



Logo by Terry Dolson

Richmond Writing Across the Curriculum Newsletter

Issue 25, Sept. 2010

We also wanted to begin expanding the set of materials for Writing in the Disciplines.

Earlier this decade, David Roberts (RC 2007) inaugurated this expansion with materials from Political Science. David, who just finished his degree at UVA's law school, noted that faculty often had excellent materials for student writers, but no public place then existed for sharing them with students and colleagues. Too often, entering writers find the tangle of unstated conventions in a field of study daunting and we faculty, who know the conventions instinctively, often do not pause to share them with novices in our fields.

Following David's lead, my sections of Eng. 383 began interviewing faculty in various majors and compiling materials for Writer's Web. Writer's Web currently offers online handbooks in the following fields of study: Biology, Business Communication, Classics, Creative Nonfiction, Education, English, French, History, International Studies, Journalism, Leadership Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Theatre & Dance. Kathleen and I went about sorting these out, editing them, and placing them in a new interface for the Web site. We are proud to continue the "print a handout" format but making every new and existing Writer's Web page have both on-screen and printer-friendly versions.

All of these areas will grow as future classes add, amend, and conduct faculty interviews. I'm proud that Writer's Web has been recognized nationally by a few publications as one of the best online resources for writers. I intend our WID materials to be the best of their sort anywhere online.

Faculty can help by providing us with materials, including superior student essays with commentary. This summer we worked with two faculty in English

and two writers who volunteered well written papers with faculty feedback to provide models in the field.

Fall Semester Writing Workshops

Sponsored by the
School of Continuing Studies.

Preregistration required.

Location & Registration at:

<http://scs.richmond.edu/about/events.html>

Critical Reading for Writing

Lee Carleton,
Writing Center Assistant Director
September 22, 5:30-6:45

What is "critical reading?" How can we read challenging texts in order to maximize our retention and harvest the most useful information to enhance our writing? In this workshop we will outline a few key reading strategies for writing before applying them to some short texts during the workshop. Attendees are welcome to bring texts they are currently reading for a writing assignment.

Online Reading & Research

Lee Carleton,
Writing Center Assistant Director
October 20, 5:30-6:45

Is online reading significantly different from reading a physical book? If so how? and why is this significant? What new tools do we have access to when reading online? How can we sort out the most reliable resources from thousands of search engine hits and make our searches more efficient? How do we cite our sources properly and how can we cite the text most effectively to support our writing? We will explore these questions and more in this workshop.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome back Consultants and WAC Faculty!

Recruiting for Next Year

We are excited about the growth of the WAC Program and we are seeking to augment our crew of Consultants to keep pace with this growth. This semester alone, the Writing Center provides over 40 hours of consultation per week, and we support 68 sections of FYS and upper division courses taught by 52 faculty with only 55 Consultants. We welcome faculty recommendation of students whose writing and interpersonal skills show promise. Potential Writing Consultants need not be your A+ writers since sometimes such skill can preclude an appreciation of the natural struggles involved in composition. Ask students to contact Lee Carleton (icarleto@richmond.edu) to apply.

Writer's Web Expansion: New Content, Better Navigation

By Joe Essid,
Writing Center Director

Over the summer, Kathleen Lietzau (WC 2010) and I embarked on a major revision to Writer's Web, our online handbook located at:

writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb.html

We both felt that the site needed a more professional appearance and an easier system of navigation.



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Saving Time With a Good Thesis: Avoiding a Rush to Judgment

Dr. Joe Essid, Writing Center Director
October 4, 5:30-6:45

Students often think--and sometimes get taught--to write a thesis statement first. This can lead them to wander through generalizations, to reason from an opinion rather than from supported analysis, and to pick and choose citations that fit the general idea but are not tied together. In this workshop, we will consider how to reason to a claim, rather than from one, how to write one's way to a solid thesis, and how to avoid digression and a rush to judgment in academic prose.

Writing From Sources: Pitfalls, Padding, and Perfection!

Dr. Joe Essid, Writing Center Director
November 15, 5:30-6:45

Marshaling and employing credible evidence can be the hardest aspects of academic writing for those new to it. This workshop will introduce the basic rules for employing sources once a writer has done some research on a topic. Using samples of actual writing provided, we'll see strong and weak ways to signal direct quotations, use paraphrases, cite references in text (APA and MLA formats), and use just enough of a source to make a point work well or support a claim effectively.



Working in the Publishing World

by Megan Reilly

Given the exponential growth of digital reading, E-books, E-readers, and the digital world in general, it is, needless to say, an exciting and riveting time to be associated with the Publishing World. If you are interested in interning, externing, or involving yourself in the publishing industry my advice is: "Act now!"

For the past two summers I have interned at Penguin Group, one of the "Top Six" Publishers in the United States. I worked with their Putnam and Riverhead Marketing division, and as an Intern for the President's Office, and both experiences were phenomenal. Penguin employees are hard-working, talented, and unbelievably passionate about the written word. Penguin, among other Publishing Houses, is continually changing and revising its "game plan," especially with the emergence of "non-traditional" reading devices. Some of my work this past summer included online website/blog research, *New York Times* best seller database creation, and the compilation of footage for advanced iPad apps. What I appreciate most about my experience at Penguin is that my work was taken seriously, and my supervisors placed a tremendous amount of responsibility on me.

If you are at all interested in interning in publishing (if you work in the Writing Center and love reading and writing, you should be interested!), research publishing companies now. The "Top Six" Publishing Houses include Random House, Penguin Group, Simon & Schuster, Macmillan, HarperCollins, and Hachette. All of these houses offer internship opportunities, and their information is located on their individual websites. Having a complete, well written cover letter and resume is also very important, so I went to UR's Career Development Center to have them look over my work. It would also be a good idea to ask a fellow Writing Consultant to be yet another "set of eyes." Keep in mind that the work in publishing involves more than editing. One of the many lessons I learned at Penguin was just how many steps and departments are utilized in the creation of a single book. Publishers have something to offer everyone, and I feel so fortunate to have played a role in such an exciting industry. If you have any questions/comments, or would simply like to chat and discuss publishing and books, please feel free to e-mail me at :
megan.reilly@richmond.edu

Concluding Cogitations...

by Lee Carleton,
Writing Center Assistant Director

The digital revolution continues to evolve and offer us interesting and useful options for writing and reading but not without a small dose of hype. I enjoy experimenting with these new tools but I'm not convinced they are the "end of the book" as some digerati have claimed. Even as mass production reduces the cost of new digital tools, it will hard to beat the book for economy and durability, especially with new paper, binding, and production technologies.

Recently I ordered a copy of Kenneth Burke's book *Attitudes Towards History* and I was surprised to read the note on the copyright page informing me that the text was not printed with ink but rather with toner! In this print-on-demand book I found no appreciable difference in the quality of the type, and the paperback binding seems more flexible and durable than the bindings on older paperbacks I own.

Sure, if I had an E-reader, I could have this text along with dozens of others that would include other media and take up less space and weigh less, but how many books can I actually read at the same time? And what happens if I get caught in the rain or accidentally leave my e-reader somewhere? My print-on-demand paperback will survive a full soaking and will be far less costly to replace if I lose it. More than this, once the book is in my possession it cannot be taken back by the publisher as happened when Orwell's *1984* was yanked from Kindles due to copyright errors. How "Big Brother" is that?

Finally, what techno-evangelists often overlook is the fragile vulnerability of our digital tools. Computers and e-readers are great but they rely on a vast and complex system that is not guaranteed to function smoothly forever. By contrast, books can be printed without electricity and read by the light of our most reliable resource: the sun. But this same sun can cause electronic havoc with the occasional solar flare, and as we well know, a supply of cheap, unlimited electricity is not guaranteed us. I don't think we should resist digital technologies, but I'm not getting rid of my books either.

Have a photo, announcement, cartoon or idea for our next newsletter?
Please contact Joe Essid
(jessid@richmond.edu) or
Lee Carleton
(lcarter@richmond.edu)