Academic Writing
Ministry 5101
Fall 2014
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 9 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 at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 27 and conclude on Wednesday, December 3, 2014. Its weekly topics will be geared to the progression of the semester. Additional one-on-one conferences with the instructor will be part of the course requirements.

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 seminary academic writing. Focus will be given to effective and proper use of outside sources in research papers. It especially will serve 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:

- Improve their overall academic competence
- Incorporate effective methods of reading and writing into their seminary coursework
- Utilize available resources to accomplish their academic goals

Required Texts:

Core, Deborah. *The Seminary Student Writes.* St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000. (or most current edition)
Vyhmeister, Nancy. *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.
Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers, 6th edition.* Boston: Bedford-St. Martins

Additional Readings:

As assigned and distributed in class sessions

Participant Responsibilities:

1. Engaged, timely participation is required. **Attendance and thorough completion of assignments is a critical component of your grade**.
2. Participants should plan on spending 28 total hours on course responsibilities (e.g. reading, assignments, conferencing, and class time). Many assignments will be tied to other current academic courses.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION. AN ASSIGNMENT SHEET WILL BE SENT TO YOU VIA EMAIL EACH WEEK. IT WILL ALSO BE HANDED OUT DURING EACH CLASS WITH DETAILS.

Course Calendar:

Week 1 (8/27) METACOGNITIVE WRITING: SYLLABUS ANALYSIS
Objective*:* Organize your assignments for the semester by scrutinizing syllabi
Readings: Core pp. 9-27; Survey Hacker and Vyhmeister
Assignments Due: List (2+ page) writing assignments for all courses by week for the entire semester.

Week 2 (9/3) ELIMINATING WRITING BLOCKS: TIME MANAGEMENT/MOTIVATION/ANXIETY
Objective: Identify issues impeding optimal completion of assignments, prepare action plan
Assignment Due: Conference with Professor during the week

Week 3 (9/10) READING FOR WRITING: BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE/MEMORY
Objective: Enhance memory/engagement with course material by researching related topics
Readings: Documents distributed in class
Assignment Due: Locate 5 background resources as directed on assignment sheet. List them in Turabian bibliography format, with an annotation following each entry.

Week 4 (9/17) READING FOR WRITING: PRE-READING/NOTE-TAKING
Objective: Improve understanding of texts/lectures by analyzing their structure and identifying points of contact
Readings: Documents distributed in class; Core pp. 29-46
Assignment Due: Prepare a list of each of your textbooks and note their content, structure and resources. Include a brief description of the way you will need to write about the information (test, review, presentation, etc.).

***September 24th NO CLASS DUE TO REQUIRED STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT LUND LECTURES**

Week 5 (10/1) WRITING AN ESSAY TEST
Objective: Improve effectiveness of test-taking by creating study guides tailored to forthcoming exams
Readings: Documents distributed in class; Core pp. 113-117
Assignments Due: Write a detailed study guide for an upcoming midterm, filling in pertinent information.

Week 6 (10/8) WRITING AS THINKING/CRITICAL THINKING
Objective: Clarify arguments in writing by identifying logical and fallacious arguments
Readings: Documents distributed in class; Hacker pp. 358-367
Assignment Due: Choose a logical fallacy and describe it in a 3 minute class presentation.

***October 15th NO CLASS DURING READING WEEK**

Week 7 (10/22) TYPES OF WRITING/MAKING AN ARGUMENT
Objective: Distinguish between genres of seminary writing; evaluate sources for research paper
Required Readings: Documents distributed in class; Core pp. 47-84; Hacker pp. 345-399; Vyhmeister 17-32
Assignment Due: Create a 1-2 page document that gives a thesis and lists sources for a paper from one of your other classes. You will be sharing the information with the class.

Week 8 (10/29) PRE-WRITING – STRUCTURES AND OUTLINES
Objective: Organize paper by creating a structure or outline for the argument as per assignment.
Readings: Documents distributed in class; Hacker pp. 2-28; Vyhmeister pp. 82-102
Assignments Due: Submit a 1-page outline of a paper, including main points and supporting arguments.

Week 9 (11/5) INCORPORATING OUTSIDE SOURCES
Objective: Incorporate sources smoothly and correctly through paraphrase, summary and direct quotations
Readings: Documents distributed; Core pp. 85-112; Hacker pp. 19-24, 83-154; Vyhmeister pp. 32-82, 103-117
Assignments Due: Submit 1 page of a research paper (from another class) properly weaving in and correctly citing at least two sources.

Week 10 (11/12) WRITING AS THINKING/RHETORIC
Objective: Student will develop flexibility, lucidity and speed in formulating ideas. Students will identify issues of speaker, content and audience.
Assignment: Each student will give a short impromptu speech/sermon on an assigned text and receive feedback from fellow students.

Week 11 (11/19) 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: One page sample from your writing, which has been thoroughly edited.

***November 26th NO CLASS DURING THANKSGIVING WEEK**

Week 13 (12/3) PEER REVIEW OF PAPER
Objective: Students will demonstrate art of positive critique by analyzing samples of each other's 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.

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

1. Assignments

Criteria for Assignments (40 possible for each assignment)

POINT VALUE	CHARACTERIZATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT
0	No response.
10-20	Assignment is late, incomplete or does not follow the directions given. Assignment is complete, but contains numerous careless errors.
30-40	Assignment is thorough, follows directions, and contains few or no obvious errors. Excellent work, above what is required, careful attention to details.

2. Class participation and attendance (for each class session)

Criteria for participation and attendance (40 possible for each class)

POINT VALUE	CHARACTERIZATION
0	Absent
10-30	Tardy, excused absence and/or little or inappropriate verbal participation
30-40	Timely attendance, and engaged participation in class