



School of Public Health
**Summer Institute of Advanced Epidemiology
and Preventive Medicine**

Medical Writing

July 9-13 | Course No. 0158.1211

Course Instructor: [Philip Greenland](#) (Northwestern University)
Date & Time: July 9-13 2017 | S, M, Th 14:00-18:30 ; T, W 14:00-19:00
Final Exam: July 14, 2017 | 9:00-11:00
Location: Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University

Pre-requisites & Intended Audience

No pre-requisites. Research experience is highly recommended.
The course is intended for Master's and PhD level students or above.

Academic Credit & Course Requirements

2 Academic Credits (4 ECTS). Participants must pass the final exam with a grade of 60 (D). Noncredit participants will receive a certification of participation and are not required to take the final exam, but are expected to participate.

All class members will be expected to take part in active discussion, to do at least one hour of reading and 1-2 hours of writing each day before class, and submit a paper for review *before the class begins* on July 9.

Recommended Reading

Text – You are not required to purchase any text for this course. All assignments will be provided as library references or PDF's. However, if you wish to own a relevant resource text, in my opinion, the best text is currently out of print, but if you can find it on Amazon, or elsewhere, you might want to buy it. It is:

- **Writing and Publishing in Medicine**, by Edward J. Huth, Williams and Wilkins, published 1998.
 - We will supply several chapters as PDF's for the course.
- **How to Write A Paper, 5th Edition**, edited by George M. Hall, 2013, Wiley-Blackwell, BMJ Books.
 - Another very good, and very short, text

Course Description

The course should be of benefit to anyone interested in improving medical writing skills and in more effectively understanding the biomedical publication process. Students will refine and demonstrate writing, reading, editing, and reviewing skills. Discussion areas include: How journals “think”, what matters (impact factor), what/how to prepare before writing, ethics of authorship, and understanding the peer review process.

- How journal editors and reviewers reach decisions about articles - what is important?
- What matters - Impact Factor?
- Editorial Ethics: Who is an author? What else is important?
- What and how to prepare before you write
- Learning by doing peer review
- Learning to do an outline before writing
- All the basics for submission: Cover letter, Title page, Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Tables, Figures, References, Acknowledgements, Supplementary Material

This is a hands-on course designed to improve medical writing skills for those who already have some experience in medical writing, including those with moderately extensive experience.



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In the first of the 5 class sessions, we will extensively review several published articles as a background for improving one's own recognition of common writing mistakes. In the remaining sessions, we will cover the following topics:

- Improving titles and abstracts;
- Preparing an outline before writing a paper – why this is a good idea and how to do it;
- Discussions of papers in progress by members of the class;
- Preparing a response to a review – how to be successful in getting your nearly accepted paper to the finish line.

Teaching methods:

There will be readings for each class and some writing assignments between classes. The class depends on very active participation in analyzing papers, writing outlines, titles, abstracts, and responses to reviews. While there will be some degree of "lecturing" from the professor, the class is primarily designed for active learning by the students rather than passive learning from lecture.

Instructor Bio

Professor Greenland is the Director of the Center for Population Health Sciences - Institute for Public Health and Medicine, Harry W. Dingman Professor of Cardiology, and a Professor in Preventive Medicine-Epidemiology. Dr. Greenland's research, teaching and clinical interests focus on the prevention of cardiovascular diseases (CVD). He has authored or coauthored over 400 research papers, editorials, and reviews on topics related primarily to heart disease prevention, heart disease risk prediction, and heart disease in women. Dr. Greenland's current research is focused mainly on prediction and early detection of CVD, including coronary imaging and metabolomics. Dr. Greenland is Director of a Post-doctoral Training Program in Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention, funded by the National Institutes of Health in the USA. He is also Director of the Population Research Center, part of the American Heart Association-funded prevention research network, based at Northwestern University. He is also a Senior Editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Important Request

This class will utilize written work for workshop analysis. It is desirable, and preferred, to utilize actual written materials prepared by members of the class. **Please send to summersph@post.tau.ac.il, in advance of the class, at least one paper that you are currently working on, or a paper currently under peer review, or even an outline of a paper that you are proposing.** Wherever possible, workshop discussions will be based upon actual writing from members of the class. **Please participate!!!**

Course Schedule

14:00-15:30 Lecture and Discussion

15:30-16:00 Break

16:00-17:30 Lecture and Discussion

17:30-17:45 Break

17:45-18:30/19:00 Lecture and Discussion

Course Timetable

Sunday, July 9 (Day 1)	
Topics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review backgrounds and goals of the members of the class 2. Overview of course – workshop, plus lectures 3. The medical literature and scientific publishing – getting started 4. Authorship: who qualifies to be an author? 5. Publication metrics – Impact Factor and more
Recommended Readings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rothman KJ. Writing for epidemiology. <i>Epidemiology</i>. 1998 May;9(3):333-7. PubMed PMID: 12296359 (PDF available). b. Macrina FL. Teaching authorship and publication practices in the biomedical and life sciences. <i>Sci Eng Ethics</i>. 2011 Jun;17(2):341-54. Epub 2011 May 1. PubMed PMID: 21533836. (PDF available) c. Durieux V, Gevenois PA. Bibliometric indicators: quality measurements of scientific publication. <i>Radiology</i>. 2010 May;255(2):342-51. doi: 10.1148/radiol.09090626. PubMed PMID: 20413749. (PDF available) d. Carpenter CR, Cone DC, Sarli CC. Using publication metrics to highlight academic productivity and research impact. <i>Acad Emerg Med</i>. 2014 Oct;21(10):1160-72. doi: 10.1111/acem.12482. PubMed PMID: 25308141 (PDF available) e. van Eck NJ, Waltman L, van Raan AF, Klautz RJ, Peul WC. Citation analysis may severely underestimate the impact of clinical research as compared to basic research. <i>PLoS One</i>. 2013 Apr 24;8(4):e62395. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0062395. Print 2013. PubMed PMID: 23638064; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC3634776. (PDF available).
For additional discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to discuss your personal goals and expectations for the class. • Be prepared to discuss your previous publication experience and any issues you have had.
Monday, July 10 (Day 2)	
Topic:	<p>The Peer Review Process</p> <p>Understanding how to review a paper --- and applying those same practices and principles to your own papers --- can make your own work better.</p> <p>For this class, we will discuss principles of conducting reviews followed by several hands-on examples which will be done in class.</p>
Recommended Readings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cummings P, Rivara P. Reviewing Manuscripts for Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine. <i>Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med</i> 2002; 156: 11-13. (PDF available). This paper is “old” but still very relevant.

	<p>b. Lovejoy TI, et al. Reviewing manuscripts for peer-review journals: a primer for novice and seasoned reviewers. <i>Ann Behav Med.</i> 2011 Aug;42(1):1-13. PubMed PMID: 21505912. (PDF available)</p>
<p>Tuesday, July 11 (Day 3)</p>	
<p>Topics:</p>	<p>Writing the First Draft: Structure of a Medical Research Paper</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using an Outline: Getting ready to write before you actually begin. 2. Developing the “critical argument.” 3. Distinguishing between a “report” of your work and a “paper” that reports your work and puts it in proper context.
<p>Recommended Readings:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chapter 5: Critical Argument and the Structure of Scientific Papers; Huth, 1999. (PDF). b. Chapter 6: The Research Paper: General Principles for Structure and Content; Huth, 1999 (PDF). c. Chapter 12: The first draft: Text; Huth, 1999 (PDF).
<p>Assignment:</p>	<p>If you were not able to send a paper in advance, or even if you did, it would be desirable for you to prepare and send, in advance, a detailed outline of an original paper (preferably something you are working on currently or just getting ready to begin). The outline should be detailed enough for others to understand the continuity and flow of your ideas. Two full pages is about the right length, including title, abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion (no references needed at this stage).</p>
<p>Wednesday, July 12 (Day 4)</p>	
<p>Topic:</p>	<p>Improving Abstracts and Tables</p>
<p>Recommended Readings:</p>	<p>Advance readings (4 very short readings):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chapter 13: The First Draft: Titles and Abstracts; Huth, 1999 (PDF available). b. Chapter 14: The First Draft: Tables; Huth, 1999 (PDF available). c. Cummings P, Rivara FP, Koepsell TD. Writing informative abstracts for journal articles. <i>Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.</i> 2004;158(11):1086-8. (PDF available) d. Winker MA. The need for concrete improvement in abstract quality. <i>JAMA.</i> 1999. Mar 24-31;281(12):1129-30. PubMed PMID: 10188667. (PDF available)
<p>For discussion:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This session will be dedicated to <u>analysis of abstracts and tables</u> taken from papers submitted in advance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, please read the “advance” readings and come prepared to discuss the abstracts and tables that will be distributed in class.
Thursday, July 13 (Day 5)	
Topics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Responding to Reviews and Increasing Chances for Success Wrapping-up (Final Questions and Discussion)
Recommended Readings:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 22: Peer reviewing and the editor’s decision. Huth, 1999 (PDF available). Provenzale JM. Revising a manuscript: ten principles to guide success for publication. AJR Am J Roentgenol. 2010 Dec;195(6):W382-7. PubMed PMID: 21098168. (PDF)
For discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two papers will be chosen for peer reviews and response letters. These will be reviewed and discussed in class. NOTE: <u>Any additional topics of interest</u> can be addressed in this last class, as time allows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested topics: Cover Letters, suggesting reviewers, becoming a reviewer, etc.
Friday, July 14 (Final Exam)	
09:00-11:00	Room 201, Sackler Faculty of Medicine (Teaching Assistants will be present)