

English Technical Writing

Gerry Rau
Fall 2023 (112-1)
Class 15

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Feedback

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Abstract and Title

- Title and abstract are two of the most essential parts of an article (title is the first thing that readers see, and abstract is a paragraph that makes readers understand your contribution).
- I think the abstract is the hardest part to writing because it's hard to write the whole research in few sentences and it must catch the readers eyes.
- Yes and Yes.

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Abbreviations

- I think one problem of my writing is the use of abbreviations. Because there are lots of abbreviations in my writing, I need to write carefully to make the sentences clear.
- Yes.

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Plagiarism

- The problem in writing is that I am afraid of the plagiarism check because even though I have modified the sentences, the checking still counts as plagiarism. I do not know if I misunderstood about plagiarism or not.
- Turn the work in and we can look at it together
- Consider
 - What part of the article (Methods, Background – maybe ok)
 - What is it similar to (journal article to conference paper – ok)

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First draft

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Turnitin

- Measures similarity
 - May not catch all similarity: symbols, super/subscripts, line/page breaks
- NOT the same as plagiarism
 - Plagiarism = intent

Alerts instructor to possibility

Before, students probably got away with some things –
 Now, it will be harder

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Turnitin

- Never ask anyone to check your document using their account, or let anyone else use your account
- Whatever is submitted will be listed as that person's work – and cause problems later!

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Plagiarism

- Getting credit for
 - Something that is not your own work
 - (Particularly if you do not cite it!) ← Turnitin
- Getting credit twice for the same work
 - You may not submit the same paper to 2 journals
 - (Even in translation)
 - You may not submit the same paper to 2 courses
 - (Unless both instructors know and agree – which usually will involve extra work to compensate) ← Turnitin

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Plagiarism

Table 18.2 Examples of plagiarism and non-plagiarism

Modification	Swales & Feak (2004: 173)	Plagiarism or not?
Substituting	"Copying a paragraph making only small changes, such as replacing a few verbs or adjectives with synonyms."	Copying a paragraph, but making a few minor changes, like changing some of the verbs or replacing adjectives with other words meaning the same thing.
Reordering	"Cutting and pasting a paragraph by using the sentences of the original but leaving one or two out, or by putting one or two sentences in a different order."	Putting one or two sentences in a different order, or leaving one or two out, but basically cutting and pasting a paragraph from the original.

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Not Plagiarism


<p>Rewriting</p>	<p>"Composing a paragraph by taking short standard phrases from a number of sources and putting them together with some words of your own."</p>	<p>If all the authors in your field use the same standard phrases, you will need to use them as well, but by putting them in the context of your own work you make them your own.</p>
<p>Paraphrasing or Expanding</p>	<p>"Paraphrasing a paragraph by rewriting with substantial changes in language and organization, amount of detail, and examples."</p>	<p>If you totally reorganize a paragraph, making it longer by adding examples as I have to the categories suggested by Swales & Feak (2004) or summarizing points to make it shorter, this is considered paraphrasing.</p>

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Specific comments

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Requesting Assistance



Simple Email:
Notification

Imposing Email:
Request

Email:
General principles

Work Time and
Assignment

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Why Learn About Email?

Section 21.1

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Why study it?


- Just like studying exemplars
 - Can learn slowly by experience
 - Purposeful study can increase chance of success
- Same principles
 - Emails are also arguments!
 - If the email is important: plan, write, rewrite



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Email or Emails?

- Collective or plural?
 - I got a lot of email today. (collective)
 - I got a lot of emails today. (plural)
- Both!
 - I got a lot of email today. (large amount)
 - I got a lot of emails today. (large number)



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Simple email: Notification

Absence from class



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Practice Evaluation Improvement

Email 1: Notification



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Write, Evaluate, Improve

- Please make one Word document
- For each email
 - Write
 - We will discuss it as a class
 - Revise – Make a copy and revise, so I can see before/after
- Upload to ECourse (Email practice)
 - Not graded
 - Will help me improve class for next year

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Email 1:

- Write a letter requesting permission to be Absent from class (due to sickness)

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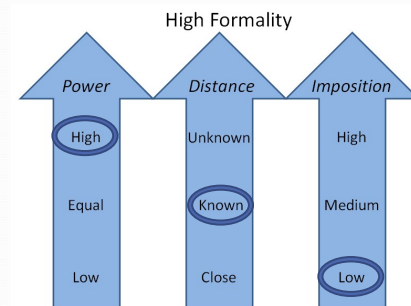
Try ChatGPT

- Ask ChatGPT to write
- Ask ChatGPT to edit what you wrote
- Ask ChatGPT to rewrite, with more detailed request

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Assessing Formality

Fig 21.2



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Absence from class

- What salutation and closing should you use? (How formal?)
 - Table 17.3 Salutations
 - Table 17.4 Closings
 - Table 17.5 Signatures
- Do you need a self-introduction?
- How much explanation do you need?

Culturally bound:
Respected professor

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Success or Failure?

My kindly Teacher Linda:

Request:
Demanding, Unclear

I want to take a leave of absence the next morning because I have to go home for some necessary things. I know you are the most kindly and beautiful teacher, so you would permit my asking, wouldn't you?

Reason:
Irrelevant

Sincerely yours,
Amy

From Yuanshan Chen

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Success or Failure?

Dear Dr. Chen:

Request:
Apologetic, Clear

This is Angelina Chang from your Large Scale Integrated Design on Wednesday morning. I'm sorry that I cannot attend your class on May 4. I totally understand that you are usually not happy to permit students for a leave, but I'm writing this e-mail to you in order to ask for your permission. This is important for me because I was notified to attend a job interview held by TSMC, and the time will be at 8:30am in the headquarter in Taipei. I have enclosed the notification from TSMC for you. It will be my pleasure to receive your reply soon.

Thank you for your time.

Reason:
Well-supported

Yours faithfully,
Angelina

From Yuanshan Chen 25

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Personal Identification

- This is Mary, from your Technical Writing class ...
- Not necessary if recipient knows you
 - In contact list, unless writing from new email address
- Necessary in a distant relationship
 - Establishes relationship or basis for relationship
 - "You may not remember me, but we met when you spoke at Chung Cheng University last year."

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Amount of Information

- Clarity
 - Direct statement of purpose of email
 - Sufficient background information
- Not too much or too little
 - Clear, concise

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Which is Best?

- I cannot come to class tomorrow:
 - for personal reasons
 - ➔ because I need to take my mother to the doctor
 - because my mother has chronic arthritis, and can't get around by herself, so I have to go up to Miaoli to take her to see the doctor, and won't be able to get a bus back in time to make it to class

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Email 1: Improvement

- Absence from class
- What salutation and closing should you use?
(How formal?)
- Do you need a self-introduction?
(When is it in the course, how many students?)
- How much explanation do you need?
- Put your revision in the same document

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ChatGPT



Write a formal email of absence from today's class:

student name: Elaine

reason: sick leave

instructor: Professor Rau

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ChatGPT

Subject: Request for Absence from Today's Class – Elaine

Dear Professor Rau,

Rather personal?
I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to inform you that I will not be able to attend today's class due to illness. My name is Elaine, and I am enrolled in your [Course Name] class.

Unfortunately, I have fallen sick and my doctor has advised me to rest and recover at home. As a result, I will not be able to participate in today's lecture. I understand the importance of class attendance, and I sincerely apologize for any inconvenience my absence may cause.

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ChatGPT

I would like to request any materials or assignments that may be discussed or assigned during today's class so that I can catch up on the missed content as soon as possible. Additionally, if there are any class-specific instructions or requirements related to my absence, please do let me know, and I will ensure to follow them diligently.

I am committed to staying up-to-date with the course and will make every effort to ensure that my absence does not hinder my progress. If there is any way in which I can make up for the missed class or if you need any further information from me, please don't hesitate to reach out to me via email or through any preferred communication method.

Thank you for your understanding and consideration. I look forward to rejoining the class and continuing with my studies as soon as I am back to full health.

Sincerely,

Elaine [Last Name]
[Your Student ID or Course Section, if applicable]
[Your Contact Information]

One day absence – too much information?
Okay as a draft – not final letter
Or give more specific prompts

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Imposing email: Request


Comment on paper



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Practice Evaluation Improvement

Email 2: Request



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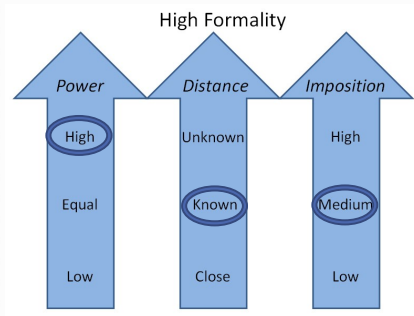
Email 2:

- Request a professor you know to write a recommendation letter for you

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Assessing Formality

Fig 21.2



Power	Distance	Imposition
High	Unknown	High
Equal	Known	Medium
Low	Close	Low

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Email 2:

- What salutation and closing should you use? (How formal?)
- Do you need a self-introduction?
- How much explanation do you need?

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Directness

- English viewed as being very direct
- Speak directly to individual, using indirect speech
- Particularly in request, face-threatening situations

The diagram shows two communication paths. In the top path, labeled 'Chinese', speaker A (smiley face) sends a 'Direct Speech' arrow to speaker C (smiley face), who then sends a 'Direct Speech' arrow to speaker B (smiley face). In the bottom path, labeled 'English', speaker A (smiley face) sends an 'Indirect Speech' arrow directly to speaker B (smiley face).

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Which is most polite?

- Could you please look over my paper and give me comments by next week?
- I want you to look over my paper and give me comments by next week.
- Please look over my paper and give me comments by next week. Thank you.
- I would appreciate it if you could look over my paper and give me comments on it by next week.

Most indirect
Use of modals:
would, could

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Ways of requesting

Table 21.6

Most polite	I wonder if it would be too much bother for you to ... I wonder if you could ... I would appreciate it if you could ... If possible, I would like you to ... Would you mind ...	Most indirect Use of modals: would, could
Polite	Could you please be so kind as to ... Could you please ... Could you ...	
Less polite	Can you please ... Can you ... I hope you can ...	
Impolite	Please ... I want you to ... I need you to ...	

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Success or Failure?

Hi,
This is the paper I will submit to JP. The deadline is tomorrow. Please tell me how to revise it.
Your student,
Anthony

Request:
Demanding,
Impolite

Maximum imposition

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Success or Failure?

Dear Prof. Chen,
Attached is the paper I plan to submit to IEEE. I apologize for sending it to you so late, but the deadline is next Friday. I wonder if you would have time to look at it before then.
Sincerely,
Bill

Request:
Apologetic,
Polite

Minimize imposition

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Email 2: Improvement

- Request from a professor you know
- What salutation and closing should you use? (How formal?)
- Do you need a self-introduction?
- How much explanation do you need?

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ChatGPT

Write a request email for my professor to ask for a reference letter for applying for a teaching job:
 my name: Elaine Hsu
 request: reference letter
 instructor: Professor Rau

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ChatGPT

...
 The application deadline for this position is [mention the application deadline], so I would appreciate it if you could complete the letter at your earliest convenience. If there is any additional information or materials you require from me to craft a comprehensive recommendation, please do not hesitate to let me know.
 ...

Definitely failed
 to recognize non-
 reciprocal
 relationship

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Face-threatening email: Apology or Need

Higher grade

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Practice Evaluation Improvement

Email 3: Face-threatening

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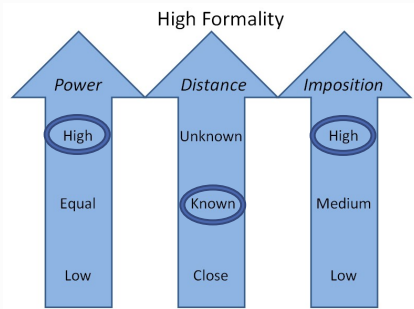
Request for a higher grade

- Request for a higher grade to pass/keep scholarship

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Assessing Formality

Fig 21.2



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Types of justification

- Personal:
 - “Since you are my advisor, can I talk with you about what courses I should take next semester?”
- Institutional:
 - “Since the university requires that I consult with my advisor before signing up for classes, would it be possible to meet sometime next week to go over the options?”

Which is better?

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Email 3: Face-threatening

- What salutation and closing should you use? (How formal?)
- Do you need a self-introduction?
- How much explanation do you need?
- How do you justify it?

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Email General Principles

Section 21.2



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General Principle 1: Respond promptly

- How quickly should someone respond to email?
 - Within 1 day
 - If you need more time, give a date when you will answer
- How long should you wait before asking if someone got an email you sent?
 - At least 1-2 days
 - Depends on how soon you need a response
 - Depends on how much time is needed to respond

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General Principle 2: Use subject line, identify yourself

- Subject line makes it easy for your reader
 - Not: Hello, Pdf, Talk, Need help!
 - Specifically identify the topic
 - Change subject line if you change subject
 - Easy to find the email later
- Personal information the reader will know is from you
 - Write at least one line in your email
 - Especially if you have an attachment or web link

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Would you open these files?

- No text in the email
- (Not unless I am expecting to receive those files)

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General Principle 3: Send it to (only) the right person

- Do check the addressee before hitting 'send'
- Do not 'reply all' unless necessary

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Example 1, Student to teacher

From: Student **A**
To: gerryrau@ccu...; gerryrau@hotmail...

Hello Professor,
I am unable to attend class this week as I am going to a conference held at Taipei. So kindly grant me leave for on this day.
Thank you,
Warm regards,
Student A

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Example 1, Student to teacher

From: Student **B**
To: gerryray@ccu...; gerryrau@hotmail...

Hello Professor,
I am unable to attend class this week as I am going to a conference held at Taipei. So kindly grant me leave for on this day.
Thank you,
Warm regards,
Student **A**

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Example 2, Context

- Series of correspondence between:
- Editors of a book on philosophy of science/science teaching
 - "Bob" – Editor
 - "Carol" – Assistant – writing the initial email
- Authors who had submitted proposals for a chapter
 - Both about difference between science/engineering
 - Me
 - "Annie A"

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Example 2, Email 1

From: Carol
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2016 7:44 AM
To: Gerry Rau, Annie A, Bob
Subject: Science and Engineering

Dr. A and Dr. Rau, **Formal**

Bob and I have discussed each of your proposals and think that we definitely need something about the science and engineering distinction and that you both have excellent points. But we think that they may be able to be combined into one chapter with both of you together. If you are willing to consider this, I can send you each others proposals to start the conversation.

Please let us know what you think of our idea! Thanks!
Carol **Informal**

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Example 2, Email 2

From: Gerry Rau
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2016, 5:11 PM
To: Carol, Annie A, Bob
Subject: Re: Science and Engineering

Reply all

Dear Carol,

← Informal

Thanks for your commitment to including the engineering/science distinction. Without seeing Annie's proposal it is a little hard to know how well our ideas would work together, but if you think there is enough overlap I would be willing to look at it and talk about options.

Sincerely,
 Gerry

← Informal

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Example 2, Email 3

From: Annie
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2016 9:53 PM
To: Gerry Rau
Subject: Science and Engineering

Reply, not reply all

Gerry & Carol

← More Informal

I agree Gerry, and would welcome the possibility of collaborating if there's overlap. If we could take a look at one another's proposals to consider how we might proceed we could begin the conversation.

Carol could you forward us one another's chapter proposals?

Annie

← More Informal

Ten days later
- Why no response?

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Example 3, Context

- Series of correspondence between:
- Editors of a book on email
 - 1st Editor
 - 2nd Editor – writing the initial email
- Authors of one of the chapters
 - Author
 - Co-author

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Example 3, Editor to Author

From: [2nd Editor]
To: [Author, Coauthor]
Cc: [1st Editor]
Subject: Your paper for the Springer book

Dear [Author, Coauthor],

← Formal, Letter of request

This is a follow up on the statistical problems and some other issues that require attention. [Details]

Very polite - modals

We would appreciate it if you could address our concerns to your statistical analysis and send back your revised paper (a clean version) by April 15 and let us know the changes in an email message, so that we can move on to the next stage of our editorial work. Thank you.

Best regards,
 [2nd Editor]

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Example 3, Response to Editor

From: [Author]
To: [2nd editor]
Cc: [Coauthor], [1st Editor]
Subject: Re: Your paper for the Springer book

Reply all, so everyone sees

Dear [2nd Editor],

Thank you very much for your detailed comments and for your scrutiny. Since it has been a while since we edited the last version, we will re-examine the data, consult an expert(s) in statistics, and fix the statistical problems you point out. The discussion about the statistical result will then be revised accordingly.

[Details]

← Formal tone, thanks, apology

Thank you again for your very detailed efforts. We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Best,
 [1st Author]

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Example 3, Co-author to Author

From: [Coauthor]
To: [Author]
Cc: [2nd Editor], [1st Editor]
Subject: Re: Your paper for the Springer book

Dear [Author],

← Actual recipients, reply all

← Intended recipients, reply

I'm not sure if I should respond with Yikes! or Groan! or Wow they really reviewed the content carefully! No matter what the response, seems like there's a lot to do. Should we meet before the holiday? [Details]

Best,
 [Coauthor]

Watch out for "reply all"!!

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Example 3, Author to Co-author

From: [Author]
 To: [Coauthor]
 Cc: [2nd editor]; [1st editor]
 Subject: Re: Your paper for the Springer book

← Actual recipients, reply all

← Intended recipients, reply

Dear [Coauthor],

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Example 3, Author to Co-author

From: [Author]
 To: [Coauthor]
 Cc: [2nd editor]; [1st editor]
 Subject: Re: Your paper for the Springer book

← Actual recipients, reply all

← Intended recipients, reply

Dear [Coauthor],

I'd say "Yikes"! I was really upset about the comments.
 I thought it was the editor ([2nd editor]) who did the editing, ...

[Details]

Thanks again for your prompt response.

Best,
 [Author]

Watch out for
 "reply all"!!

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General Principle 4: Be careful what you say

- An email is a written record, easily spread
- Bad examples may be used for teaching purposes

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Work time



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Final questions

- "Final" chance to ask questions about your writing
 - Anything unclear on comments on rough draft
 - (You may ask questions next week if you want)
- Title and Abstract

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Assignment

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Final presentation

- 12/26 (next week)
 - Submit before 11 am
- Two options
 - Research presentation (12-15 minutes + 5 minutes Q&A)
 - What you learned (8-10 minutes + 2 minutes Q&A)

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Final presentation – option 1

- Conference style presentation (12-15 minutes)
 - Your research
 - Structure like an article
 - What was your goal? Why is it important and needed? (Intro)
 - How did you achieve your goal? (Process/Method)
 - How did you prove you achieved your goal? (Testing, R&D)
 - What have you achieved? (Conclusion)
 - Remember who your audience is
 - Not all in your field
 - = More introduction, background

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Final presentation – option 2

- Most important thing(s) you learned (8-10 minutes)
 - Structure of exemplar articles
 - Process of writing/rewriting
- Remember who your audience is
 - Do not tell us what we already know
- Give examples of how you used that knowledge
 - Demonstrate that you actually learned it

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Final draft of Introduction 12/31

- **Complete Introduction + Title/Abstract/References:**
 - Title
 - Abstract
 - All necessary components
 - At least 8 citations
 - References in format of journal
- **Formatting:**
 - Remember what you learned in the first half of the course!
 - Delete track changes, comments

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Feedback Plus

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Weekly feedback

- Different questions:
 - Any comments on the course as a whole
 - Anything that will help me improve the course

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Course evaluation

- (If you have not done it yet)
- 12/9-12/29
<https://www026190.ccu.edu.tw/evaluation/001.php>
- One 'reverse' question

- Comments to future students: Evaluation
- Suggestions for me: Feedback

