
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, AND PLANNING

GLG 358

Instructor: Thomas G. Plymate

Writing II: Reporting Geological Information

Office: Temple 358

Fall 2006

**Office Hours: 9:00-10:00 MWF;
11:00-12:00 TTh**

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

GLG 358 Writing II: Reporting Geological Information. 3(1-4) S. Prerequisite: ENG 110 and 30 hours and GLG 314 and either GLG 318 or GLG 332. Techniques and strategies for locating and accessing technical geological information. Preparation of technical reports and presentations on geologic topics with emphasis on the styles and formats of the Geological Society of America and the United States Geological Survey.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS:

As a Writing II course, GLG 358 is designed to satisfy part of the "Basic Required Skills" component of the Missouri State University General Education program. Specifically, this course is intended to develop technical reporting skills (both written and oral) which will be of benefit to the geology student throughout his/her educational and professional careers. The specific goals of this course are as follows:

- Develop ability to find and access detailed geologic information using the *Bibliography and Index of Geology* and other printed bibliographies. (General Education Goals I.B.1, I.C.1, I.C.2, I.D.1, II.A.1, II.A.2)
- Develop ability to find and access detailed geologic information using *GeoRef* and other online bibliographies. (General Education Goals I.B.1, I.C.1, I.C.2, I.D.1, I.D.2, II.A.1, II.A.2)
- Develop ability to interpret detailed geologic information presented in text formats, including formal geologic reports and abstracts. (General Education Goals I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.C.2, I.C.4, I.D.1, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.A.3, II.A.4, II.A.5)
- Develop ability to interpret detailed geologic information presented in visual formats, including graphs, cross-sections, and geologic maps. (General Education Goals I.B.2, I.B.3, I.B.4, I.C.2, I.C.4, I.D.1, I.D.3, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.A.3, II.A.4, II.A.5)
- Develop ability to write with clarity and precision about geologic subjects. (General Education Goals I.C.3, I.D.1)
- Develop ability to properly cite sources of geologic information using the styles of the Geological Society of America. and the U.S. Geological Survey. (Gen. Ed. Goal I.D.1)
- Develop ability to clearly and precisely abstract a complex body of geologic information. (General Education Goal I.D.1)
- Develop ability to clearly and precisely illustrate a subject graphically within a geologic report. (General Education Goals I.B.5, I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.3)
- Develop ability to speak with clarity and precision about geologic subjects in front of an audience. (General Education Goals I.C.3, I.D.1)
- Develop ability to clearly and precisely illustrate a geologic subject visually in front of an audience. (General Education Goals I.B.5, I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.3)

III. COURSE ASSESSMENT:

As with all General Education courses, GLG 358 will be assessed periodically to determine how effectively it is meeting the goals and objectives of the General Education Program. To help in that assessment, at the end of the course I will ask for your feedback on a questionnaire about the strengths and weaknesses of this course.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS:

The following texts are required for this course:

- a. Bates, R.L. and Jackson, J.A. (eds.), 1984, *Dictionary of Geological Terms (3rd ed.)*, American Geological Institute.
- b. Walsh, J. Martyn and Walsh, Anna Kathleen, 1987, *Plain English Handbook (9th ed.)*, Random House.
- c. Hacker, D., 2004, *A Pocket Style Manual (4th ed.)*, Bedford/St. Martin's.
- d. A good dictionary of the English language.

The following supplemental texts will be available for GLG 358 in the back of Temple Hall 331:

- a. Hansen, W.R. (ed.), 1991, *Suggestions to Authors of the Reports of the United States Geological Survey (7th ed.)*, United States Government Printing Office.
- b. Bates, R.L., 1988, *Writing in Earth Science*, American Geological Institute.
- c. Cochran, W., Fenner, P., and Hill, M. (eds.), 1979, *Geowriting: A Guide to Writing, Editing, and Printing in Earth Science (3rd ed.)*, American Geological Institute.
- d. Willis, H. and Klammer, E., 1986, *A Brief Handbook of English (3rd ed.)*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- e. Pearlman, D.D. and Pearlman, P.R., 1996, *Guide to Rapid Revision (6th ed.)*, Allyn & Bacon.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There will be ten writing assignments, varying in length from 100 to 2500 words. The due dates for these assignments are spaced more-or-less evenly throughout the semester; there is no single "term paper" or "portfolio" due at the end of the course. Each student will also be required to make oral presentations summarizing three of their papers. These oral presentations will vary in length from 5 to 12 minutes.

VI. GRADING:

Each of the 13 assignments (10 writing assignments, 3 oral presentations) will be given a letter grade. At the end of the semester, the letter grades will be converted to numbers as follows: A+=98, A=95, A-=92, B+=88, B=85, B-=82, C+=78, C=75, C-=72, D+=68, D=65, D-=62, F=50. Each student's course grade will then be determined according to the standard 90-80-70-60 fixed scale by whichever of the following "plans" yields the higher grade:

Plan A—Raw Average: Your course grade will be based on the simple, unweighted average of your grades on the thirteen assignments.

Plan B—Weighted Average: Your course grade will be based on a weighted average of your grades on the thirteen assignments using the following weighting factors:

Papers 1, 2, & 3 and Oral Presentation I	x1
Papers 4, 5, 6, & 7 and Oral Presentation II	x2
Papers 8, 9, & 10 and Oral Presentation III	x3

VII. MISSED DEADLINES:

You have one "free late" in this course; you may use it either on a writing assignment or on an oral presentation. If you use your "free late" on a writing assignment, that paper will be accepted without penalty for up to one week after its original due date. Similarly, if you use your "free late" on an oral presentation, you can reschedule that presentation for any time up to one week after the original date with no penalty. After you have used your one "free late", no excuse, no matter how legitimate, will be sufficient to justify missing a deadline. The penalty for the second missed deadline is 50% of the grade for that assignment. The penalty for the third missed deadline is a grade of "0" for that assignment. The penalty for a fourth missed deadline is a grade of "F" for the course.

Each paper will be assigned with very specific requirements for length, references (type and minimum number), illustrations (type and minimum number), and format. If your paper does not conform to these specifications it will be returned for rewriting and it will be counted as a missed deadline.

VIII. PROOFREADING:

You are expected to proofread each of your papers thoroughly and carefully before handing them in. All uncorrected typographical errors will be graded as spelling errors. (Note: It is acceptable to correct typographical errors in pencil, and you are encouraged to do so.)

IX. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

You are expected to attend all of your courses regularly. Attendance will be kept, as required by university regulations, for verification of attendance status in relation to student loans, grants, scholarships, etc. Your attendance will not figure directly into the computation of your grade for this course, but it will be virtually impossible for you to learn the material of this course without attending regularly.

X. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Missouri State University is a community of scholars committed to developing educated persons who accept the responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing and following the University's student honor code, *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures*, available at <http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/3935.htm> and also available at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in this policy.

In writing, the most prevalent type of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a very serious offense and will be dealt with accordingly in this course. The first occurrence of plagiarism by a student in this course will result in a grade of "0" being assigned for the paper in question. A second occurrence by the same student will result in the instructor initiating the procedure for assigning an "XF" grade for the course.

A good definition of plagiarism is "to take and use as one's own the writings or ideas of another" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1969, p. 1001). Willis and Klammer (1986, p. 307-308) offer a very clear discussion of what constitutes plagiarism and the most effective ways to avoid it.

XI. DROPPING THE COURSE

It is your responsibility to understand the University's procedure for dropping a class. If you stop attending this class but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class, you will receive a failing grade and will also be financially obligated to pay for the class. For information about dropping a class, see <http://www.missouristate.edu/registrar/chnsched.html>). If you wish to withdraw from the University (i.e., drop all your classes), contact the Registration Center, Carrington 320, 836-4335.

For Fall 2006, the no-penalty drop deadline is Wednesday, October 25; the last day to drop the course is Friday, December 1. Students who drop by the no-penalty drop deadline receive an automatic N grade. Students who drop between the no-penalty drop deadline and the last day to drop receive either an N or an F grade, based on their performance in the course up to the date the drop is processed.

XII. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Any student with a physical or learning disability which he or she feels may affect performance in this course should arrange to meet with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss his/her individual situation.

For further information about services available to students with disabilities, or to request academic accommodation for a disability, contact the Director of Disability Services, Plaster Student Union, Suite 405, (417) 836-4192 (voice); (417) 836-6792 (TTY), <http://www.missouristate.edu/disability>. Students are required to provide documentation of disability to Disability Services prior to receiving accommodations. Disability Services refers some types of accommodation requests to the Learning Diagnostic Clinic which also provides diagnostic testing for learning and psychological disabilities. A fee is charged for testing. For information about testing, contact the Director of the Learning Diagnostic Clinic, (417) 836-4787, <http://psychology.missouristate.edu/ldc/>.

XIII. NONDISCRIMINATION

Missouri State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution, and maintains a grievance procedure available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries or concerns about possible discrimination to the Office for Equity and Diversity, Sicheluff Hall 296, (417) 836-4252. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic nature) should be discussed directly with your instructor and can also be brought to the attention of your instructor's Department Head.

XIV. POLICY ON USE OF CELL PHONES IN CLASS

The use by students of cell phones, pagers, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes is prohibited. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent mode and cannot be taken out during class. At the discretion of the instructor, exception to this policy is possible in special circumstances. See <http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/4264.htm> for complete policy.