Instructors: Ed Grafius (grafius@msu.edu), Matt Grieshop (grieshop@msu.edu)

Objectives:

1. Develop and improve scientific writing skills
2. Produce a journal article or thesis/dissertation chapter using your own research data
3. Write a short proposal for future research

Anticipated audience: Second-year M.S. and second to third-year Ph.D. students who have completed enough research to begin writing a scientific journal article or thesis/dissertation chapter.

Pre-requisite: Each student should have at least part of his/her own research data analyzed and ready to begin writing a journal article or thesis/dissertation chapter.

Expected Result: Each student will produce a journal-quality scientific article or thesis/dissertation chapter. Students will write and revise their own scientific article, section-by-section, beginning with title, introduction, methods, etc. By the end of the semester each student should have finished a complete journal article or thesis/dissertation chapter. Students will also write a brief grant proposal.

Lecture/discussions (approximately every 3 weeks): Meeting time is to be arranged, depending on students’ schedules and time available. Meetings will include a brief lecture/discussion of how to write the next section of your journal article, as well as more general material on writing and scientific style, etc.

Assignments (due 1 - 2 weeks after lecture): The first assignment will be to write a title and an introduction for your paper, second assignment will be methods, etc. In addition to completing each new assignment, students will also revise the previous section, based on comments and suggestions from their group.

Small group meetings: Students will meet in small groups the week after each assignment is due to review and discuss each others’ writing.

Grading: Based on class and small group participation and timely completion of assignments. Grades will be assigned according to number of points accumulated:

- 10 points for turning in each assignment on time (60 pt possible)
- 10 points for reviewing small group members’ papers and participating in each discussion group meeting (50 points possible)
- Totals: 100-110 points = 4.0; 90-99 points = 3.5; 80-89 points = 3.0, etc.


Other required reference book: Strunk, et al., The Elements of Style (any edition is fine).