The Course:
This course is the study of the development of skills and opportunities that culminate in publishable works in public health and other health science-related professional journals, area-specific journals, cross-disciplinary journals, and other publications. The emphasis is placed on writing, editing, reviewing, and other professional development skills that culminate in the publication of papers in peer-reviewed professional journals and other publishing outlets. It is considered an important skill-development course for professional growth and survival in the academic world or anyplace where written communication and information dissemination are necessary job-related tasks.
About the Instructor:
Robert J. McDermott, Ph.D., FASHA, FAAHB, FAAHE, FRSH
Office hours 12:00 – 1:00 on class days and by appointment
E-mail: rjmcdermott@wisc.edu or rmcdermo@health.usf.edu

Dr. McDermott is a member of 16 professional organizations and is a peer reviewer for 16 professional journals in the fields of public health, health education, psychology and other social and behavioral sciences, education, and social marketing, and is a member of the editorial board of several of these journals. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Health Education, founder and Editor-in-Chief of the Florida Public Health Review, Co-editor of Umwelt und Gesundheit Online (Environment and Health Online) in Germany, Contributing Editor of the "Inside the Academy" column of the American Journal of Health Behavior, Contributing Editor of the "Training Ideas" column of the Social Marketing Quarterly, and Consulting Editor to Psychological Reports. He is the author or co-author of three textbooks (each in multiple editions), and covering the period from 1980 to 2009, of approximately 60 book chapters, 225 articles in peer-reviewed professional journals, and 200+ abstracts, technical reports, non-peer-reviewed papers, Internet publications, computer software, and other publications. He has taught courses and workshops on writing for publication around the country for over 20 years.

Reference Textbooks for Your Consideration:

Some handouts will be posted or provided. Students are encouraged to read from the extensive bibliography and required to select some of these readings or others of their choosing to report on in class. In addition, blinded manuscripts may be distributed for out-of-class and in-class review.

Topics:
Why write?
Preparing to write; reading to write; reading outside of your primary field; good and bad writing styles
Developing the habit to write while still in graduate school
Writing as a creative outlet and as an intellectual exercise
Writing as a means to clarify ideas in your head as well as to communicate thoughts to others
The role of writing in professional advancement
Outlets in your particular interest area of public health - forums for writing and breaking into print
Writing as a professional tool and benefit
Where ideas for writing come from and how they get from your head to the page
Writing articles vs. creating other written products (books, posters, abstracts)
Communicating with editors and reviewers and discovering what reviewers and editors look for
Publication manuals and styles
Sexist language and other real/perceived sources of bias
Authorship, co-authorship, order of authorship, and ethical considerations in publishing
Directing one's writing to the correct literacy level
Editing your own work and that of others
Dealing with writer’s block
Other topics as requested by course participants

Grading and Assignment Expectations:
There are no exams for the course. Feedback will be provided throughout on writing and editing, and other performance. In addition to attendance (50%), there are a few assignments: (1) letter to the editor of 400 words – 10%; (2) written editorial/commentary/viewpoint/position paper of 1000-1500 words – 30%; (3) editing and other reviewing exercises – 10%. Plagiarism will be a topic of discussion during the course, but please do not let it become an object of discussion as well. Ergo, written work should be entirely your own.

Grading: 93-100 = A  90-92 = AB  84-89 = B  80-83 = BC  70-79 = C  60-69 = D  00-59 = F

Lecture Schedule and Assignment Due Dates:

Meeting 1: July 27
DUE (July 28 @ 12:00 noon): E-mail (rjmcdermott@wisc.edu) a list of 5 or more questions that you would like to have discussed about writing, publishing, life in academia, or related issues.

Meeting 2: July 29
DUE (July 29 @ 9:00 AM): Submit a draft of a 400-word letter to the editor of a professional journal (name the journal) in your field that takes issue with a particular article, practice, or editorial policy. In addition to a copy that you keep for yourself, submit a hard copy (that has your name and a pseudonym on it that you will use during the course) to the instructor, and two hard copies containing just the pseudonym (that will be reviewed by two peers in the class).
DUE (July 29 @ 9:00 AM): Seek out, print out or photocopy, and submit the "Information for Authors" guidelines from 5 professional journals in your particular field of interest in which you could conceivably publish in the next year. Most of these may be available on-line.

Meeting 3: July 31
DUE (July 31 @ 9:00 AM): Submit peer-edited/reviewed letters with name of reviewer.
DUE (July 31 @ 9:00 AM): Be prepared to summarize in ≤3 minutes something from the bibliography or something from related literature of your choosing. You will probably only have to do this once during the course, although you are responsible for summarizing (~300 words) each of five readings.

Meeting 4: August 4
DUE (August 4 @9:00 AM): First draft, 1000-word to 1500-word editorial, commentary, or viewpoint/position paper (topic and journal of your selection); same format as letter regarding copies.

Meeting 5: August 6
DUE (August 6 @ 9:00 AM): Submit your peer-edited and reviewed
editorial/commentary/position paper with name of reviewer

DUE (August 6 @ 9:00 AM): Revised letter to the editor (final version) with edited copies attached.

DUE (August 6 @ 11:00 PM): Submit electronically summaries of five readings (~300 word summary of each) to rjmcdermott@wisc.edu.

Conclusion: August 11

DUE (August 11 @ 11:00 PM): Submit the final version of the 1000- to 1500-word editorial/commentary/viewpoint/position paper (send electronically to – rjmcdermott@wisc.edu).
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Gay, J.T., & Edgil, A.E. (1989). When your manuscript is rejected. Nursing and Health Care, 10(8), 459-461.
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