

**Academic Writing  
Ministry 5101  
North Park Theological Seminary  
1 credit hour**

**Course Instructor:**

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Questions can be sent to me via e-mail, and I will respond as promptly as I am able. In an (academic) emergency, you may reach me at my home phone number between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

**Introduction:**

This course is designed to help sharpen your academic “tools,” so that you can learn more efficiently and improve your ability to communicate through various forms of seminary writing. I have taught this course for the last 7 years, and have provided academic counseling, led workshops and oriented students to the expectations of seminary academic life. I am a certified teacher and have a M.Div. degree from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. I also work as a freelance writer and editor.

**Course Schedule:**

The course will begin on August 26, 2009 and conclude on December 2, 2008. Its weekly topics will be geared to the progression of the semester. Additional meetings with the instructor can be arranged on an individual basis.

**Course Description and Participant Learning Objectives for Course:**

This course will shape students’ capacity to succeed in seminary education by strengthening theological and biblical reasoning, critical thinking, and reading, for the purpose of improving writing. Focus will be given to effective and proper use of outside sources in research papers. It especially serves those who are new to theological categories, studying in a second language, or second career students. The course will also benefit those who wish to improve their ability to read and write more effectively and efficiently. By the completion of this course, participants will:

- Recognize and appreciate new ways to improve their academic competence
- Incorporate effective methods of reading and writing into their seminary coursework
- Utilize available resources to accomplish their academic goals

**Recommended Texts:**

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000

Covey, Stephen. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989

Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers, 5<sup>th</sup> edition*. Boston: Bedford - St. Martins, 2004

**Additional Readings:**

As assigned and distributed in class sessions

**Participant Responsibilities:**

1. Engaged, timely participation is required.
2. Participants should plan on spending 28 total hours on course responsibilities (e.g. reading, assignments, and class time). Many assignments will be tied to your present academic courses.
3. In order to receive a passing grade, you must complete all assignments. A record of your work will appear on your transcript.

## **Course Calendar:**

### **Week 1 (8/26) METACOGNITIVE WRITING: THE SYLLABUS**

Objective: Organize your assignments for the semester by scrutinizing your syllabi

Readings: Covey pp. 66-144; Core pp. 9-27

Assignments Due: Complete survey; List writing assignments for all courses by week for the entire semester.

### **Week 2 (9/2) WRITING BLOCKS: TIME MANAGEMENT/MOTIVATION/ANXIETY**

Objective: Identify issues impeding optimal completion of assignments

Readings: Covey pp. 145-182, 206-234

Assignment Due: 100 word descriptive/reflective essay: "My Writing Process"

### **Week 3 (9/9) READING FOR WRITING: BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE/MEMORY**

Objective: Enhance memory/engagement with course material by researching topics related to your reading and coursework

Readings: Documents distributed in class

Assignment Due: Locate 3 helpful online background resources from links on Bible Gateway. List them in an "annotated bibliography" format.

### **Week 4 (9/16) READING FOR WRITING: PRE-READING/NOTE-TAKING**

Objective: Improve understanding of texts and lectures by analyzing their structure and identifying points of contact

Readings: Documents distributed in class; Core pp. 29-46

Assignment Due: List each of your textbooks and analyze their content, structure and resources. Include a brief description of the way you will need to write about the information.

### **Week 5 (9/23) WRITING AN ESSAY TEST**

Objective: Improve effectiveness of test-taking by creating study guides for forthcoming exams

Readings: Documents distributed in class; Core pp. 113-117

Assignments Due: Write sample essay test; Prepare study guide for midterm exam or quiz in another course

### **Week 6 (9/30) WRITING AS THINKING/CRITICAL THINKING**

Objective: Clarify arguments in writing by identifying logical fallacies

Readings: Documents distributed in class; Hacker pp. 358-367

Assignment Due: Write a persuasive paragraph on the reasons one should use clear, objective arguments.

### **Week 7 (10/7) TYPES OF WRITING/RESEARCH**

Objective: Distinguish between genres of seminary writing; evaluate sources for research paper

Required Readings: Documents distributed in class; Core pp. 47-84; Hacker pp. 369-399

Assignment Due: Create a 1-2 page document that gives a thesis and lists sources for a paper from one of your other classes.

**NOTE: 10/14 is during FALL BREAK – there are no assignments or readings.**

### **Week 8 (10/21) PRE-WRITING – STRUCTURES AND OUTLINES**

Objective: Organize paper by creating a structure or outline for the argument

Readings: Documents distributed in class; Hacker pp. 2-28

Assignments Due: Submit a 1-page outline of a paper, including main points and supporting arguments

**Week 9 (10/28) WRITING/INCORPORATING OUTSIDE SOURCES**

Objective: Incorporate sources smoothly and correctly through paraphrase, summary and direct quotations

Readings: Documents distributed in class; Core pp. 85-112; Hacker pp. 19-24, 83-154

Assignments Due: Submit 1 page of a research paper (from another class) using at least two sources properly.

**Week 10 (11/4) REVISION/EDITING**

Objective: Distinguish between global and local revision.

Readings: Documents distributed in class; Hacker pp. 25-33, scan 155-356, 369-399

Assignments Due: Write one paragraph which describes the distinction between global and local revision

**Week 11 (11/11) WRITING A SERMON: ORAL STYLE I**

Objective: Student will recognize the unique characteristics of oral style and principles of rhetoric

Assignment: Each student will give a 3 minute devotional, and show an outline and summary sentence.

**Week 12 (11/18) WRITING A SERMON: ORAL STYLE II**

Objective: Student will recognize the unique characteristics of oral style and principles of rhetoric

Assignment: Each student will give a 3 minute devotional, and show an outline and summary sentence.

**NOTE: Class will not meet on Wednesday, November 25, the day before THANKSGIVING.**

**Week 13 (12/2) PEER REVIEW OF PAPER**

Objective: Students will demonstrate art of positive critique by analyzing samples of each others' work

Reading: Each student will read the paper of one other student.

Assignments Due: First draft of paper, revised draft after critique. Papers will be from one of the other classes in which the student is currently enrolled.

**Week 14 (12/9) FINAL EXAM PREPARATION**

**Assignments/Evaluation:**

Your work in this course will be evaluated according to your successful completion of the following:

- 1. Assignments

*Criteria for Assignments*

POINT VALUE	CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT
0	No response.
1-4	Assignment is late, incomplete or does not follow the directions given. Assignment is complete, but contains numerous careless errors.
5-6	Assignment is thorough, follows directions, and contains few or no obvious errors.

- 2. Class Participation and attendance

*Criteria for Participation and attendance*

POINT VALUE	CHARACTERIZATION
0	Repeated absences/and tardiness
1-2	One absence, repeated tardiness, little verbal participation
3	Consistent and timely attendance, and engaged participation in class

