IDS 101-21: College Colloquium: Technically Speaking
Fall 11
Course Procedures

Professor: Josh Laison
Ford 215, x6689, jlaison@willamette.edu

Office Hours:
Monday 2:00-3:30
Wednesday 2:00-3:30
Thursday 10:00-11:30, at the Bistro
or anytime by appointment or by catching me in my office. You can see my schedule and available times at http://www.willamette.edu/~jlaison

Writing Associate: Stephanie Crook
scrook@willamette.edu

Class Meetings: Ford 224, 12:40-1:40, Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Texts:
Required:
Natalie Angier, The Canon: A Whirligig Tour of the Beautiful Basics of Science
Matt Ridley, Genome: The Autobiography of a Species in 23 Chapters
Martin Rees, Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe
Ian Stewart, How to Cut a Cake: And Other Mathematical Conundrums

Recommended:
Diana Hacker, A Pocket Style Manual

Course Web Page: http://www.willamette.edu/~jlaison/tech.html

Course Objectives:
This course is designed to strengthen your skills of reading, writing, and communicating science and mathematics. This includes:

• Becoming a better reader of scientific writing.
• Becoming a better expository writer, with a focus on improving organization, logical reasoning, engaging the reader, and editing through multiple drafts.
• Improving your ability to communicate complex ideas and engage in meaningful, informed discussion.
• Improving your ability to think deeply and critically about complex topics.
• Learning a lot of interesting new science.
Graded Components of the Course:

- **Two papers, 15% each.**
  In these papers, you will explain a scientific topic from the readings. You will meet with the writing associate and me to revise each of your papers, and you will also revise each paper based on feedback from the other students in the class. The final drafts of your papers will include an appendix discussing these comments, and their impact on the final versions of the papers.

- **Two oral presentations, 15% each.**
  In consultation with me, each student will select two articles or chapters to read and present to the rest of the class. For each presentation, you will first give a practice presentation with an opportunity for professor and peer feedback. Presentations should be polished and organized, and may include a digital component, use of the whiteboard, handouts, or other visual aids.

- **Two days of leading discussions in class, 10% each.**
  For two of the reading assignments, in a team with another student from the class, you will lead the day’s discussion. This will include reading the assignment ahead of time, identifying key ideas and potential sources of confusion, and generating a list of potential questions and topics for discussion. Again, your team will meet with me before the day of your discussion so I can help you prepare.

- **Attendance, participation in discussions, reading assignments, peer feedback, 20%.**
  For the class discussions to be successful, every student should actively participate in every discussion. This doesn’t mean that you need to have figured out every idea in the readings, or that you’re ready to answer every question your classmates pose. It does mean that you should be actively engaged in class, and ready to provide thoughtful input in discussions. I will gauge your effort in class discussions, and provide regular feedback on how I think you’re doing. This component of the grade also includes any short writing assignments I ask you to complete (i.e. responses to reading assignments, in-class written exercises, etc.).

College Resources:

- **The Writing Center**
  The Willamette University Writing Center is an excellent resource to help you write and edit your papers. You can sign up for an appointment during their office hours, or drop in to talk to a writing consultant about your paper in progress. Don’t feel that this is extra help that you only need in a crisis. Everyone benefits from a second opinion on their writing, even professionals. The writing center is on the ground floor of Matthews Hall and on the web at http://www.willamette.edu/dept/wcenter
  From the Writing Center web page: “The Writing Center is a place where members
of the Willamette community can discuss and work on their writing in a comfortable, supportive atmosphere. Experienced writing consultants from a variety of disciplines are eager to discuss your papers at any stage, from blank page to almost finished draft. With friendly smiles and free tea, cocoa, and snacks, we look forward to making your writing process a positive and rewarding experience. Please make an appointment to come see us soon!"

• **The Course Writing Associate**

Stephanie Crook is a Willamette senior hired by the Writing Center to be a consultant for our class. She is paid to help you with your papers, and you are required to meet with her for each of your two papers. You may meet with her at any stage in the writing process before the due date, but the further in your writing process you are, the more helpful she will be. I hope that by the end of the semester, you will become accustomed to seeking others’ feedback on your writing, and come to think of it as a natural part of the writing process.

• **Bishop Wellness Center**

From the Bishop Wellness Center web page: “Our office facilitates reasonable accommodations for those students with a qualifying disability or temporary medical condition and to provide academic assistance on an individual basis to any undergraduate or graduate student who requests it.”

If you have learning needs for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact me to discuss them. Additionally, you will need to register with Disability and Learning Services in the Bishop Wellness Center within the first two weeks of class. All such discussions will be confidential.

**Course Conduct**

• **Attendance and participation**

As stated above, the quality of our class meetings will suffer if any student is absent or disengaged. I hope you will make every effort, not only to attend class, but also to actively participate. This includes coming to class on time, bringing the assigned reading to class, turning off your cell phone during class, using your laptop only for class-related activities, etc.

• **Late assignments**

I expect everyone to complete all assignments on time. If a crisis during the semester prevents you from doing this, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably before the missed assignment. Late assignments will be given lower grades, depending on the lateness of the assignment. Late drafts of papers are particularly bad, since you will not be able to participate in peer revision of your paper in class.

• **Plagiarism and academic honesty**

Plagiarism can take different forms, but its essence is presenting the words or work of another person as your own. When you are quoting from a source you must place
that material in quotation marks and correctly cite the source of the quotation. If you are paraphrasing someone else you must provide the source from which you are paraphrasing.

Plagiarism is a very serious offense and an insult to your professor and your classmates. If you plagiarize, your paper will receive a 0 and the incident will be reported to the Dean of the College. In addition, you may also fail the course or be expelled from the college.