

Syllabus supplement  
WL 367 Ichthyology  
Fall 2009  
Writing assignment

**Learning Outcomes:**

Students will complete a writing assignment, focusing on critical thinking, organization, time management, effective scientific writing, and detail-oriented revision. In turn, the entire class will practice the peer review process and learn from other student's research.

Specifically, students will learn to...

1. use electronic databases, including Web of Science, to find literature relevant to their topic and properly cite sources,
2. communicate effectively (clearly and concisely) through writing,
3. compose technical scientific writing, focusing on formatting and organization,
4. provide peer-review, and
5. revise their writing.

**Assignment (general description):**

Each student will choose a writing topic from the list below. The assignment will be evaluated by your instructor and your peers in stages to help you effectively manage your time, prevent misdirection, and allow you to improve your writing through iterative revisions. You will receive points for completing each iteration in a timely manner, and you will receive points for quality of the paper after the final draft is submitted.

- 1: Draft a research proposal to investigate the evolutionary relationship among cichlids in Lake Malawi.
- 2: Write a field guide to the cyprinids of South Dakota.
- 3: Prepare a technical report that describes the fish assemblage of the Big Sioux River in South Dakota. All necessary data are provided on D2L.

**Guidelines for papers:**

1. Double spaced and typed
2. Number pages (bottom-center)
3. Title page
4. Organize your document, paragraphs (topic sentences; STEP: state, translate, exemplify, prove), and sentences (structure; subject-verb agreement).
5. Follow formatting guidelines of the journal, Transactions of the American Fisheries Society (see attached)
6. Critically read, re-read, and read aloud what you have written, then revise until it is clear, concise, and makes sense
7. Avoid misspellings and grammatical errors
8. See me whenever you have a question or a problem

**Assignment (exactly what needs to be turned in):**

Paper Topic

Choice of one of three topics above.

Annotated Bibliography

A list of entries that you will eventually use in your literature cited (80% primary literature). Following each entry, paraphrase (2-5 sentences) the important information that you will use from this source in your paper.

Rough Draft

A complete draft of the paper, including the edited literature cited section (based on my comments from your annotated bibliography).

Peer Review

Four anonymous written reviews of your peers' papers. These will include a summary of the main points of the paper, strengths of the paper, weaknesses of the paper, suggestions on how to improve weaknesses, and line-by-line detailed comments (correct typos, formatting errors, etc.).

Final Draft

Revision of your rough draft based on peer and instructor feedback, including a cover letter detailing your responses to peer and instructor feedback.

**Due dates (all submitted in D2L dropboxes by 11:59PM CST on the date below):**

9/15	<u>Paper Topic</u>
10/6	<u>Annotated Bibliography</u>
10/20	<u>Rough Draft</u>
11/5	<u>Peer Review</u>
12/10	<u>Final Draft</u>