Graduate Writing Workshop

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Topics to Discuss:

- Positioning yourself as a graduate student writer
- The Writing Process
- Helpful resources
Positioning Yourself

“...the means by which you create in writing a credible image as a competent member of your chosen discipline.”

From *Academic Writing for Graduate Students, 3rd Edition* (Swales and Feak, 2012)
Positioning

- Audience
- Purpose
- Organization
- Style
- Flow
- Presentation

Based on Swales and Feak, 2012
Audience

Who are you writing for?

Consider who knows more and gear content appropriately.

- Professor – showing knowledge, critical thinking, insight, etc.
- Peers – collaborating, questioning, persuading, etc.
- Public – teaching, providing background, creating forums, etc.
What are you being asked to do?

Decipher the writing assignment by considering:

- Writer’s stance (descriptive, evaluative, persuasive)
- Each required component of the writing prompt (your topic)

Examples:


- **Moral Vision Book Review:** Based on what you read in the Hays book for class nine, describe the theological emphasis of Paul, the Pauline tradition, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John and the author of Revelation. What integration insights do you gain and what integration questions are raised by the text? What are the three common themes that Hays proposes to synthesize the diversity found in the New Testament? How does he propose we use these images?”
“Visit the Living Room, 420 N. Broadway, 485–3667, or other agencies caring for persons with AIDS, such as Fresno County Health Services Agency, 445–3434, All about Care, 222–9471, etc. Write a brief response paper describing what you experienced.”

“Students will write a brief paper (three to seven pages) describing and supporting their theology of marriage. This paper should reflect a biblical theology in that it should be clearly based on scripture. It is not expected to be the student’s ultimate statement of the biblical theology of marriage but rather a milestone on marking the student’s current understanding. The paper should define and describe marriage from a biblical perspective and address important issues in marriage such as role of intimacy and love, roles in marriage (headship, egalitarian, or?), divorce, and God’s intent for marriage. Other issues may also be included. Cite scripture to support your argument.”

Key Point: Know what you should address. If you’re not sure. . . ASK.
Organization

What rhetorical form or text type will you use?

- Structure your work accordingly and with your purpose in mind.
  - Book/article summary
  - Critical book/article review
  - Compare/contrast
  - Problem/effect/solution
  - Argumentative position paper
  - Experience reflection paper
  - Clinical observation paper
  - Research, etc.

- USE AN OUTLINE
Are you using appropriate style for your context?

- Formal vs. Informal writing – knowing the difference and when to use each

- Vernacular
  - Terms and ideas used within your field – build a corpus
  - Authenticity – always use your own voice
  - Citation – always give credit where credit is due

- Differing contexts may require different styles
Flow

Are your ideas clearly and logically connected?

- The reader doesn’t live inside your head. Build coherence by:
  - Connecting ideas logically
  - Using transition words & phrases
  - Following the general pattern of your rhetorical form
  - Following a well thought-through outline
Are you providing an easily followed, finished product?

- Errors trip-up readers and distract them from your writing/message.
- Error filled writing reflects poorly on the quality of your scholarship (like a really wimpy handshake).
- Take the time to check:
  - The nitty-gritty of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. (Use word processing programs – grammar, spell, and punctuation checks.)
  - That required citation forms are correctly used.
The Writing Process

**Step 1: Get ideas**
- reading
- brainstorming
- clustering
- talking/listening

**Step 2: Organize your ideas**
- outlining
- plan use of examples & details

**Step 3: Write a rough draft**
- use your plan/outline
- focus on content/ideas

**Step 4: Revise your rough draft**
- re-read
- peer review
- rewrite

**Step 5: Edit your writing**
- Focus on mechanics (grammar & punctuation)

**Step 6: Write a final copy**
- for publishing
- for learning importance of writing

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Fluency → Form → Correctness

Adapted by K. Austin  2011 (Smith 1989)
Helpful Resources

Online:

- Perdue University Online Writing Lab: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl)

- Fuller Theological Writing Center free resources and videos: [http://vimeo.com/channels/fullerwritingcenter](http://vimeo.com/channels/fullerwritingcenter)

Helpful Resources (cont’d)

Texts:


Helpful Resources (cont’d)

- In–person:
  - Peer review
  - Writing workshops
  - Language 770 – English for Graduate Academic Purposes
  - Academic Services Center (ASC)