

Saint Paul School of Theology
IN079 Introduction to Theological Writing
Fall 2003

Instructor

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Office Hours

By appointment and
Tuesday, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Course Meeting Times and Place

Thursdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Kansas-Winger 507

Course Description

This course surveys basic writing styles and skills necessary for theological studies. The goal of the course is to equip students with fundamental skills in writing, research, speaking, and critical thinking for professional and academic competence. This course requires simultaneous enrollment in another Saint Paul School of Theology course for which writing is required. (1 semester credit hour, elective)

You must be registered for another course to which writing assignments are linked for credit in IN079. MIN101 is the preferred linked course, but with permission of both instructors, another course may be linked with IN079.

Learning Goals

1. The overarching goal of the course is to assist students to make the transition from previous academic and work-related experiences with writing to the specialized writing, reading, thinking, and speaking skills required for theological studies and professional life.
2. Learning objectives for students include the following:
 - a. devising study plans for the semester and setting learning goals,
 - b. deepening critical thinking, reading, and research skills,
 - c. developing strategies for multiple types of theological writing, from autobiography, reports, and research papers to essay exams,
 - d. engaging and creating criteria for evaluation of written and oral work, including self-evaluation, and
 - e. reflecting on the importance of written and oral communication for leaders in Christian churches, denominations, and academic contexts.

Required Texts

- Deborah Core, *The Seminary Student Writes* (Chalice Press, 2000).
Leonard J. Rosen, *Decisions: A Writer's Handbook* (Allyn & Bacon, 1998).
Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition (University of Chicago, 1996).

Other Writing and Research Resources

- Howard S. Becker, *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It*.
Wayne Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*.
Richard E. Davies, *Handbook for Doctor of Ministry Projects*.
Francis G. Downing, *Doing Theology Thoughtfully Is Really Very Like Thoughtfully Doing All Sorts of Other Things (The Theologian's Craft)*.
Karen Elizabeth Gordon, *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire: The Ultimate Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*.
Laurie Green, *Let's Do Theology*.
Urban Holmes, *To Speak of God*.
Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*.
Robert Allen Krupp, *A Primer on Theological Research Tools*.
Donald E. Miller and Barry Jay Seltser, *Writing and Research in Religious Studies*.
Schubert Ogden, *Doing Theology Today*.
Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*.
Patrick Sebranek, Verne Meyer, and Dave Kemper, *Writer's Inc: A Student Handbook for Writing and Learning*.
Carolyn Spencer and Beverly Arbon, *Foundations of Writing: Developing Research and Academic Writing Skills*.
Dennis Tucker, *Finding Religion in the Library: A Student Manual of Information Retrieval and Utilization Skills*.
Jim and Evelyn Whitehead, *Method in Ministry*.
Joseph M. Williams, *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*.
Douglas E. Wingeier, *Working Out Your Own Beliefs*.

Course Schedule

Reading Week:	October 13-17
Thanksgiving Recess:	November 24-28
Session 1 August 28	Introducing the Course
Session 2 September 4	Planning to Study and Write Reading: Rosen, Chapter 2 and 4 Core, Chapter 2 Assignment: Prepare a Study Plan
Session 3 September 11	Reading Texts and Primary Sources Reading: Rosen, Chapter 1 and Appendix A4 Core, Chapter 3 Assignment: Submit Learning Contract
Session 4 September 18	Developing Thesis Statements Reading: Rosen, Chapters 2 and 4 Core, Chapter 2
Session 5 September 25	Preparing Drafts Reading: Rosen, Chapters 2 and 6 Core, Chapter 4
Session 6 October 2	Quoting Sources Reading: Rosen, Chapters 5 and 7 Turabian, Chapter 5 Core, Chapter 4
Session 7 October 9	Constructing Footnotes and Endnotes Reading: Turabian, Chapter 8 Reminder: First draft due no later than October 10
Reading Week October 16	
Session 8 October 23	Analyzing Drafts and Setting Goals Assignment: Bring an Evaluated Draft and Text to Class
Session 9 October 24- November 6	Consultation Assignment: Make an Appointment with the Instructor Bring your Paper Analysis and Goals.
Session 10 November 6	Creating Bibliographies Reading: Turabian, Chapter 9

Session 11 November 13	Structuring Arguments and Thinking Critically Reading: Rosen, Chapters 3 and 8
Session 12 November 20	Reviewing Grammar Assignment: Review your Grammar Problems and bring Rosen and Turabian to Class
Thanksgiving Recess November 28	
Session 13 December 1-11	Consultation Assignment: Make an Appointment with the Instructor.
Session 14 December 11	Applying Writing Skills to Diverse Assignments Reading: Rosen, Chapter 2 Core, Appendix 2 Assignment: Class Participation Self-Evaluation

Course Requirements

1. *Class participation.* Class participation is expected of all students. (Please refer to the “Class Attendance” policy in the Saint Paul School of Theology catalog.) There are no excused absences in this course because the first step toward good study and writing habits is to be disciplined about time management. Any absence from class will lower your class participation grade, but serious extenuating circumstances should be discussed with the instructor. Late papers received after the five-day grace period will receive a grade of NC regardless of the quality of writing. Class participation means that you have completed all reading and writing assignments for the day, not that you have understood all that you read or that your writing is perfect. Good class preparation means that you have come to class prepared to ask questions, to engage the topic of the day, and to think critically about writing. Students have an opportunity to submit a class participation self-evaluation as part of the final grade. Class Participation Self-Evaluation (attached to the syllabus) is due December 11. If the self-evaluation is late or not submitted, the instructor’s class participation grade stands alone as the grade for class participation in the course.

2. *Learning Contract.* One graded assignment is your learning contract. You should project a study and writing plan for the term, which encompasses all assignments for all courses. (Remember to include important family, church, and work responsibilities in your study plan so that the plan is realistic.) From the study plan, write a learning contract for IN079. The learning contract should include:
 - a. one draft of an assignment due before reading week, no later than October 10
 - b. analysis of one evaluated draft due during consultation appointment (October 24-November 6)
 - c. two drafts of a second writing assignment.

The learning contract must indicate the linked course number and title, the exact names of writing assignments in the syllabus, and self-assigned deadlines for drafts. Please allow at least seven days between draft and draft analysis deadlines. Note that drafts more than five days late will receive automatic NC grades and that the instructor cannot guarantee evaluation of late drafts in time to inform later drafts. Deadlines for next drafts are not revised because an earlier draft is late. The learning contract is a contract between us, and its schedule is a supplement to your syllabus. Use the form attached to the syllabus to submit the learning contract, which is due September 11.

3. *Written assignments.* All writing assignments for the course come from MIN101 or another course's assignments. This course will assume that you are writing drafts of projects for the linked course. Writing assignments will be graded as drafts and not as finished products. You will submit one draft for an early assignment in the linked course and two sequential drafts of a later assignment for the linked course--a total of three grades. A draft is understood to be a partially completed assignment of at least 3 pages or a fully complete version of the assignment. Drafts, written in full sentences and paragraphs, must include a working thesis statement and footnotes or endnotes. It is expected that you will complete drafts, receive comments on the draft, and then use those comments to prepare the next draft. Therefore, you may not submit two drafts of the same paper on the same day or in the same week. Students set deadlines for drafts in their learning contracts.
4. *Paper analysis and goals.* Students must select one paper, either the first or second draft for analysis. Working with the instructor's grading sheet, the student consults the textbooks and amends the grading sheet to include references to the rules for correcting the paper's errors. Second, the student calculates and reports frequencies of different kinds of errors, listing them in order of priority by frequency. Third, the student sets six very specific writing goals for the semester. The paper analysis is a graded assignment so be sure to complete all parts of the assignment. The paper analysis and goals assignment is due during consultations October 24-November 6.

Grading

Class Participation	30%
Drafts (15%/draft)	45%
Paper Analysis and Goals	15%
Learning Contract	10%

The course is graded Credit/No Credit.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to abide by institutional guidelines regarding class attendance, integrity of work, and student conduct. If you are unfamiliar with these guidelines, consult the current catalog and handbook. The professor reserves the option of failing students strictly for failure to attend class (including regular absences from part of class). A single instance of plagiarism may also result in failure.

Professor's Responsibilities

My job is to teach with integrity the scholarship representative of my field, to see that students learn as much as possible, and to create a comfortable environment for learning. These goals cannot be accomplished without genuine attention to the unique strengths, experiences, and expectations that both the professor and students bring to the classroom. My goal is to provide encouragement and support for your learning. Sometimes flexible procedures and learning options are necessary to facilitate the kind of teaching and learning that should occur here. I am anxious to hear what energizes you, what disappoints you, where you disagree, and what helps you to learn. PLEASE SEE ME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR SPECIFIC NEEDS.

Differently-Abled Students

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

Criteria for Evaluating Course Work

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, or create any original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work:

1. ***Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of texts and resources.*** Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.
2. ***Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions.*** Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readers in following the plot or main point.
3. ***Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas.*** Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly reporting what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition of others' ideas to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.
4. ***Flawless grammar, spelling, and form.*** Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.

Name _____ Semester _____

Please evaluate yourself in the following categories. Circle the number that best describes your class participation if 1 is excellent, 2 is very good, 3 is average, 4 is satisfactory, and 5 is poor.

Preparation

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| I have conscientiously attempted reading assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have reflected seriously on reading assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have worked to bring depth to comments and questions by preparing more than superficially for class. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I prepared written assignments on time and when the syllabus or my learning contract required them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I checked spelling, grammar, quotations, and footnotes before submitting papers. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Class

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| I have attended class regularly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have contributed to class discussions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| When I talked in class, I remained focused on the topic of class discussion. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have listened respectfully to comments and questions raised by other students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I brought my questions to class or to the professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I expressed disagreement constructively. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have shared my responsibilities for successful class sessions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I supported other students' efforts to improve their writing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Attitude

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| I have remained involved and engaged in the course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have been constructive in relationships with others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I put extra effort into the course – such as study groups/partners, library research, extra reading or writing. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I made appointments with the professor when I needed assistance or wanted to discuss the course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Linked Course

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| I attended the linked course regularly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I completed reading assignments for the linked course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| When I had questions, I discussed assignments with professor(s) to achieve clarity. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| When I had questions about course content, I raised them in class or with faculty. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I completed all assignments on time and met deadlines set in the syllabus. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

I assign myself the following letter grade: _____

Please submit any additional reflections on class participation that should affect your grade in writing on the back of this page. This worksheet is intended to assist you in thinking about the quality of your participation in class. Any interpretations, additions, or connections of criteria should be included in your additional reflections.

Name: _____

First Draft

Number and Title of Linked Course _____

Name of Assignment in Syllabus _____
(Attach copy of syllabus and handouts about assignment if the course is not MIN101.)

Deadline in Linked Course _____

Deadline in IN079 _____ (before October 10)

Paper Analysis and Goals

Draft (First or Second) _____

Anticipated Deadline _____ (subject to appointment schedule between
October 24 and November 6)

Second and Third Drafts

Number and Title of Linked Course _____

Name of Assignment in Syllabus _____
(Attach copy of syllabus and handouts about assignment if the course is not MIN101.)

Deadline in Linked Course _____

Second Draft Deadline in IN079 _____

Third Draft Deadline in IN079 _____ (at least seven days after second draft and
no later than December 12)