Research & Writing Workshop

McMaster Divinity College (MDC)   Fall Semester 2014
Instructor: Hughson T. Ong, Ph.D. (cand.)   September 17–October 22
Contact: hughsonong@yahoo.com   Wednesdays, 1:30–3:20PM
Office hours: By appointment   Cochran Room (Room 121)

I. Course Description

This is *not* a remedial course, nor is it a course for credit. It is a six-week (two hours per week) workshop offered to students who want to work their way towards mastering three essential skills—reading, researching, and writing—that are needed in graduate-level education. The course is intended and designed for students who want to become successful in their academic work, for those who have been out of school for some time, and for those who have learned English as a second language. The course will teach students how to read a book for research and writing, how to plan and organize a research assignment, how to perform online researching, how to create an outline and a logical argumentation for written assignments, and how to prepare for oral presentations. Students registered in both professional and research degree programs are encouraged to attend this course.

Cost: $180—MDC pays $100, student pays $80

II. Course Objectives

a. Knowing
   - To familiarize students with different levels of reading which they can apply to their various academic assignments
   - To familiarize students with the types of assignments they will be writing in their coursework
   - To teach students how to research and write at the graduate and seminary level, focusing on the use of library and online research tools and on the development of such organizational skills as structuring an essay, forming paragraphs, and constructing clear argumentation
   - To teach students the elementary rules of English usage and composition, including grammar and syntax and commonly misused words, phrases, and expressions

b. Being
   - To help students gain confidence in their research, writing, and presentation skills
   - To develop students' ability to share freely their challenges and concerns and to receive positively feedback and comments from others
   - To cultivate in the life of students a heart of humility in the pursuit of knowledge and a passion for continuous learning

c. Doing
   - To help students find enjoyment in their research and writing activities so as to improve continually their research and writing skills
   - To encourage students to help others with the research and writing knowledge and skills they acquired
   - To encourage students to give their best effort to all their academic endeavors

III. Course Materials and Resources
   a. Class materials and style guides (available in the MDC bookstore)
      ▪ Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles van Doren. *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading*. Revised and Updated ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972.
      ▪ Northey, Margot, Bradford A. Anderson, and Joel N. Lohr. *Making Sense in Religious Studies: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
      ▪ Porter, Stanley E. *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. (Read chapter two—Basic Principles of a Publishable Manuscript.)
      ▪ Strunk, William Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 2000.
      ▪ "McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses (March 14, 2013)." McMaster Divinity College. Accessed August 26, 2013. http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/MDCStyleGuideMarch0413.pdf.
      ▪ Alexander, Patrick, et. al., eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.
      ▪ Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
   b. Online resources (research)
      ▪ "ATLA (American Theological Library Association religion database)." McMaster University Library. http://www.http://web.ebscohost.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/.
      ▪ "JSTOR (online journal for the humanities)." McMaster University Library. http://www.jstor.org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/.
      ▪ "Scholars Portal Journals." Ontario Council of University Libraries. http://journals2.scholarsportal.info.
      ▪ "Virtual Training Suite (Developing internet research skills)." Institute for Learning and Research Technology, University of Bristol. http://www.vtstutorials.co.uk.
      ▪ "Internet Archive." http://archive.org/.
      ▪ "SBL Abbreviations." Resources for Biblical Studies. http://www.deinde.org/resources/abbreviations.php.
      ▪ Hayes, John H., and Carl R. Holladay. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007. (See the bibliographical list of website and internet resources on pages 225–30.)
   c. Online resources (writing)
      ▪ "Common Errors in English Usage." http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/.
      ▪ "Guide to Grammar and Writing." Capital Community College Foundation. http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/.

IV. Course Requirements
   a. Course Readings (ca. 300 pp.)

Students are not required but are highly encouraged to read *The Elements of Style* and *Making Sense in Religious Studies*.

b. Attendance and Participation
   Learning is a collaborative effort. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and are encouraged to ask questions and participate in class discussions. Classroom and out-of-classroom exercises will help students acquire more quickly the necessary skills for research and writing.

V. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

VI. Course Activities

The workshop will include lecture periods, practice periods (hands-on exercises), and discussion periods. Students are expected to bring their computers and samples of their own coursework assignments to class, especially during those sessions where they will be needed (refer to the activities indicated in the course outline below).

VII. Course Outline

The major topics of this workshop are divided into six two-hour sessions. Students are expected to get up to speed with the lessons covered in each session and to bring their term assignments to the class for discussion.

Session 1 (Sept 17): Workshop introduction & learning how to read

Minutes	Lessons	Activities in class
30	1) Workshop Introduction & Syllabus	
30	2) Overview of the research and writing process and its various components	
60	3) The activity and art of reading 4) Levels of reading	Practice inspectional reading, "pigeonholing" and "x-raying" a book

Session 2 (Sept 24): Learning how to plan, think, and organize (pre-research-and-writing activities) & library tour

Minutes	Lessons	Activities after class
90	1) Distinguishing between types of assignments 2) Time management and organizing schedule 3) The initial strategies in writing 4) Planning the research	Review the different assignments that need to be done for the term and use these pre-writing activities to initialize the writing process
30	5) Tour of Mills library	Visit Mills as often as possible and familiarize oneself with the locations of such resources as

		books, journals, periodicals, reference-only books, etc.

Session 3 (Oct 1): Learning how to find, examine, quote and paraphrase, and document sources (the research process)

Minutes	Lessons	Activities in Class
60	1) Finding library and online sources 2) Gathering, examining, and collating sources 3) Putting together a beginning bibliography	Bring one upcoming assignment to class for online-research practice
60	4) Citing and documenting sources 5) Plagiarism 6) MDC style guide	Practice quoting and citing sources and putting together a beginning bibliography

Session 4 (Oct 8): Learning how to use bibliographic databases & software (the research process continued) & the elementary principles of composition (the writing process)

Minutes	Lessons	Activities after class
30	1) Building a bibliographic database in MSWord 2) Using Endnote (optional)	Practice building a bibliographic database for one of your papers
75	3) Essay outline and structure 4) Writing sentences and paragraphs	Apply these lessons learned to one of the papers you are writing or will be writing

Session 5 (Oct 15): Learning the basics of English grammar and usage (the writing process continued)

Minutes	Lessons	Activities after class
60	1) Elementary rules of usage 2) Common errors in grammar and usage	Read and ask questions from the handouts; work on grammar and syntax practice sheets
60	3) Commonly misused words, phrases, and expressions 4) Punctuation marks	

Session 6 (Oct 22): Learning how to proofread and edit the final copy of your paper (the writing process continued) & how to prepare for oral presentations (the oral presentation process)

Minutes	Lessons	Activities in class
60	1) Post-writing checklist 2) Receiving critical feedback and comments	Bring a final copy of one of your papers to class
60	3) Preparing for an oral presentation 4) Creating visual aids 5) Delivering your presentation	Practice identifying the key points or the materials in the paper that need to be presented

VIII.   PROOFREADING SERVICES
   a. Weekly proofreading offered by Willard Pottinger: Tuesdays and Wednesdays between 10AM to 4PM; one-on-one tutoring by appointment only; email: wpottinger@shaw.ca
   b. Proofreading offered by MDC Ph.D. students on a case-by-case basis: contact Hughson T. Ong.