RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Centre for Postgraduate Studies

Rhodes University Short Course:

WRITING AN ACADEMIC JOURNAL ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION

Background and Rationale

In a recent contribution to 'The Conversation', Laura Czerniewicz posted a map that showed the 'world's very unequal knowledge map'. This map shows that very little published research is emerging from the African continent. Czerniewicz relates this to a number of factors including dominance of the Euro-American publishing complex, African authors serving mainly as 'secondary authors' on publications produced by authors from elsewhere, and the political economy of the academic journal publishing industry. While many of these concerns require longer term structural interventions, there is a possibility to begin to redress the situation by increasing the published research contributions of African authors who are producing research in Africa. This short course will provide a supportive environment for scholars at Rhodes University to contribute African research from the continent into an international scholarly arena.

If you map the world by scientific research output, things look rather uneven. From www.worldmapper.org (cited in Czerniewicz, 2015).

This presents us with a challenge, how to publish more research emerging from the African continent. This challenge confronts many universities, including Rhodes University, which currently has an uneven profile of academic journal authors with only a few authors producing most of the academic journal articles out of the university.

To address this, and to broaden the publishing base at Rhodes University, the Centre for Postgraduate Studies will run a bi-annual short course programme for postgraduate scholars (including post-doctoral scholars) and supervisors who wish to expand their published outputs in peer reviewed scholarly journals.

The short course is practice-based and will support postgraduate scholars and supervisors to work on, produce and finalise an academic journal article of their choice. The RU short course '*Writing an Academic Journal Paper for Publication'* will be certified under the RU short course programme and will equip postgraduate scholars with the competence to produce academic articles for publication in a supportive environment.

The short course will be structured over a four month period, and will involve **3 sessions totaling 4 days** (Session 1 = 2 days; Session 2 = 1 day, and Session 3 = 1 day) to allow for work together, work away sessions. The sessions will be supported by an on-line forum on RUConnected, and will be interactive. During the session, authors will work on, and obtain feedback on their articles, providing a supportive mechanism for reflexive development of an academic paper.

The result will be a paper ready for submission to a selected peer reviewed journal.

The short course will consist of three related sessions structured as follows:

Session 1: Developing a Writing Plan and Abstract

Work together activities (on course)

Day 1: Background research and focus

- Initial drafting of your ideas for a journal paper
- Presentation on publishing in Academic Journals (Sciences and Social Sciences)
- Choosing the right journal
  - Matching audience of the journal and audience of your paper
  - Considerations: purpose, impact factor, reach
  - Researching the required conventions of the journal
  - Critical reading and analysis of articles, table of contents and abstracts from your selected journal
  - Positioning of the paper in the field
  - Positioning of your paper in relation to the published works and purpose of the journal
  - Planning your writing style for the genre of the paper you wish to develop
  - Planning for writing collaboration (if the paper is co-authored)
- Producing your writing plan
- Developing an abstract for your journal article

Day 2: Designing the paper

- Title and keywords
- Mapping out the line of argument and contribution of the paper
- Capturing it all in a well crafted abstract
- Beginning to write the first draft (holding text, free writing, and structuring arguments)
- Next steps

Work Away Task: Drafting a 'first draft' of your academic journal article

Session 2: Drafting, Re-drafting and Critical Review

Work together activities (on course):

- Presentation of, and working on draft 1 of your paper
- Your writing voice: clarity, relevance, integrity, thoughtfulness
- Standing on the shoulders of others – how to acknowledge and reference well

- Helpful writing strategies, linguistic devices and avoiding jargon
- Dealing with quotes and self-checking for accidental plagiarism
- Obtaining and responding to critical review

Work Away Task: Read, revise, re-read, edit and rewrite: Drafts 2, 3 and 4.

- Is the article well structured and easy to read?
- Is the argument sound and logical?
- Is the abstract clear and summative?
- Does the conclusion point to the contribution of the paper to the field?
- Is the language used consistent with the theoretical and methodological choices?
- Is the content of the paper relevant, focused, clearly communicated and academically defensible?

Session 3: Finalisation and Preparation for Submission

Work together activities (on course)

- Editing, proofreading and getting to the perfect 'final draft'
- Checking the paper for various criteria: length, form of presentation, style etc.
- Figures, tables and obtaining copyright to use material in your article
- Referencing style, acknowledgements and ethical clearance
- Understanding rejection rates, journal publishing systems and how they work
- Submission, peer review and responding to peer review

Work away tasks: Submission of the paper

NOTE: Support from experienced academics will also be provided to authors of articles once the peer reviews have come in.

A Rhodes University 'Certificate of Competence' will be issued once articles have been submitted to a journal. The Certificate is awarded for full participation in the programme, which means that should you wish to attend the programme, **you must be sure to be present at all sessions.**

Application procedure

Application to the short course will be accepted on a 'first come, first serve' basis. To allow for feedback and peer review processes during the course, the course can only accommodate 30 participants at one time. Should demand be high, the possibility exists to re-run the short course more regularly than the anticipated bi-annual programme.

Applicants wanting to participate in this programme **must be sure that they can attend all 3 sessions, and must make a commitment to do so**.

The programme is free to all Rhodes University postgraduate scholars and their supervisors, and to academics who are still within a five year post-doctoral period (i.e. within 5 years of having completed a PhD). Co-authors can attend and work on

a paper together.

All applicants should complete the attached application form, and must have a clear idea of a viable paper that can be developed via the support provided in the short course. Applicants from a range of faculties will be considered.

Before applying consider the following question:

- Do I have something new or interesting to offer the academic field out of my original research, or out of a substantive review of a field.
- Alternatively, do I have a strong theoretical argument that I can make based on the academic work that I am busy with?

Please sign up for the short course using the following link:
http://goo.gl/forms/DI7d7LG9jD

Contact Ms Varonique Sias on cpgs@ru.ac.za with any queries.

Dates for the first course in 2015 are:

- Session 1: 30 August & 1 September 2015
- Session 2: 6 October 2015
- Session 3: 10 November 2015

Venue: Library (to be confirmed)

Reference: Czerniwicz, L. 2015. It's time to redraw the world's very unequal knowledge map. The Conversation, July 8 2015. http://theconversation.com/its-time-to-redraw-the-worlds-very-unequal-knowledge-map