

**School of Professional Studies**

**Writing Specialist Report**

**June 21, 2013**

**Submitted by Beverly S. Lucas**

2012-2013 Academic Year

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The School of Professional Studies offers six levels of writing courses: ENGL030 Fundamental Writing Skills, ENGL 103 Grammar and Writing Workshop; ENGL105 Introduction to Writing; ENGL 105/S Introduction to Writing with Supplemental Instruction; ENGL 106 Writing for Academic and Professional Success; and ENGL 107 College Composition. This report is an analysis of the following course offerings during the Summer 2012, Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters:

ENGL107 College Composition

ENGL 030 Fundamental Writing Skills

ENGL103 Grammar and Writing Workshop

ENGL105 Introduction to Writing

ENGL105S Introduction to Writing with Supplemental Instruction

ENGL 060 Composition Skills

ENGL 106 Writing for Academic and Personal Success

INT 502 Graduate Writing Primer

ENGL 103 Grammar and Writing is designed to help students acquire skills necessary to write effective paragraphs. The focus is on the construction of sentences and paragraphs, the writing process, grammar usage, and mechanics. This is 3-credit bearing course. ENGL105 Introduction to College Writing and ENG105S Introduction to College Writing with Supplementary Instruction are courses designed to increase fluency in college-level written communication with an emphasis on organizational skills and language structure. The goals of the course are for students to develop skills in academic writing and to give students a set of concepts to help structure their thinking and work toward writing clear, persuasive, stylish prose. This is accomplished by engaging various rhetorical strategies in response to a variety of interactions between writer, reader, text, topic and moment. ENGL105 is a 3-credit bearing course, whereas ENGL105S is a 4-credit bearing course which includes a weekly, 120 minute lab for supplemental instruction. ENGL 107 College Composition helps students to develop the skills necessary for effective writing of thesis-centered essays at the college level, including analytical, critical, and argumentative essays. Research and documentation techniques are included. This is a 3-credit bearing course.

The courses offered at the Town Hall Education and Recreation Center (THEARC) for students pursuing an Associate’s degree include: ENGL 030, ENGL 060 and ENGL 106. ENGL 030 prepares students to write grammatically correct sentences to paragraphs. ENGL 060 Composition Skills focuses on writing clear, effective compositions. Students learn how to construct paragraphs, state topics, and to develop narratives and analysis; and ENGL 106 Writing for Academic and Professional Success focuses on planning, writing, and revising compositions for academic and professional purposes including informational, analytical, evaluative and persuasive compositions. Students develop skills in accessing, evaluating, using, and documentation informational sources and introduce students to professional writing applications including memos, resumes, and reports. For each of the English courses, the instructional modes and strategies include: lecture, discussion, readings, quizzes, and collaborative learning activities.

My Writing Lab was used for diagnostic testing in ENGL 030, 103, 105, 105S and 060. Each faculty member was trained and supported to utilize this course management tool as an enhancement and reinforcement of classroom instruction. All English course data generated for this report was abstracted from PowerCampus.

This report also includes an overview of the INT502 Graduate Writing Primer as well as other activities performed by the writing specialist.

**Report on Progress and Goals**

**Goal 1**: *To review current course descriptions for each English offering to ensure objectives were consistent course learning outcomes.*

Progress: Standard syllabi and assignments were developed and used for all sections of pre-foundational courses. This is also an effort to link courses for progression. The challenge is for students to progress in the foundational courses before attempting to register for other courses.

**Goal 2**: *Set a standards for writing assessments*

Progress: Pre and Post testing writing samples were used for all English courses as assessment for on-demand essay writing. These writing samples will be reviewed and assessed over the summer by writing specialist and current English faculty

**Goal 3**: *To implement the participation in My Writing Lab and My Comp Lab within the courses as part of the student’s overall earned grade.*

Progress: Pearson Publishing Company changed the course management platform for My Writing Lab and introduced My Comp Lab (for ENGL 106 and 107). This was a challenge for the students and the instructors as all had issues with the publisher in selling obsolete registration cards for the system. This resulted in students purchasing codes from the bookstore that could not be applied to access the new system. In addition, the new format was not user friendly and the online site experienced many technological glitches throughout the semester. These issues impact each student’s ability to stay on the course set for completing assignments. The Pearson products are currently being reviewed as well as other online tutorial options.

**Goal 4:** *Assist graduate students in the transition to graduate level writing*

Progress: Writing specialist assist in the ongoing design and implementation of the INT 501 graduate transition program. Beginning in the Fall 2012 semester, SPS now offers a 1-credit Graduate Writing Primer course for all students who score low on the writing assessment. In addition workshops were offered throughout the semester and students met with specialist on a one-on-one bases.

***Findings:***

* The average passing rate for the pre-foundational courses (030, 103, 105, 105S and 060) for the 2112-2013 academic year was **54.8%.** This is a gain of 5.8% from the previous year.
* The highest failure rate of all pre-foundational courses is ENGL 030 at **76%**.
* The passing rate for students registered in ENGL105/S was 69% whereas the passage rate for students in 105 averaged at 54%. This significant increase can be contributed to the 2-hour supplemental instruction.
* There were placement scores recorded for 132 students. Students Accuplacer scores ranged from 2-7.
* Overall, there is no clear correlation between the Accuplacer score and student’s final grade for placement in ENGL 105, 106, or 107. However, Accuplacer’s accuracy is prevalent for students who place in ENGL 030 and 103.

***Snap Shot All English Courses***

**Data:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ENGL 030** | **ENGL 060** | **ENGL 103** | **ENGL 105** | **ENGL 105S** | **ENGL 106** | **ENGL 107** | **Total # of Students** |
| 2012 | 8 | 29 | 14 | 17 | 6 | 6 | 40 | 120 |
| FALL | 8 | 29 | 14 | 17 | 6 | 6 | 25 | 105 |
| SUMMER |  |  |  |  |  |  | 15 | 15 |
| 2013 | 9 | 14 | 9 | 16 | 7 | 18 | 29 | 102 |
| SPRING | 9 | 14 | 9\* | 16 | 7 | 18 | 29 | 102 |
| Grand Total | 17 | 43 | 23 | 33 | 13 | 24 | 69 | **222** |

*\*Two counts of students in ENGL 103 are for a student designated as “H” (hold) – no grades are recorded for this student*

Analysis:

***Grades by Course Pre-Foundational Course***

**Data:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **ENGL**  **030** | **ENGL**  **060** | **ENGL**  **103** | **ENGL**  **105** | **ENGL 105S** | **Total** |
| A |  | 6 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 18 |
| A- | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 11 |
| B | 1 | 6 |  | 4 |  | 11 |
| B- | 1 | 9 | 3 | 3 |  | 16 |
| B+ |  | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| C | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 |  | 10 |
| C- |  |  | 2 | 7 | 1 | 10 |
| C+ |  | 1 | 1 | 2 |  | 4 |
| D | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| D+ |  |  | 1 | 2 |  | 3 |
| F | 10 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 25 |
| W |  | 3 | 2 | 1 |  | 6 |
| Grand Total | 17 | 43 | 23 | 33 | 13 | 129 |

The minimum passing grade for ENGL 030, 103, 105, 105S and 060 is, “C”

**Passing rate for pre-foundational courses:** **54.8%**

***Grades by Foundational Course***

**Data:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | **ENGL 106** | **ENGL 107** | **Total** |
| A | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| A- | 2 | 9 | 11 |
| B | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| B- | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| B+ | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| C | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| C- | 2 | 9 | 11 |
| C+ | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| D |  | 4 | 4 |
| D+ | 3 |  | 3 |
| F | 5 | 6 | 11 |
| NG |  | 5 | 5 |
| W | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Grand Total | 24 | 69 | 93 |

The minimum passing grade for ENGL 106 and 107 is, “D”

**Passing rate for foundational courses: 70%**

***Course Progressions***

**Data:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **English** | **Total # of students** | **Pass** | **Fail** | **Withdrawal** | **No Grade** |
| 030 to 060 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 060 to 106 | 19 | 12 | 5 | 2 |  |
| 103 to 105 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 |  |
| 103 to 107 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 105S to 107 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |  |
| 105 to 107 | 9 | 8 | 1\* | 1 | 1\*\* |

*\*student should not have been approved to register for ENGL 107*

*\*\*NG waiting on academic hearing outcome*

Analysis: There were no complete course progressions for SPS (103 to 105 to 107) or at THEARC (030 to 060 to 106). The highest progression is from ENGL 060 to ENGL 106.

***Repeat Students***

**Data:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ENGL 030** | **ENGL 060** | **ENGL 103** | **ENGL 105** | **ENGL 105S** | **ENGL 107** | **Total** |
| 2012 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 19 |
| FALL | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 15 |
| SUMMER |  |  |  |  |  | 4 | 4 |
| 2013 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 2 |  | 2 | 19 |
| SPRING | 4 | 9 | 2 | 2 |  | 2 | 19 |
| Grand Total | 5 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 38 |

Analysis: The highest repeat rates are ENGL 060 and ENGL 107.

***Repeat Students Final Grades***

***Analysis:*** The overall percentage rates for passage for repeat students vary by course as the passing requirements are different for each course. Overall, the passage rate is between 75 to 70%.

***Withdrawal and No Grades***

***Data:***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ENGL 060** | **ENGL 103** | **ENGL 105** | **ENGL 106** | **ENGL 107** | Total Number  of Students |
| No Grades |  |  |  |  | 5 | 5 |
| W | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 13 |
| Grand Total | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 18 |

***Analysis:*** Overall, the withdrawal rate for English courses is relatively low. The course with the highest withdrawal is English 107. The No grades are the result of pending outcomes of five academic hearings.

# MY WRITING LAB (MWL)

MWL is a complete online learning program which provides practices and exercises to help develop students writing. The site includes both pre and post diagnostic testing: The diagnostic test in MWL comprehensively assesses students' skills in grammar. MWL then creates an individualized learning path for students based on their diagnostic results, which identifies the areas of weakness. The online modules of study include:

* Sentence Grammar
* Punctuation and Mechanics
* Usage and Style
* Basic Grammar

The essence of MyWritingLab is the progressive learning that takes place as students complete the Recall, Apply, and Write exercises in each module. Students move from literal comprehension (Recall) to critical application (Apply) to demonstrating concepts in their own writing (Write). Although available, the students were not required to submit paragraph samples or writing. Only the recall and apply exercises were assigned for each student. All student work in MWL is recorded in the online grade book. Students are able monitor their own progress through reports detailing scores on all of the exercises in the course.

Students enrolled in ENGL105S with supplemental instruction were required to complete at least 50 minutes of MWL lab time per week. This was accomplished during the Friday session laboratory time. Students enrolled in ENGL105 were required to complete 50 minutes outside of the classroom per week. A separate report will be generated with an analysis of MyWritingLab.

In the Fall of 2013, Pearson Publishing Company changed the course management platform for My Writing Lab and introduced My Comp Lab (for ENGL 106 and 107). This was a challenge for the students and the instructors as all had issues as a result of the publisher continuing selling obsolete registration cards for the system. This resulted in students purchasing codes from the Trinity bookstore that could not be applied to access the new system. In addition, the new format was not user friendly and the online site experienced many technological glitches throughout the semester. These issues impact each student’s ability to stay on the course set for completing assignments. In addition, MyWritingLab no longer accommodated the ENGL 107 text.

MY COMP LAB

Students enrolled in college composition were registered for MyCompLab which is on a totally different format structure than MyWritingLab. My CompLab contains instruction and multimedia tutorials and exercises for a variety of composition topics. There is one “base” course designed by the writing specialist in which other faculty “copy” so that all students enrolled in ENGL 106 and ENGL 107 are focusing on the same topics. The skill building activity assignments include:

Pre Diagnostic Testing, Clauses and Phrases, Fused and Fragment Sentences, Modifiers, Pronoun Reference Transition Expression, Academic Language, Tone and Usage, Avoiding Plagiarism, Documenting sources, APA Citation, Research Assignments, Post Diagnostic Assessment

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MY COMP LAB RESULTS Class Averages in percentages** | | **ENGL 107 Lucas** | **ENGL 107 Paperny** |
| Fused and Fragment Sentences | | 90 | 89 |
| Research Assignments | | 62 | 80 |
| Clauses and Phrases | | 62 | 52 |
| Transition Expression | | 51 | 62 |
| Tone and Usage | | 47 | 57 |
| Avoiding Plagiarism | | 81 | 79 |
| Documenting Sources | | 56 | 56 |
| Academic Language | | 90 | 87 |
| Modifiers |  | 79 | 83 |
| Pronoun Reference | | 70 | 78 |
| APA Citation | | 81 | 77 |
| Pre Assessment | | **55** | **59** |
| Post Assessment | | **70** | **71** |

Students demonstrated a positive gain in both sections.

Lucas post assessment gain: **15%**

Paperny assessment gain: **12%**

***Grade comparison by instructor Summer 2012***

***Data:***

Analysis: Even grade distribution between instructors

***Grade Comparison by Instructor Fall 2012***

ENGL030 and ENGL 103

***Analysis:*** In response to the high failure rate in this course, the instructor offered the following recommendations:

*“*Content comprehension/ retention/ application*.*

*“The students these last two semesters, especially the ones who have stopped coming, struggle to grasp and apply the content. I think this is in large part because the weekly schedule does not allow for much backtracking or extended discussion on difficult chapters. If possible, for the courses that are "remedial" and don't count toward the degrees, the students may do better if the sessions are more frequent and take less time (1.15 hrs instead of 2.5 hrs) so that rather than weekly classes have classes meet twice a week. This would take into consideration those students who test into courses like 060 or struggle in 030 and haven't been in school (high school) in over 20 years. The problem, I know, is space and time at THEARC, given there are classes each night. Could one possible solution to several of these problems be an online component that isn't just things like MWL but online classes so that one session is the face-to-face meeting and the other is the online class? I believe there's a component in Moodle that would allow something like online chat sessions/ conferencing. There's definitely something in MWL. It would also help those who fit concern/ issue #3.”* This instructor has also recommended: increased instructor access, technology literacy, college readiness and computer access.

***Grade Comparison by Instructor Fall 2012***

ENGL060 and ENGL 106

Analysis: The grade disparity amongst instructors is wide.

***Grade Comparison by Instructor Fall 2012***

**ENGL105**

Note: Only one section of ENGL105 was offered this semester

***Grade Comparison by Instructor Fall 2012***

**ENGL107**

Analysis: Even grade distribution between instructors.

***Grade Comparison by Instructor Spring 2013***

ENGL030 and 103

***Analysis:*** Wide grade distribution among instructors. Particularly interesting are the grades for Professor Pile. This 103 section is the first section in (three years) which all students have passed with high grades of A and A-. ENGL030 has the second highest failure rate of all English courses.

Analysis: Note Atkins’ previous comments

***Grade Comparison by Instructor Spring 2013***

ENGL105 and 105S

***Analysis***: Wide grade distribution by instructors. Typically, students in 105S perform at a greater level. This can be attributed to the extra supplemental instruction lab.

***Grade Comparison by Instructor Spring 2013***

ENGL106 and 107

***Analysis:***  With the exception of the No Grades (NG), each instructor demonstrates an even bell curve in the grading.

***Analysis:*** Recommendations for student improvement at THEARC are discussed in detail in the recommendation section of this report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS for 2013-2014**

* **Recommendation #1** **Workshop with Supplemental Instruction** for 030 and 103 – Students who place in ENGL 030 and 103 has the lowest Accuplacer scores and are in need of the most instruction. The students would benefit from participating in an extra 2 hour lab each week. The supplemental instruction has been successful for ENGL 105 to the extent that beginning the Fall 2013, all students enrolled in ENGL 105 are required to register for the lab.
* **Recommendation** # **3 Evaluate the use of My Writing Lab and My Comp Lab** – Until the summer 2012, the online course management tool had proven to assist students in the pre-foundational courses. It also provided a baseline of assessment data to measure student outcomes. Pearson Publishing Company drastically changed its platform for My Writing Lab and introduced My Comp Lab (for ENGL 106 and 107). These changes impacted the “userbility” for students and instructors. Trinity was recently notified that My Comp Lab will be phased out within the next year. For these reasons, other online tutorials will be researched and recommended for future semesters.
* **Recommendation# 4 Writing Center Evening Hours** - The Writing center should expand its hours on evenings and Saturdays to accommodate the schedules of working adult students. Evening appointment availability was confined on average between 5:00-6:30 PM. This was difficult for students and specialist because classes (for students and specialist) began at 6:30 PM.
* **Recommendation #6 Upper Level Writing Course** beyond College Composition (i.e. College Composition II) as well as other English literature courses to give students a wider variety of electives and courses to improve and sharpen their writing ability.
* **Recommendation #8 Writing Support -** As the School of Professional Studies continues to increase in enrollment size for students requiring pre-foundational English courses, more writing support will be needed. SPS is in need of another writing specialist and/or another full time English faculty member. CAS writing specialists teach and focus on two courses specifically. SPS writing specialist responsibilities include, but are not limited to: teaching 5 courses per semester (including graduate writing), curriculum development, one-on-one tutoring, workshop presentations, faculty training and observation. In order to progress with providing data and assessments to improve programming, additional assistance is crucial. Another challenge
* **Recommendation #9 Academic Support Outreach –** A representative from the Academic Success Center should implement outreach activities by visiting the developmental courses at least once per semester.
* **Recommendation # 10 English Advisory Board** – In order to successfully implement the efforts to decrease grading variances, it is imperative to have the input of the faculty who teach English courses. In establishing an advisory board, the adjuncts will have a voice in the improvement process to help identify barriers and in offering recommendations.
* **Recommendation #11 for THEARC**:

1. On-site tutoring services. THEARC faculty have voiced they do not have ample time to work with students who require additional assistance. The challenge in working with students outside of classroom time is a challenge. First, space is an issue. Faculty and students are not allowed into the Trinity room until 5:30 PM. If a faculty is working with a student, there is only a ½ hour time period. The Trinity room lacks privacy as it is the space where students and staff congregate until they are allowed into the classrooms. If an instructor needs to meet with more than one student, there is not sufficient time. Tutoring is recommended especially for students enrolled in ENG 030, which is the course with the highest failure rate at 76%.
2. Computer Literacy. Students at THEARC (and students placed in 030) lack computer literacy. This is a challenge in submitting college-level assignments and participating in the online tutorials. These challenges contribute to the high failure rate in ENGL 030 and 103. Optimally, students who place in these courses should be required to take a computer literacy course before they enroll in other courses toward their degree.

**Challenges for the English Program**

**Challenge 1**: *High turnover for English Faculty*

During the past two semesters, all new English faculty was hired. Each member required an acclimation to Trinity as well as technology training. This training includes Moodle and MyWritingLab/MyCompLab training. This can also be contributed to the disparities in the grading variance.

**Challenge 2:** *Lack of full time English Faculty*

Each semester time is spent in recruiting and training English faculty. The recommendation has been made for SPS to hire an additional writing specialist to assist with the growing needs of the student population.

# INT501Transition Seminar for Graduate Students

As part of INT 501, students were introduced the importance and necessity of academic writing. The workshops, Graduate Writing Expectations and APA Writing Style were facilitated. As part of the seminar, students were required to complete a Graduate Writing Assessment (a critical writing analysis) and submit through Moodle. Students were given 48 hours to complete the assignments. Using the Accupacer scoring system as a guide, the analyses were scored on a scale of 1 to 8. Students who score 5 and below were required to register for INT 502 Graduate Writing Primer.

***Findings:***

* Of the 54 students registered for the course, 28 completed the assignment online and 6 completed the assessment in person for a total of 34 (63% completion rate). The writing assessments were scored with a guide adapted from the Accuplacer, 2011 Scoring Rubric on a scale from 1-8.

***Data:***

Assessment Results

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Fall 2012**  **Number of Students** | **Score** | **Spring 2013**  **Number of Students** |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 14 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | 18 | 5 | 3 |
| 6 | 22 | 6 | 11 |
| 7 | 9 | 7 | 21 |
| 8 | 2 | 8 | 3 |
| NG | 0 | NG | 5 |
| Grand Total | **72** | Grand Total | **58** |

The class average score: 5

Students recommended to take INT502: 21 (fall) and 10 (spring)

* INT 502 Graduate Writing Primer: 14 students were enrolled in the spring semester and 2 students were enrolled in the Fall 2012 semester. The grading is N or NP. All students successfully passed the course.
* Many students request writing assistance require appointment times in the evenings and/or on Saturday. In 2012, 62 office appointments were scheduled which made it impossible for me to continue to assist and spend time at the Writing Center. All appointments are scheduled through the SPS Office.

**Writing Workshop Series**

During Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters, the SPS writing workshop series offered to all students included:

**The Writing Process**

This workshop will teach students the importance of approaching every writing assignment as a process. Students will be given strategies to help them effectively chose topics, focus, and prepare outlines. Topics covered will include: prewriting, drafting, revising, and proofreading.

**APA Style Writing**

This workshop will teach students the essential elements of APA Documentation Style writing. Topics covered will include: format, citation, reference list, and various style issues.

**Research Strategies**

In conjunction with Library Services, this workshop will cover services offered at the library. Topics covered will include: how to find scholarly articles using Trinity’ databases, books (catalog), and strategies to evaluate sources online, including those found via Google and other major search engines.

**The Scholarship Process and Scholarship Essay**

Given the financial climate of higher education and the recent regulations for student aide, it has become imperative for students to seek financial assistance and scholarships through public and private funding sources. This workshop is designed to help students prepare, write, and submit scholarly essays as part of the scholarship process. Included in the workshop will be strategies to research, identify, and apply for potential scholarships.

# APPENDICES

# Student Enrollment by Course

***Data:***

***Overall Snapshot of Grades by Course for Summer 2012, Fall 2012 and Spring 2013***

**Data:**

**INT501 Writing Assessment**

The purpose of this activity is to assess your academic writing skills. In response to **one** of the three articles posted, you are to write a critical analysis paper. A critical analysis has two main goals: (1) to identify and explain the argument of the author(s) and (2) to provide an argument is response to the article.

The paper should contain, but is not limited to:

* Introduction and presentation of the thesis
* Summary of the article
* Your argument and/or response to the article
* Conclusion

Other notes:

* The paper should be written from a third-person perspective (or point of view)
* Do not include any outside research to add to or defend your argument
* The assignment should be written in 600 words or less

I will read and assess each of your essays. You will receive individual feedback on your writing. Please send me an e-mail if you have any questions.

**Article Options**

Kasworm, C. (2011). The influence of the knowledge society: Trends in adult higher education.

*Journal Of* *Continuing Higher Education*, 59(2), 104-107. doi:10.1080/07377363.2011.568830

Holmes, G. and Abington-Cooper, M. (2000) Pedagogy vs. andragogy: A false dichotomy? *The*

*Journal of Technology Studies*, 26 (2). Retrieved from

http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JOTS/Summer-Fall-2000/holmes.html

The Declaration of Independence. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.archives.gov/exhibits

/charters/declaration\_transcript.html

**INT502 Graduate Writing Primer**

**Credits: 1**

**Minimum Passing Grade:** Pass/Fail

**Methods of Instruction:** Online (One-on-one scheduled appointments are strongly encouraged)

**Syllabus Last Updated:** January 2013

**Instructor:** Beverly S. Lucas

**Trinity Phone:** (202) 884-9298

**Trinity Email:** [lucasbe@trinitydc.edu](mailto:lucasbe@trinitydc.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 6:00-9:00 PM

Thursday and Friday 3:00-5:00 PM or by appointment

**Course Description**:

This seminar is designed for students to improve their writing skills to prepare for the demands and rigor of graduate, academic writing.  Students will learn the steps of the writing process, effective writing strategies, and APA style requirements.  The ability to analyze, synthesize and respond to scholarly articles will be reviewed.

**Course Objectives**:

Upon completion of this course you will be able to:

* understand and incorporate the necessary steps of the writing process;
* meet the usage standards and sophistication level of the audience being addressed;
* understand the elements of various patterns of development (narrative, definition, critical analysis, literature review, and persuasive/argument);
* integrate APA documentation style writing;
* integrate techniques of academic inquiry and research;
* develop writing and research strategies that can be applied consistently across disciplines and audiences; and edit writing for effective word choice and grammar usage.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week**  **Date** | **Topics Covered/Readings Required** | **Assignments Due** |
| **1** | Introductions and course overview  **Focus: The Writing Process**  **Elements of An Effective Essay**  **Effective Thesis Statements**  Readings: *“How to Write with Style”* by Kurt Vonnegut  Writing Assessment Reviews |  |
| **2** | **Focus: Narrative**  **Personal Writing Style**  Reading: *“Up From Slavery”* (an excerpt) by Booker T.  Washington  Guidelines for Assignment 1 - Narrative | Student  Writing Assessment |
| **3** | Focus: **APA Writing Documentation Style**  Readings: *APA Manual*: Writing Clearly and Precisely  (pp. 61-70)  The Mechanics of Style  (pp. 87-97)  Guidelines for Assignment 2 – APA Review | Assignment 1  Narrative |
| **4** | Focus: **Definition Essay**  **Critical Thinking Skills**  Readings: *“What is Poverty?”* by George Henderson  *“Maslow’s Theory of Self-Actualization”* by  Gerald Covey and Marianne Corey  Rubric Review  Guidelines for Assignment 3 – Definition | Assignment 2  APA Review |
| **5** | Focus: **Critical Analysis Writing**  **Judgment and Evaluation Skills**  Reading: The Critical Analysis Paper PowerPoint  Guidelines for Assignment 4 – Critical Analysis | Assignment 3  Definition |
| **6** | Focus: **Incorporating Research**  **Plagiarism**  Readings: *APA Manual*: Crediting Sources (pp. 169-179)  “*Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Guidelines and Examples*” by Richard J. Torraco  Guidelines for Assignment 5 – Literature Review | Assignment 4  Critical Analysis |
| **7** | Focus: **Argument**  **Research Skills Development**  Readings: APA Manual: Samples (pp. 41-59)  *“The Unconscionable Great Divide”* by Patricia  McGuire | Assignment 5  Literature Review |
| **8** | Focus: **Writing in the Profession**  **Individual Appointments**  Readings: Chosen by student (discipline specific) |  |

**Weather Delays, Closings, and Emergencies:** Information on school delays and closings will be available online and at the weather hotline, 202-884-9009. Trinity’s Department of Public Safety can be reached at 202-884-9111. *Since this is an online course, unless there is a regional emergency, we will follow the syllabus as written*.

**Required Text:** *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010). 6th edition, Washington, DC.

**Additional Reading:** Additional readings may be distributed throughout the duration of the lass.