AQUINAS COLLEGE
EH 265: Writing Center Theory and Practice
Fall 2013

Location/Times: M 6:00-9:00
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 (allow 24 hours for response)
Office Hours: M 10-12, 3-5; Th 11-12

Colleague’s contact information: ________________________________

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Required Textbooks and Instructional Materials


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

Flash drive for various class projects

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, 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 with the following categories:

Walls connections (at least 3 pages double-spaced, 10 points)
This well-organized, polished journal documents your engagement with the Walls 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 Walls’ book 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. 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 Response Journals /Creative Reflections (2 pages double-spaced per chapter of assigned reading; 5 points apiece)
These well-organized, polished journals (or creative reflections where indicated) 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. You will receive five points per journal—one point 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.

The “How I Write” Paper (taken from Donald A. McAndrew & Thomas J. Reigstad’s, Tutoring Writing; 50 points)
Early in the course you will compose a 4-6 page paper that describes your own writing processes, habits, and rituals. 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. Consider the following as you write:

When do you get the urge to write?
Under what circumstances does writing become easier/more difficult?
What do you find most enjoyable/most unpleasant about writing?
Can you think of any quirks or gimmicks you use to get started, to keep going, or to finish up?
What is an ideal writing situation for you (what do you like to eat/have around)?
Do you ever think of who will read your writing?
Are there any analogies that you can use to describe your writing process? (Explain)

An alternative for this assignment: consider a recent essay that you wrote and compose a blow-by-blow account of how you wrote it.

Two Writing Center Visits (beginning, middle; 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 reflection that considers:
*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

Staple this reflection to your copy of the WC sheet you receive from the consultant. If this assignment is complete, well-organized and contains few surface errors, it will receive full credit.

**Independent Study Element: Writing Habits Interview (50 points)**

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

**Shadow/Flip AND Work in the Writing Center (170 points)**

More details at the end of this document.

**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.

**LATE WORK**

Late work is rarely accepted in this course.

**Support Services**

**Students with Disabilities**

If you believe you qualify for course adaptations or special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is your responsibility to contact the Disability Coordinator (616) 632-2166 and provide the
appropriate documentation. If you have already documented a disability or other condition that would qualify you for special accommodations, or if you have emergency medical information or special needs, this should be reported in confidence to the Disability Coordinator to discuss your specific needs. Together, you can plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

**Academic Assistance**
Academic and Learning Services at (616) 632-2166 offers free assistance to all students. In addition, participants in the Student Support Services program can receive academic assistance and other services.

**Writing Center**
Shameless plug: please visit the Writing Center in Wege Center 110B as often as possible. The Center employs specialists in study and reading skills, grammar, and term-paper preparation. Hours will be announced during the second week of class, and are available at [http://www.aquinas.edu/aac/writing.html](http://www.aquinas.edu/aac/writing.html).

**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 (for example, internet lesson plans/activities), are prohibited and may result in failure of the course. Further information on Academic Dishonesty can be found in the current College catalog.

**Technology**
Please silence, and put away, all mobile devices while in class (this includes group activities). Laptops are permitted when they enrich—not distract from—course material.

**Feedback**
I will aim to provide feedback for assignments within two weeks of submission.

**Class cancellation policy**
If a class is cancelled (due to snow or other reasons) on a due date, that assignment will be collected at the next class.

**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.
Shadow/Flip in the Writing Center

Beginning the week of November 4, you will sign up for a two-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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If students show up for feedback:</th>
<th>If students don’t show up for feedback/in between sessions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Have Mentor Consultant introduce you to student, share the reason for your presence and ask permission for you to stay and observe during session;</td>
<td>*Discuss with mentor consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Simply watch, listen and learn; take notes as needed</td>
<td>--Background (how long as a consultant, qualifications, teaching experience, etc.)</td>
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<td>*After session, provide consultant with</td>
<td>--Greatest moments of WC consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>--any positive feedback for session (What went well, in your opinion? Why did consultant do this? Does it always go this way? Etc.)</td>
<td>--Challenges of WC consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>--any questions/challenges (What didn’t go so well? Why? What might we change in future sessions?)</td>
<td>--Any advice for consultants-in-training</td>
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<td>--any connections with class readings (as appropriate)</td>
<td>--Any book recommendations?</td>
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<tr>
<td>--ask consultant what s/he learned/was challenged by/etc. during the session</td>
<td>--Anything else that seems interesting!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Take note of WC surroundings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>--Resources provided</td>
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<td>--Space (room, windows, posters, etc.)</td>
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Written reflection after Shadow:

After the shadowing session, please write a well-organized, polished reflection with the following headings (25 points):
*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

The week FOLLOWING your shadowing experience at the WC, you will flip this experience and act as the writing consultant as mentor consultant observes. 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 (25 points):
*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
Work in the Writing Center (Practicum)

The week FOLLOWING your shadow/flip experience at the WC, you will begin your practicum as a WC student consultant. After each three-hour shift, write a well-organized, polished reflection with the following headings (10 points for practicum attendance, 15 points for reflection, 5 points for email/conference):

* 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

Be ready to share these ideas with me in a student-instructor conference, or send me an informal email keeping me apprised of your experiences.