as the final examination for the course. The paper must be submitted (online through Canvas) no later than 11:59 pm on Friday July 8, 2016.

**General Course Procedures and Policies:**

**Technical Requirements**
As an asynchronous online course, you will need access to a computer with high speed internet access and microphone. If you need help with any of the technical issues, consult the UMD help desk, which can be found [here](#).

**Conferences**
Two conferences during the semester are required so that your instructor can give you preliminary feedback before completion of the final project. The first conference will be scheduled on 6/27 or 6/28 after the Memo has been submitted. The second conference will be scheduled on 7/6 or 7/7 to give final feedback (based on the review article) before the submission of the final paper. These conferences will take place either face-to-face or online—depending on whether the student is residing in the area.

**Participation Policies**
As indicated above, there will be regular assignments consisting relatively short low stakes exercises and larger writing projects. You can monitor the due dates for these activities in the course space in ELMS. As per grading policies outlined above, you are expected to complete
these assignments by their due dates; however, there are standard recognized exceptions. In particular, the University grants excuses for your own illness or the illness of an immediate family member, for a death in the family, for your participation in university activities when requested by University authorities, for religious observance, and for compelling circumstances beyond your control. In the context of an online course, these circumstances would have to be such that they would prevent the student from completing online activities by the dates and time specified in the course materials. If you believe that one of the above situations applies to you, consult with the instructor and provide appropriate documentation (e.g., from a health care provider for medical-related issues). For students who cannot complete assignments because of religious observance, it is their responsibility to notify the instructor early in the term.

**Late Papers:**

Papers are due at the announced times as indicated on ELMS. If a major writing assignment is turned in late without prior permission, it is subject to a late penalty of one letter grade per day of lateness, including the first one. Low stakes assignments cannot be submitted for credit after their due dates.

**Course Evaluations**

Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community (www.courseevalum.umd.edu). Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University. Because CourseEvalUm does not ask specific questions useful to the Professional Writing Program, I will ask you to fill out a different, also confidential, evaluation in class. Both evaluations are important for separate audiences and somewhat separate purposes, and I appreciate your participation in this process.

**Academic integrity:** The student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibit students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).*

Allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Student Honor Council: [http://www.shc.umd.edu](http://www.shc.umd.edu). If the Student Honor Council determines that this is an instance of academic dishonesty, then the student will receive no credit for the assignment in question.

- **Students with Disabilities:** The University of Maryland is committed to providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Students with a documented disability should inform the instructors within the add/drop period if academic accommodations are needed. To obtain an Accommodation Letter prepared by Disability Support Service (DSS), a division of the University Counseling Center, please call
301.314.7682, e-mail dissup@umd.edu, or visit the Shoemaker Building for more information.

- **Copyright notice:** Class lectures and other materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor.

- **Emergency protocol/loss of internet access:** If the university is physically closed for an extended period of time, this should not prevent the continuation of course activities since this is an online course. However, if extended loss of internet access occurs, then there would be no penalties for missed due dates during the time of non-access.

- **Expectations for tolerance of diversity:** The instructor of this course is committed to creating an open and accepting environment in which diversity, unique perspectives, and others’ worldviews are respected.