

**Writing 20**  
**The Billion Dollar Problem of Aquatic Invasive Species**  
**Spring 2010 Course Syllabus**

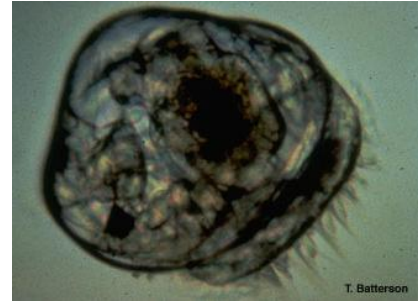
Writing 20.63 and 20.77: Academic Writing

Time and Location: Tues/Thurs 2:50-4:05 Bell Dorm East 110 (20.77)

Tues/Thurs 6:00-7:15 Art 116 (20.63)

Blackboard site to access course materials: <https://courses.duke.edu>

Instructor: Dr. Sandra L. Cooke  
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Office location: Art Building 200A  
Office hours: Tues/Thurs 12:30-2:30 pm and by appointment  
<http://www.duke.edu/~sc153>



Source: [http://www.sgnis.org/publicat/slide/zm\\_vs3.htm](http://www.sgnis.org/publicat/slide/zm_vs3.htm)

Texts: All texts will be provided on Blackboard or handed out in class.

Course Overview:

Aquatic invasive species, including both plants and animals, cost the United States billions of dollars each year in damage to habitat quality, water supply infrastructure, navigation channels, fisheries, and other sectors. Addressing such a critical problem requires clear, accurate communication among scientists, policymakers, water resource managers, and the general public. In this course we will learn to communicate the science, policy, and societal implications of aquatic invasive species through writing that informs, provides new insights, and raises important questions. As with all Writing 20 courses at Duke University, our goals will be to **(1) engage with the work of others**, which we will do through analyzing and responding to news and commentary articles, primary scientific literature, and secondary scholarly literature; **(2) articulate a position**, which will be facilitated by our class discussions and exercises; and **(3) situate writing in specific contexts**, which we will achieve in part by learning how to write for different readerships, for different purposes, and in different formats. We will work towards these goals through **researching, workshopping, revising, and editing**. Please refer to <http://uwp.duke.edu/courses/writing20/students/goals.html> for elaboration of the Writing 20 Goals and Practices. I hope that after completing this course you will be better able to critically analyze texts, develop new insights into an issue, and communicate those insights through writing that is purposeful, clear, and concise.

Narrative of Course:

In the first part of the course we will begin our work by reading and writing press releases, research highlights, and other texts for broad readerships as we learn some of the broader problems of invasive species and the ecology, history, and societal impacts of a few significant aquatic invaders in the U.S. The species we will study include aquatic animals such as zebra mussels and Asian carp, and aquatic plants such as Didymo. You will select one of these species to research in more detail, a task that will involve working with peer-reviewed scientific literature. Your **first of two major writing projects will be a literature review** in which you discuss important research findings and implications for your selected species. Your literature review will be targeted toward a more specialized readership compared

to your earlier course writings. Literature reviews in the natural sciences can actually be divided into several sub-genres, and thus your literature may be a “policy forum”, a “perspective”, or some combination of the two. You’ll learn what these mean soon!

One outcome of your literature review will be a recommendation for one or more future research directions regarding your selected species. In the second half of the course, you will select one of these research directions, frame it in terms of an approachable research question, and write a **research pre-proposal, the second major writing project**. When writing a pre-proposal the goal is to use what is often a limited amount of space to “sell” your idea to a multi-disciplinary review panel so that they will then invite you to submit a full proposal for funding consideration. Pre-proposals can focus more on key ideas and implications and less on the proposed methodology. Your pre-proposal will be targeted toward a peer review panel comprised of both experts and those unfamiliar with your selected invasive species. Throughout this course, consideration of audience and your purpose as a writer will be emphasized as components of successful writing, and we will rely on the tools of careful research, thoughtful self- and peer-review, and frequent revision.

### Course Activities:

*Major Writing Projects (MWP)* – The two papers outlined above (MWP#1 – literature review and MWP#2 – pre-proposal) will form the backbone of this course, and thus will account for the majority of your grade (see *Grades* below). Each of these papers will be taken through multiple drafts and will be workshopped by your peers.

*Short Writings (SW)* – Examples of SWs include short response essays (1 page or less), revision reflections of major assignments, blog posts, and peer reviews. These will be graded simply as √ (2 pts – you put in good thought and effort to do the work), √- (1 pt – work appears half-hearted or instructions were not followed), or 0 (missing or incomplete). As of the first week of this course there are 8 of these on our schedule; however, I reserve the right to add a few more as our semester progresses!

*Asian Carp Press Release* – This medium-sized (in between MWP and SW) collaborative project will account for 9% of your grade and will be completed with a partner.

### Course Procedures:

*Attendance, Participation, and Conduct* – This is a small, seminar-style class, and thus it is expected that everyone will attend class on time and participate in activities and discussions to the best of one’s abilities. If you do miss a class it is your responsibility to learn what happened in class on the day you were absent and to obtain any of the materials distributed that day. If your absence is excused, you can see me to find out what you missed, but if your absence is unexcused, you can ask a classmate or check Blackboard. You should let me know in advance if you will miss a class or notify me of your excuse as soon as possible after the absence occurs. Missing class or consistently being late to class will impact the “Quality of Participation” component of your course grade (see below). During class interactions – which include discussions and peer review – please be respectful of differing opinions and viewpoints.

*Submitting Work* – All assignments must be submitted electronically via Blackboard or e-mailed to me by the due date and time, unless I specify otherwise. For MWPs and some SWs, one or more hard copies must also be brought to class on the due date for workshopping or peer review. I will let you know when hard copies are necessary. Late work will be assessed on a case-by-case

basis and may lower your grade (usually a third of a letter grade per day – e.g., A to A-). For assignment format, please use Times New Roman 12 pt font, 1 inch margins, and double spacing, unless otherwise noted. For papers longer than one page, please number the pages. Also, for workshopping papers in class please number the lines (in Word 2007 click on “Page Layout”).

*Back-up Your Work* – It is always good practice to save your work in multiple places besides your hard drive. Hard drives can crash and flash drives can easily be lost. Consider using Webfiles, an online storage service provided to the Duke community. Duke students receive 5 GB of personal file space for free. Find out more about Webfiles here:

<http://www.oit.duke.edu/comp-print/storage/webfiles/index.php>

Additionally, Duke has partnered with Iron Mountain to provide a reduced-cost PC back-up and recovery plan:

<http://www.oit.duke.edu/comp-print/storage/backup/index.php>

I urge you to consider these options because computer problems WILL NOT BE AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE for late or missing work.

*Editing and Proofreading* – This is not a course in the mechanics of writing. Students in Writing 20 are expected to be able to write reasonably correct prose. This means you are responsible for making sure that your work is presented with care and thought. I am willing to help you with any questions you may have about points of style, usage, or grammar, but I should not be the first reader of your work. So, ask friends, classmates, or roommates to look over your work. I will not accept any writing that strikes me as hurriedly or carelessly prepared, so make sure to review, edit, and proofread all the work you do for this course before you turn it in.

*Grades* – Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

Asian Carp Press Release	9%
Major Writing Project #1	28%
Major Writing Project #2	28%
~8-10 Short Writings	25%
Quality of participation	10%

I will distribute detailed grading rubrics for the major writing projects. Please keep in mind that I may modify (i.e., add to) our list of short writings as the semester progresses. Your “quality of participation” includes your thoughtful responses to the texts (via oral or blog discussion), your critical readings of your peers’ texts, and your participation in class activities (including attendance/ tardiness). Also, please note the following grading policy: a MWP is worth 28% of your grade, but failing to turn in one of the major writing projects will result in a failing grade for the course (i.e., you cannot receive a zero on one of these MWPs and pass the course).

Letter Grade	Percent equivalent	Range for final grade
A+	100	100
A	95	>92 to <100
A-	92	90 to 92
B+	88	88 to <90
B	85	>82 to <88
B-	82	80 to 82
C+	78	78 to <80
C	75	>72 to <78
C-	72	70 to 72
D+	68	68 to <70
D	65	>62 to <68
D-	62	60 to 62

In order to compute your final grade, I will assign the letter grade received on each paper a percent according to the table above. For example, let us say a student receives grades of an A, B and A- on the press release, MWP 1 and MWP 2, respectively. Let us also assume the student

receives 18/20 on his or her SWs (8 checks and 2 check minuses on 10 SWs), and receives full credit for their Quality of Participation. That student's grade would be computed as follows:

activity	weight	letter grade	Percent equivalent	weight x percent equiv.
Press release	9%	A	95	8.55
MWP #1	28%	B	85	23.8
MWP #2	28%	A-	92	25.76
SWs	25%	18/20	90	22.5
Participation	10%	A+	1	10
Sum:				<b>90.6</b>
Course Grade:				<b>A-</b>

*The Writing Studio* – The Writing Studio has three locations on East Campus: room 219 of the Academic Advising Center, the second floor of Lilly Library, and room 106 of the Art Building. There is also a location on the West Campus: room 112 in Perkins Library. (Go to <http://uwp.duke.edu/wstudio/index.php> for more information.) You can go to the Writing Studio for free help with drafting, revising, or editing any writing assignment you are doing for any course at Duke. The professional writing consultants will work with you on a one-time basis, or they can help you with your writing regularly throughout the term. I encourage you to visit the Studio – every writer, no matter how experienced or inexperienced, needs readers, and the consultants at the Studio are good ones. Be sure to take with you a copy of the assignment you are working on and any drafts with my or your colleagues' comments.

*Citing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism* – Please familiarize yourself with the Duke Community Standard (<http://www.integrity.duke.edu/standard.html>) if you have not done so already. To misrepresent the work of someone else as your own is to plagiarize. When you quote, paraphrase, build upon, respond to, or in any other way draw upon the texts or ideas of others in your writing—as you will surely do in this course—you must note your use of their work. We will use different citation styles for each assignment, as I will explain in detail later. Please visit <http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/index.html> or speak to me for additional guidelines, and I will be happy to help. I do not anticipate problems with plagiarism in this course, but the penalty for plagiarism would be a failing course grade.

*Other* – Please do not hesitate to speak to me if you have a learning disability, physical condition, or any other situation that may hamper your abilities in this course.