

## Department of Child and Adolescent Studies Learning Objectives for CAS 300 Elements of Effective Professional Communication

CAS 300 incorporates university upper-division writing requirements and emphasizes professional communication skills needed for effective interactions with children, adolescents, and families. A grade of “C” (2.0) or better is required to fulfill campus upper-division writing and major requirements. Writing assignments in this course shall involve the organization and expression of complex ideas. Careful and timely evaluations of writing will be provided so that deficiencies are identified and suggestions for improvement and/or for means of remediation are offered to students. This course prepares students to

- use clear, correct, and effective grammar and punctuation
- use APA-style citations and references
- evaluate and integrate information from diverse sources
- present information in written, as well as oral, formats
- communicate to multiple target audiences
- initiate professional development practices

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

*Writing should be understood as an iterative process of revision and improvement.*

#### 1. Mechanics

- Punctuation
- Grammar
  - a) Subject-verb agreement
  - b) Correct use of pronouns (agreement with antecedent, no ambiguity)
  - c) Parallel structure
- Sentence structure (complete sentences)
- Correct spelling

#### 2. Organization

- Thesis statement
- Topic sentences
- Paragraph structure
- Development of argument in logical progression (introduction, development, summary/conclusion)
- Outlining
- Integration of information

#### 3. APA style (6<sup>th</sup> edition)

- Reference citations in text
- Appropriate citations
- Reference list formatting
- Guidelines for reducing bias in language and topic (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, disability, age)

- a) describe at the appropriate level of specificity
- b) be sensitive to labels
- c) acknowledge participation

#### 4. Style/Tone

- Sentence variety
- Interest – engaging to reader
- Appropriate word choice (professional language, child development vocabulary, precise language, inclusive, non-biased, person-first language)
- Awareness of audience – adjust writing based on intended audience
- Conciseness, lack of redundancy
- Clarity of expression
- Absence of clichés and colloquial expressions
- Appropriate use of quotations and paraphrases
- Appropriate use of narrative voice

#### 5. Editing

- Rubric for editing (meaning first, followed by structure)
- Peer and self-editing

### ORAL COMMUNICATION

*The unique requirements of oral presentations should be understood and incorporated in student performance.*

#### 1. Organization

- Development of argument in logical progression (introduction, development, summary/conclusion)
- Outlining
- Integration of information

#### 2. Style/Tone

- Interest – engaging to reader
- Awareness of audience – adjust writing tone and content based on intended audience and its needs
- Sentence variety
- Appropriate word choice (professional language, child development vocabulary, precise language)
- Conciseness, lack of redundancy
- Clarity of expression
- Absence of clichés and colloquial expressions (e.g. “children are our future”)
- Professional decorum (poise, pacing, gestures and movements, appearance, posture, eye contact, intonation, volume, avoid “uh,” “um” and “like.”)

### REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS FOR CAS 300

#### *Assessment of Learning Goals*

#### Personal Narrative

- **Assignment Description:** In 2-3 pages, explain how you came to be a CHAD major and your career and personal goals.

- **Rationale:** This is an introductory writing assignment that
  - provides a baseline assessment of writing proficiency
  - fosters an iterative writing process
  - introduces the course focus on professional goals
  - serves as the basis for the subsequent development plan
  - is personally relevant and does not require outside research
- **Grading Criteria:** Students should receive detailed feedback about their basic writing skills on this assignment (see Learning Objectives for *Mechanics*, *Organization*, and *Style and Tone*). In particular, introduction should be engaging. Because this assignment occurs very early in the semester and may not reflect learning in this course, this assignment should have a relatively small impact on the overall course grade.

### Oral Presentation

- **Assignment Description:** In 2-3 minutes, summarize a central aspect of your personal narrative in an oral presentation to your classmates. Following instructor and peer feedback, you will compose a 1-2 page paper evaluating your presentation. Evaluation will include reflection on strengths and weaknesses and specific strategies for improving your oral presentation skills.
- **Rationale:** This assignment
  - provides documentation of baseline oral skills
  - allows a forum for peer feedback and self-assessment
  - requires analysis of audience perspective
  - encourages awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses
- **Grading Criteria:** Students should receive detailed feedback about their oral presentation skills from both faculty and peers (see Learning Objectives for *Oral Communication*). Quality reflection papers should address feedback from peers and faculty as well as meaningful self-assessment and plans for remediation, and should present this information in a systematic and organized manner.

### Resume

- **Assignment Description:** In 1 page, present personal, educational, and professional accomplishments that are related to your career objective.
- **Rationale:** This assignment
  - extends course focus on professional development
  - requires analysis of audience perspective
  - facilitates development planning by highlighting experiential gaps
  - focuses on conventional resume format, organization, and aesthetic presentation
  - demands succinct and clear writing
- **Grading Criteria:** Students should receive detailed feedback about their use of
  - language and content for the targeted audience and position
  - conventional resume formats
  - parallel structures
  - active voice and action verbs

## Thematic Paper

- **Assignment Description:** In a 3-5 page, research-based, APA style paper (e.g., title page, running head, citations, and references), develop a thesis to explore a contemporary topic that relates to children and/or adolescents using a minimum of 4 scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles and 2 web-based professional/government sources. *The format may take the form of a position paper, an expository paper,, a compare and contrast paper, an advocacy statement, or a critical evaluation of common misconceptions about child development in light of scholarly materials. Faculty may provide a specific topic, or a small number of topics, for students' use.*
  
- **Rationale:** This assignment
  - promotes critical evaluation of text and media sources
  - requires written synthesis of ideas and logical organization of material
  - provides an introduction to advocacy
  - fosters students' understanding of themselves as professionals or "experts"
  - helps students understand that public policy, educational practice, and/or parenting is influenced by scholarly research and popular opinion
  - provides practice with appropriate APA-style citation and reference procedures
  - requires effective paraphrasing and the limited use of direct quotes
  
- **Grading Criteria:** Students should receive detailed feedback about
  - basic writing skills (see learning objectives for *mechanics, organization, and style and tone*)
  - appropriate documentation of ideas and sources, including use of 6<sup>th</sup> edition APA style
  - logical and coherent progression of ideas
  - critical evaluation of text and media sources
  - appropriate sources (e.g. , topic, origin, number)