

Saint Paul School of Theology
IN099 Workshop for Writing Credo
Fall 2003

Instructor

Nancy R. Howell
Associate Professor of Theology and
Philosophy of Religion
Kansas-Winger 308
(816) 245-4826 (or ext. 126)
howellnr@spst.edu
Fax (816) 483-9605
www.nancyrhowell.com

Office Hours

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

Course Meeting Times and Place

Fridays, 10:00-11:50 a.m.
Kansas-Winger 507

Course Description

This is an elective course in which advanced students meet together to begin the constructive work of creating a credo. The class provides a context in which students gain clarity about their theological methods and positions. There also is assessment of needs, input from various faculty members, and evaluation of written material. [Prerequisite: 60+ hours of seminary credit]

Learning Goals

1. The primary learning goal is completion of the professional and spiritual formation for which seminary is designed. The credo process is designed as a summative, creative project that integrates the academic, vocational, and experiential aspects of each student's unique professional identity.
2. Each student should learn how to develop a central metaphor or theme that describes his or her vocational identity and that integrates a theological, biblical, and historical framework with reflection on the arts of ministry (or pastoral theology).
3. The course provides the context for faculty to provide mentoring through the technical curricular process of writing the credo and completing the credo conference.

Required Texts

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition (University of Chicago, 1996).
Saint Paul School of Theology Handbook (2003-2004).

Recommended Texts (available in the bookstore)

John B. Cobb, Jr., *Becoming a Thinking Christian*.
Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer, *The Art of Theological Reflection*.

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*.
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
September 5
- Introduction to the Course
Overview of the Process and Timeline
Working with Credo Committee Chair
Working with Other Faculty
Working with Peer Observers
What is credo? (See *Saint Paul School of Theology Handbook*)
Workshop on Unifying Metaphors or Themes
- Session 2
September 19
- Content of the Credo
Evaluation of the Credo
Skills for Writing Credo
Developing a Thesis Statement
Sustaining an Argument
Integrating Sources
Assignment: First 2 pages of credo
- Session 3
October 3
- Examples of Credo Introductions
Discussion of Progress and Questions
Skills for Writing Credo
Using Quotations
Developing Citations
Assignment: Next 5 pages of credo
- Session 4
October 24
- Professors at Roundtable
Faculty teams meet with small groups of students
10:00-10:20 Preparation for discussion
10:20-10:40 First group
10:40-11:00 Secondgroup
11:00-11:20 Third group
11:20-11:50 Processing discussion
Assignment: Next 5 pages of credo
- Session 5
October 31
- Professors at Roundtable
Faculty teams meet with small groups of students
10:00-10:20 Preparation for discussion
10:20-10:40 First group
10:40-11:00 Secondgroup
11:00-11:20 Third group
11:20-11:50 Processing discussion
Assignment: Next 5 pages of credo

Session 6 November 14	Policies and Process Credo Forms Accumulated Wisdom and Troubleshooting Assignment: Yes, 5 more pages of credo
Session 7 December 5	Deadlines in January What is a “serious attempt”? Reconsideration Preparation for Conference Instructing peer observers Reflecting on credo Preparing family, friends, churches, employers Remembering to celebrate Assignment: Complete draft of credo

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. Good class preparation means that you have come to class prepared to ask questions, to engage the topic of the day, and to think seriously about writing credo. Good class participation also means being supportive of other students’ progress in the course. 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 5. 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. *Written assignments.* All writing assignments for the course are constructive and progressive developments of the credo. Writing assignments will be graded as drafts rather than as finished products. The first two-page writing assignment is due September 19 and will be evaluated by the IN099 instructor. The intervening drafts will be submitted to the IN099 instructor on the dates indicated in the course schedule, but serious evaluation of those drafts should be undertaken in consultation with credo committee chairs and other faculty. However, the IN099 instructor will monitor intervening drafts for adequate overall progress. Finally, a complete 20-page draft is due December 5. Please follow the following general rules in writing drafts: (1) write the working thesis at the top of the page (note that the working thesis may change as the credo develops), (2) include serious and informed new material in each draft, (3) write in full sentences and complete paragraphs, and (4) include all citations in Turabian form.

Grading

Class Participation	10%
First 2-page draft of credo	10%
Intervening drafts	10%
Complete 20-page draft	70%

The course and its assignments are 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 worked to develop a metaphor or theme that integrates a theological framework with arts of ministry. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have developed a working thesis and refined a thesis statement for the complete draft. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I have reflected seriously on materials from previous coursework to inform the credo writing process. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I reviewed the <i>Saint Paul School of Theology Handbook</i> to understand the credo process. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I prepared written assignments on time and when the syllabus required them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I checked spelling, grammar, quotations, and footnotes before submitting papers. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I consulted Turabian's manual of style carefully while writing drafts. | 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 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 made appointments with the professor when I needed assistance or wanted to discuss the course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Consultations

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| I prepared thoughtfully for consultations with faculty. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I was prepared for effective consultations with my credo committee chair. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I made regular (but not unnecessarily frequent) appointments with my chair. | 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.