

McMaster Divinity College
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Office hours by appointment

Fall Semester 2011
11, 18, 25 October, 1, 8, 29 November
Cochran Hall (Room 121)

1. Course Description

This workshop will teach research and writing skills to enable students to engage skillfully and intellectually with their academic work. Focusing on the areas of content, argumentation, and written presentation, this workshop will introduce tools for facility with proper research, clear and logical argumentation, and proficiency with language. A major component of this course will be providing students with the technological expertise to do online research in order to increase their ability to do research in our 21st century context.

2. Course Objectives:

a. Knowing

- To teach students how to effectively use modern technologies for research and writing, including online journals, books, bibliographic software, biblical language software, and other vital resources.
 - To teach students organizational skills such as outlining, forming paragraphs, and using sources.
 - To share with students the fundamental elements in clear argumentation.
 - To familiarize students with the academic expectations of MacDiv.
 - To familiarize students with the types of assignments they will be writing at MacDiv (e.g., book reviews, essays, research papers)
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- To help students gain facility of the English language including its grammar and syntax.
 - To familiarize students with resources for continuing improvement in research and writing skills.

b. Being

- To encourage students towards confidence in their skills in research and writing.
- To encourage students to grow through honesty and relationship by giving students an opportunity to voice their academic concerns and difficulties.
- To cultivate a community of trust by allowing students to freely share the challenges they face and giving positive feedback and resources to help alleviate these concerns.

c. Doing

- To equip students for the academic rigour of the journey ahead.
- To prepare students to meet the challenges of seminary studies.

- To provide the foundation necessary for students to think critically, express themselves clearly, and research effectively.

3. Course Outline:

The workshop will have two main components. Four sessions focus on research and organizational skills and two sessions focus on aspects of the English language, specifically geared toward improving the use of written English. All practice at home is optional, but recommended for optimal learning from this workshop.

Dates (Wk #)	Lecture Topics	Practice following each class
11 Oct. 2011 (Week 1)	Workshop Introduction Content A. Types of Assignments 1. Essay 2. Research Paper 3. Book Review 4. Academic Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review upcoming assignments for this semester and access their assignment type. If unsure, bring your example to class next week. • Bring computers and your course syllabi for your fall courses next week.
18 Oct. 2011 (Week 2)	Content (continued) B. Research 1. Finding sources a) in library b) online tools 2. Accessing sources a) Relevancy, authority, currency, and accuracy 3. Library tour (the second hour of class at Mills library)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search online for research for one of your upcoming papers. Use the “tricks of the trade” discussed in class to access the relevancy, authority, and currency of each of your sources.

Dates (Wk #)	Lecture Topics	Practice following each class
25 Oct. 2011 (Week 3)	Content (continued) B. Research (continued) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citing your sources <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Quotation/Plagiarism b) Footnotes/endnotes 2. Building a bibliography <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) using bibliographic software b) using MacDiv style guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice quotation and citation. • Put together a beginning bibliography for one of your papers.
1 Nov. 2011 (Week 4)	Organization A. Structure for Argumentation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing your thoughts 2. Outlining <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Parts of an argument 3. Forming paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice brainstorming and create an outline for one of your papers. • Bring outlines with you for next week.
8 Nov. 2011 (Week 5)	Writing Skills-Style I. Grammar and Syntax <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Elements of sentence and common mistakes B. Fixing syntactical errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on grammar and syntax practice sheets.
29 Nov. 2011 (Week 6)	Writing Skills-Presentation I. Common Presentation Errors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Spelling and Usage B. Punctuation and Capitalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on spelling, usage, punctuation, and capitalization exercises • Frequently review notes from this workshop.

4. Course Activities

The workshop will include lecture periods as well as question and answer periods. It will also include practice sessions, using hands-on exercises. The practice sessions centered on research and organization will use exercises such as creating

outlines, analyzing the argumentation of a book review, examining sources in a book, and critiquing the presentation in a short paper, etc. The practice sessions centered around writing skills will use exercises that analyze elements of grammar and syntax.

During the third session of the workshop, students will be encouraged to bring their computers for a “how-to” session on using the internet for research. During the second half of this session, students will attend a tour of Mills library schedule, introducing them to library resources and resources for further help in research.

Students will be encouraged to bring samples of their own coursework to edit and use for practice. Students needing further assistance will also be directed to the outside help of proofreading. Please contact the instructor to find out more about this service.

Weekly proofreading offered by Willard Pottinger: Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the morning and afternoon, free one-on-one tutoring by appointment only, email him at wpottinger@mountaincable.net .

Bibliography

Books

Alexander, Patrick, et. al., editors. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.

Glazier, Teresa Ferster. *The Least You Should Know About English: Writing Skills. Form A. 5th ed.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch College Publishers, 1992. Hacker, Diana. *A Canadian Writer's Reference*. 2nd ed. Scarborough, ON: Nelson Canada, 1996.

Messenger, William E. and Jan de Bruyn. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall, 1980.

O'Hearn, Carolyn. *Writing, Grammar, and Usage*. New York: Macmillan, 1989.
Strunk, William Jr. and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Online Resources

For Research:

1. ATLA (American Theological Library Association religion database) <http://library.mcmaster.ca/articles/atla-religious-studies-database-with-atlaserials>
2. JSTOR (online journal for humanities) <http://library.mcmaster.ca/articles/jstor>
3. Internet Detective (a tutorial on using internet sources wisely) <http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/detective/index.html>

For Writing:

1. Common Errors in English Usage: <http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/errors.html#errors>
2. Grammar Explanations and Quizzes: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>
3. Quizzes and Answers to Grammar and Writing Questions: 501 Grammar and
4. Writing Questions [electronic resource]. LearningExpress (Organization), 1999. (Access via McMaster University Library System).