

(8/16)  
(Created with help from Pamela Dail Whiting)

**AQUINAS COLLEGE**  
***EH 265: Writing Center Theory and Practice***  
**Fall 2016**

**Location/Times:** M 6:30-9:30  
**Instructor:** Dr. Gretchen Rumohr-Voskuil  
**Office:** AB 309  
**Phone Number:** 616.481.3312 (allow 24 hours for response; texting is ok)  
**Fax Number:** 616.732.4487  
**E-mail Address:** [ghr001@aquinas.edu](mailto:ghr001@aquinas.edu) (allow 24 hours for response)  
**Office Hours:** M 2-3 and 4:30-6:30; Th 2-3 and 4:20-5:20

**Required Textbooks and Instructional Materials**

Hacker and Sommers, *Pocket Style Manual*, 7th ed. BSM

Rafoth, *A Tutor's Guide*, 2nd ed, ISBN 0867095873, Boynton/Cook

*St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors* (978-0312661915), BSM

*Our Voices* (Aquinas Bookstore or on reserve in the library)

Aquinas email address that you check on a daily basis

Regular, reliable access to CourseConnect/Internet (CC course key is aquinas)

Paper and printer toner if you plan to print at home

“Printing funds” if you plan to print materials at the computer lab rather than at home

Reliable transportation to and from final class celebration in Zeeland, MI (can be arranged, no problem)

**Course Description**

This course will utilize writing theory and technique to train students to be student consultants for the Aquinas College Writing Center. Specifically, the course will equip students to assist Writing Center visitors with key elements of the writing process, including but not limited to: idea generation, thesis development/topic focus, organization, revision, editing, grammar correction (usage and punctuation), discipline-specific documentation and formatting.

**Course Goals**

**To provide students with**

an understanding of the writing process

practical knowledge of the English language, including issues of usage and punctuation

practical knowledge of what constitutes quality writing, including issues of content, organization, style, and audience awareness  
strategies for responding to—and helping to improve—student writing

### **Learning Outcomes**

#### **Student consultants will:**

Demonstrate elements of a successful student/consultant conference  
Exhibit competency in assisting student writers  
Show proficiency in writing  
Identify strengths and weaknesses of student writing and respond appropriately  
Recognize lower-order concerns and higher-order concerns in writing, and prioritize revisions accordingly  
Model revision strategies and empower students to use these strategies independently

## **Requirements**

### *A Word on Professionalism:*

Because the goal of this class is to develop exemplary writing center student consultants, I expect that you will strive for the highest level of professionalism. That means that you will be committed to the goals of the course, read assigned texts thoughtfully, contribute to the classroom community, keep up with all assigned work, and attend all class meetings on time.

As a professional, you should present ALL class assignments neatly (**typed**). And since you will be advising others on effective writing, your own class writings should attend to higher-level concerns (like organization and content) as well as lower-level concerns (like spelling and grammar).

More specifically, your professionalism will be evident as described in the categories below.

### *Our Voices connections (at least 3 pages double-spaced, 10 points)*

This well-organized, polished journal documents your engagement with the *Our Voices* text. In reading it, I will look for proof of close reading and reflection on the text. You may want to consider how elements of the book have been true in your own life, how you have seen such ideas enacted/ignored in Writing Center practices, or whether you agree/disagree with the ideas presented. You will receive two points for each category: depth of thought/explanations/examples, documentation (quotes/examples), investment/interest, organization of ideas, and mechanics. Please note that especially incomplete or error-ridden journals will not receive credit.

### *Reading Responses (substantial response; 5 points apiece)*

These well-organized, polished journals (or creative reflections) document your engagement with assigned readings. In reading them, I will look for proof of close reading and reflection on that week's text. You may want to consider how elements of the assigned reading have been true in your own life, how you have seen such ideas enacted/ignored in everyday life, or whether you agree/disagree with the ideas presented. These journals can be meta-cognitive (i.e. detailing your interaction with the text) or non-traditional—a poem, script, infographic, etc. You will receive five points per weekly reading—one point for each category: depth of thought/explanations/examples, documentation (quotes/examples), investment/interest, organization of ideas, and mechanics. Please note that especially “surface-level” or error-ridden journals will not receive credit.

### *The “Writing About Writing” Assignment (10 points rough draft; 10 points final draft)*

Early in the course you will compose a 4-6 page paper that tells a story about a time you wrote something. You could describe a childhood memory of writing a story, the first time you wrote in college, perhaps a time when you knew you were a writer, or a time that writing really challenged you. Your audience is your fellow consultants-in-training, not just me (the instructor). This essay will be evaluated according to the guidelines at <http://www.aquinas.edu/ie/grading.html>.

Two Writing Center Visits (25 for each)

Bring two pieces of your own writing to the Writing Center for feedback. Before you go to your session, consider some questions for your WC consultant. After your session, write a 2-page memo with substantial reflection under these headings:

- \*date, time, location, first name of consultant
- \*background information on writing piece workshopped
- \*specific ways that this WC session confirmed/challenged ideas from assigned class readings
- \*helpful information learned (how can you use this information as a Writing Center consultant?)
- \*questions you still have (what are they? Why are they important to you? How will you investigate them?)

If this assignment is complete, well-organized (with headings) and contains few surface errors, it will receive full credit.

Independent Study Element: Writing Habits Interview (50 points)

This semester, you will interview an Aquinas College student (not in this class) in order to become more familiar with the preferences, abilities, attitudes and habits of college writers. Plan to spend about an hour with your interviewee, and plan your questions ahead of time. You may find that the conversation takes on a life of its own (and that you must abandon your preformed questions), but it is always a good idea to be prepared. Remember to establish a rapport with your interviewee—put him/her at ease by making this assignment more of a conversation than a question-driven interview. Don't forget that open-ended questions usually yield richer conversations as opposed to yes/no questions. Consider the following questions as some examples:

- \*Are you writing anything right now for fun? (Follow up: What are you reading? Why did you choose to read it?)
- \*What are you most proud of writing? Why?
- \*What kind of writing do you do for Aquinas? How do you feel about it?
- \*Do you and your friends talk about your writing? (If so, what? If not, why do you suppose that you don't talk about it?)

After your interview, write a brief reflection documenting your experience. **Use the following headings:**

- \*date, time, location, first name of person observed
- \*background information on person
- \*specific ways that this interview confirmed ideas from assigned class readings
- \*specific ways that this interview challenged ideas from assigned class readings
- \*helpful information learned (how will you use this information as a Writing Center consultant?)
- \*questions I still have (what are they? Why are they important to you? How will you investigate them?)

If this assignment is complete, includes the required headings and contains few surface errors, it will receive full credit.

Shadow/Flip AND Work in the Writing Center ( 10 points apiece, including reflection)

Beginning the week of \_\_\_\_\_, you will sign up for a one-hour shift at WC. Show up a few minutes early, introduce yourself, and gather some background on the consultant you will shadow. Then, follow the protocol below.

If students show up for feedback:	If students don't show up for feedback/in between sessions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Have Mentor Consultant introduce you to student, share the reason for your presence and ask permission for you to stay and observe during session;</li> <li>*Simply watch, listen and learn; take notes as needed</li> <li>*After session, provide consultant with               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--any positive feedback for session (What went well, in your opinion? Why did consultant do this? Does it always go this way? Etc.)</li> <li>--any questions/challenges (What didn't go so well? Why? What might we change in future sessions?)</li> <li>--any connections with class readings (as appropriate)</li> <li>--ask consultant what s/he learned/was challenged by/etc. during the session</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Discuss with mentor consultant               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Background (how long as a consultant, qualifications, teaching experience, etc.)</li> <li>--Greatest moments of WC consulting</li> <li>--Challenges of WC consulting</li> <li>--Any advice for consultants-in-training</li> <li>--Any book recommendations?</li> <li>--Anything else that seems interesting!</li> </ul> </li> <li>*Take note of WC surroundings               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Resources provided</li> <li>--Space (room, windows, posters, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Written reflection after Shadow:**

After the shadowing session, please write a well-organized, polished reflection with the following headings:

- \*Ways that the WC Protocol was enacted (was it followed exactly? Flexibly? Why?)
- \*Helpful information learned
- \*Specific ways that this WC session confirmed/challenged ideas from assigned class reading
- \*Questions you still have (what are they? Why are they important to you? How will you investigate them?)

You will shadow for one week.

FOLLOWING your shadowing experience at the WC, you will flip this experience and act as the writing consultant as mentor consultant observes. You will act as the writing consultant for one week. At the end of your two-hour flip, use the discussion questions above (the left of the column) to guide your conversation. Then, write a well-organized, polished reflection with the following headings:

- \*Ways that the WC Protocol was enacted (was it followed exactly? Flexibly? Why?)
- \*Helpful information learned
- \*Specific ways that this WC session confirmed/challenged ideas from assigned class reading
- \*Questions you still have (what are they? Why are they important to you? How will you investigate them?)

**Work in the Writing Center (10 points per assigned shift, including reflection)**

After each shift in the WC, write a well-organized, polished reflection that considers:

- \*Ways that the WC Protocol was enacted (was it followed exactly? Flexibly? Why?)
- \*Helpful information learned

- \*Specific ways that this WC session confirmed/challenged ideas from assigned class reading
- \*Questions you still have (what are they? Why are they important to you? How will you investigate them?)

If you'd like to vary this response, feel free to draw upon your creativity—an infographic, poem, or short story would also help you reflect. You will post these reflections on CC in the WC Forum (more details soon)

### **Praxis Proposal (prewriting=25, presentation=25, paper=50)**

You will write a research-based proposal that explores one way that you plan to contribute to the Aquinas College Writing Center. This will serve as a basis for your continued work there during your internship (next semester) and paid work (following semesters).

## **Grading**

### **ATTENDANCE**

- **With two absences, your final grade for the course will fall a full letter grade.**
- **With three absences, your final grade will fall a second full letter grade.**
- **With four absences and beyond, you will receive an automatic failure for the course.**

### **SCALE**

**Grading criteria for most essay assignments can be found at [www.aquinas.edu/ie/grading.html](http://www.aquinas.edu/ie/grading.html).**

93-100 A  
90-92 A-  
88-89 B+  
83-87 B  
80-82 B-  
78-79 C+  
73-77 C  
70-72 C-  
68-69 D+  
63-67 D  
60-62 D-  
59 F

### **LATE WORK**

Late work is rarely accepted in this course.

### **Support Services**

#### **Students with Disabilities**

Aquinas College is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting

the Disability Services Office at [616-632-2177](tel:616-632-2177), [dsservices@aquinas.edu](mailto:dsservices@aquinas.edu). The office is located in the Wege Center, room 103C. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified letter from the Disability Services office. Please present your accommodation letter to the instructor as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, they begin when the instructor receives the verified letter from you.

### **Academic Assistance**

Academic Learning Services (616) 632-2166 offers free tutoring to all students. All students are encouraged to visit the Writing Center. For further questions contact Julie Bevins, Writing Center Coordinator, [jl006@aquinas.edu](mailto:jl006@aquinas.edu) or 632-2168.

### **Writing Center**

*PHILOSOPHY: The AQ Writing Center understands writing to be a process. We believe “good” writing is not a “gift” given to some individuals and denied others. It is, instead, a craft which individuals develop over time, and all writers—regardless of current skill level, writing experience, or academic discipline—benefit from receiving feedback from intelligent readers and engaging in conversations about their writing.*

Current Writing Center hours are linked through our CC page.

### **Academic Integrity**

Note that it is not allowable to submit previously-written papers in this class (whether from high school or college or elsewhere). Written or other work that a student submits must be the product of her/his own efforts. Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty, including dishonesty involving computer technology, are prohibited and may result in failure of the course. Further information on Academic Dishonesty can be found in the current College catalog.

### **Technology**

Laptops and tablets are permitted during class when approved by the instructor; please ask first. Mobile phones must be turned down and put away during class, and should not be used for assigned readings.

### **Calendar/Assignments**

Check due dates under “required assignments.” Students will be notified of any changes to the course via CourseConnect.

### **Feedback**

I will aim to provide feedback on essays within two weeks of submission.

### **Class cancellation policy**

If a class is cancelled on a paper’s due date, you can submit via CourseConnect.

### **Student Concern Policy**

Please contact the English department chair if you have concerns about the content or administration of this course.

### **Resources/References**

In addition to a course reserve in the Woodhouse Library, the English and Education departments maintain web sites ([www.aquinas.edu/ie/index.html](http://www.aquinas.edu/ie/index.html)) where students can find links to numerous online writing resources. The Grace Hauenstein Library also subscribes to numerous databases (including ProQuest, First Search, InfoTrac, ERIC, and others) in order to support academic research and learning.