

# ACADEMIC SKILLS AND WRITING

Seminar Leader: Dr. Sutherland, Zoe

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Course dates: 31 Aug - 18 Dec 2020

Course schedule: Wednesdays 14:00 - 15:30

Location SR2 P98

Office Hours: Mondays 18:00-19:00 and by appointment throughout the week

Credits: 4 ECTS, 2 US Credits

Expected Workload: 120 hours

## Course Description

This course is designed to support students in their subject-specific tutoring by working individually and together as a cohort to develop the skills required for academic writing and discussion. The main aim of the seminar is to workshop students' tutoring assignments and to use individual and group exercises to practise various ways to engage with scholarly communities in writing and discussion.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, it is expected that students will;

- have developed a writing practice that serves them in their subject-specific assignments,
- have developed reading and note-taking strategies that enable them to conduct effective research in their subject-specific tutoring courses,
- be able to demonstrate progress in engaging confidently in scholarly discussion, both to contribute critical argumentation and to further the lines of inquiry under construction in the seminar,
- be able to demonstrate a sound grasp of best practices for academic communication, including above all citation, and
- know how to work effectively as individuals and in groups to produce quality research.

## Requirements

For 50% of their credit, students are required on an ongoing basis throughout the course to apply what they learn to drafting and re-drafting their tutoring assignments, as evidenced by submission of work-in-progress. The other 50% of credit is determined based on active participation in the weekly seminars.

### Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that instances in which students fail to meet

the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

**Attendance**

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Students should consult the Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

**Assessment**

Syllabi should include all assignments required for the course, the dates on which they are due, and any stipulations concerning specific required preparatory work, submission of drafts, or consultation with writing tutors/use of the Learning Commons.

**Assignments**

This is a writing course designed to support the assignments students are producing in their subject-specific tutoring. Therefore the assignments for this module are to apply what is learned in the seminar to improving the academic writing submitted for credit in tutoring (in coordination with the tutors).

**Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

**Grade Breakdown**

For 50% of their credit, students are required on an ongoing basis throughout the course to apply what they learn to drafting and re-drafting their tutoring assignments, as evidenced by submission of work-in-progress. The other 50% of credit is determined based on active participation in the weekly seminars.

**Schedule**

Week	Date	Time	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1	2 Sept		Introduction to the course	Readings will be provided by the instructor in each session. Students are expected to read and offer reflection on all materials.	For 50% of their credit, students are required on an ongoing basis throughout the course to apply what they learn to drafting and re-drafting their tutoring assignments, as evidenced by submission of work-in-progress. The
2	9 Sept		Why do we cite?		
3	16 Sept		Building bibliographies I		
4	23 Sept		Building bibliographies II		
5	30 Sept		Reading for meaning I		

6	7 Oct		Reading for meaning II		other 50% of credit is determined based on active participation in the weekly seminars.
7	14 Oct		Writing papers: writing to learn		
Fall Break					
8	28 Oct		Writing papers: editing		
9	4 Nov		Presenting papers 1		
10	11 Nov		Presenting papers 2		
11	18 Nov		Presenting papers 3		
12	25 Nov		Exploring group work		
13	2 Dec		Building inquiries		
14	9 Dec		Course conclusion		
Completion week					

Week 1 Introduction to the course

In this session students will be introduced to the course and invited to begin reflecting through a series of exercises on their study and writing practices.

Week 2 Why do we cite?

In this session students will explore the importance of citation, the general principles of citation practices in academia, what plagiarism actually means, as well as various style guides (Chicago, Harvard, MLA). Students will have the opportunity to review what they already know and to practice correct form through exercises and quizzes. We will also compare the various citation software available, and discuss how to use these with success.

Week 3 Building Bibliographies

In the first part of this two-part workshop, students will take a problem-based approach to organising their research by building a bibliography for a piece of research they are currently undertaking for tutoring. Students will explore examples of bibliographic practices before being taken through a series of exercises which they can workshop in relation to their own research with the aim of producing an annotated bibliography which enables them to navigate their own arguments and analysis in relation to the existing literature.

Week 4 Building Bibliographies II

In the second part of this two-part workshop, students will experiment with using their bibliographies to establish support for and against their research question. Students will be introduced to methods for

verifying their bibliography with reference to position papers as well as the painstaking work of checking their bibliographic entries using style guides and examples.

#### Week 5            Reading for meaning I

In this session students will learn about 'reading for meaning'. Reading for meaning is a pedagogical approach to comprehending texts which focuses on textual, paratextual and inferential tools. Students will be alerted to the pitfalls of line-by-line translation which they will already have become aware of in the course of their studies (such as time management and false meaning) and instead invited to explore more productive methods for reading than line-by-line translation. Students will be shown note-taking tools with regard to an accessible academic text. Students will begin working on their own reading for meaning project in relation to this text: (1) note-taking for a (2) written summary of the text.

#### Week 6            Reading for Meaning II

In the second-part of reading for meaning, students will continue workshopping the text using the new tools introduced in the previous session. Students will be assessed on their note-taking as well as the piece of writing they produce in response to the text.

#### Week 7            Writing papers: editing

In this session students will be invited to reflect on their practices for editing papers before submission. What kinds of checks need to take place? How can we ensure these checks take place? Students will workshop writing that they are preparing to submit in tutoring and reflect on their writing process from bibliography and position paper through reading and note-taking to editing a final version.

#### Week 8            Writing papers: writing to learn

In this session students will practice writing to learn. Writing-to-learn is a method of using writing to think through concepts and ideas in order to communicate with oneself during research, as opposed to communicating with others. Students will be guided through a series of controlled exercises which will enable them to experiment with how they can utilise current literature in order to respond to research questions.

#### Week 9            Presenting papers I

In part 1 of this session we will enact good academic practices when it comes to communicating in seminars and at conferences. We will use a learning-by-doing approach. Students will therefore present papers about work they are doing in tutoring and lead a brief discussion from the group in response. The instructor will facilitate reflections on what methods we have used to produce the most constructive exchanges and where we could have improved communication.

#### Week 10          Presenting papers II

In part 2 of this session we will enact good academic practices when it comes to communicating in seminars and at conferences. We will use a learning-by-doing approach. Students will therefore present papers about work they are doing in tutoring and lead a brief discussion from the group in response. The

instructor will facilitate reflections on what methods we have used to produce the most constructive exchanges and where we could have improved communication.

#### Week 11 Presenting papers III

In part 3 of this session we will enact good academic practices when it comes to communicating in seminars and at conferences. We will use a learning-by-doing approach. Students will therefore present papers about work they are doing in tutoring and lead a brief discussion from the group in response. The instructor will facilitate reflections on what methods we have used to produce the most constructive exchanges and where we could have improved communication.

#### Week 12 Building arguments

In this session students will be guided through a series of controlled exercises to analyse how argumentation works. In particular we will attend to how an inquiry is constructed using evidence and inference. We will discuss content, form and style and students will be given the opportunity to reflect on their own writing to see how they can improve their argumentation.

#### Week 13 Building inquiries

In this session students will build a response to a research question of their choosing (preferably something they are working on/have worked on in tutoring) - from bibliography to first position paper. Working in groups, students will identify their question, collect resources and create a sample bibliography with annotations.

#### Week 14 Course Conclusion

The final session of our course will be given over to students to choose which aspects of the course they want to revisit, question, or look into further. Peer-to-peer support will be strongly encouraged and the instructor will facilitate the review with regard to resources used during the course.

### **Essay Deadlines**

The deadline for final essays is that of the subject-specific tutoring assignments. This course uses rolling deadlines in accordance with the drafting and workshop processes set out above. Students are required to meet all deadlines (see 'Policy on Submission of Late Papers' above). The deadline for active participation credit is 9 December, although of course students will be marked on their performance throughout the course from the first seminar onwards.

### **Grades Submission**

See 'Grade Breakdown' above.

### **Library and Book Purchase Policies**

Materials will be provided by the instructor.