

The Writing Center

And he replied, "Then every scribe who has been instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings from his storeroom both the new and the old." (Matthew 13:52 NAB)

This Center brings together three components: professors, tutors and students. All three are integral to the success of the Center.

Goals

By using the Center, students have the opportunity to:

1. benefit academically and personally by becoming more independent and skillful writers in English and/or
2. improve their ability to speak and read aloud clearly in English so that their intended message is understood.

Description

The Resource Center will support seminary students by providing help in approaching their writing and speaking assignments. In order to provide the greatest assistance, Resource Center tutors will use syllabi and other specific instructions for assignments and will work with faculty members to enable students to achieve a high standard of academic English.

I. Resource Center tutors will work with students on written assignments to:

1. interpret an assignment., consider ideas for a project or paper and/or plan the outline of the paper;
2. understand and use different styles according to the type of writing task (e.g. research paper, thesis, theological reflection, homily);
3. organize a written assignment following American academic conventions (e.g. introduction, thesis statement, body of paper, conclusion);
4. develop ideas in writing;
5. use and document sources appropriately;
6. improve a student's ability to proofread and edit their own writing for appropriate use of English (grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation);
7. learn to use the technology available for improving and editing their own writing (e.g. Paper Rater, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, Criterion, TurnItIn's Write Check).

II. Resource Center tutors will work with students in speaking assignments to:

1. improve a student's pronunciation and diction by personalized pronunciation sessions;
2. prepare for reading aloud (e.g. Scripture passages) to an audience;
3. practice delivering a homily, focusing on pronunciation and public speaking skills.

Resource tutors will not:

1. simply proofread or correct papers;
2. accept papers that are simply dropped off with no student participation;
3. attempt to address every mistake in a paper in one session;
4. provide help on any written assignment the day before it is due;
5. suggest or contest a grade on any assignment;
6. edit the content of any assignment.

Academic Resources

1. *Guide to student Academic Writing* (SS. Cyril & Methodius Seminary)
2. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (Turabian, 2007 ed.)

Policies and Procedures

Written assignments

1. Within two weeks after an assignment is given in class, the student will contact the Writing Center and a mutually agreed upon tutor will be appointed for the student.
2. The tutor and student will discuss the nature of the project. The tutor will then decide how many sessions will be necessary and what will be done in these sessions.
3. The tutor will devise a timeline for the student to follow as the project moves through the stages to completion.
4. Professors will be asked to review a rough draft of the assignment.

Oral assignments

5. Students should schedule a session at least one full day before the due date.

Sessions normally last thirty minutes.

6. Attendance and participation of the student will be documented by the tutor. A log will be available to the professor.

Materials provided

1. course syllabi (available online)
2. Additional requirements/specifications provided by the professor
3. Dictionaries, the Turabian manual and other writing reference books available in the ESL library
4. Software for editing and revising (such as TurnItIn)

Location and Equipment

1. Tutoring sessions will take place in the language laboratory (CAC 107).
2. The computers and printer in the language laboratory will be available for students and tutors.

Staffing

The Writing Center is Staffed by professional language tutors in conjunction with Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan.

Evaluation of the Program

All students who use the Resource Center will be asked to fill out an evaluation form at the end of each session. Tutors will be asked to keep a log of the sessions for an individual student are. These forms will be kept on file, compiled and reviewed at the end of each semester. Summaries will be made available to the teaching faculty.

GUIDE TO STUDENT ACADEMIC WRITING

RESEARCH PAPER/TERM PAPER

What is it? The Research paper is the final product of an involved process of research, critical thinking, source evaluation, organization and composition. Interaction with primary and secondary sources is at the heart of a research paper. The goal of a research paper is not to inform the reader what others have to say about a topic, but to draw on what others have to say about a topic and engage the sources in order to offer a reasoned perspective on the issue at hand.

“A research paper is more than the sum of your sources, more than a collection of different pieces of information about a topic, and more than a review of the literature in a field. A research paper analyzes a perspective or argues a point.” (esc.edu)

Work on the research/term paper requires several stages: Select a topic of interest, research and read, create a thesis statement, present the argument or support your claims, complete the research, submit a first draft, present the final draft.

Evaluative Criteria: The evaluation of the paper will be based on the following criteria:

Thesis: The thesis statement is identifiable, plausible, insightful, clear, arguable (not obvious, subjective or a statement of fact).

Argumentation/Analysis: The argumentation possesses clarity, logic and coherence; displays critical thinking and avoids simple description; diffuses counter arguments.

Content/Sources: The content has depth, engages (critiques) the issues, recognizes the presuppositions, and is relevant to the course. The amount and kind of sources reflect the perspectives found in the theological community.

Organization/Structure: The paper is well organized. Clear, appropriate paragraphs; has strong topic sentences and transitions.

Mechanics: Spelling, grammar, punctuation and citation style are correct. Papers should be typed, double spaced, with one inch margins top and bottom, left and right sides, 12 point type and Times New Roman font. Follow the Turabian style for bibliography and foot/endnotes or reference list and parenthetical references. Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, latest edition, is the established guide for form.

Consult 2012 Catalogue pp. 29-31 regarding Academic Standards and Academic Integrity (plagiarism).

EXPOSITORY ESSAY/REFLECTIVE ESSAY

What is it? An essay requires that the student provide his/her own opinions as well as information about a topic. It reflects personal learning stretch, e.g. showing depth of knowledge and learning. The essay may reveal feelings and thoughts and may discuss how the insights gained from the study effects one's ministry.

Evaluative Criteria:

1. Topic: An experience, occasion, topic, book report: Description shows understanding of the depth and complexity of the topic/experience.
2. Analysis: articulates the issues with clarity and consistency; Identifies the main or significant points; distinguishes between level of importance of ideas; looks at more than one angle by comparing and contrasting; provides good documentation for the analysis.
3. Reflection: Explores, judges; understands the core of the argument; draws effective conclusions.
4. Coherence & Style: Paragraphs follow a natural progression of ideas in precise language.
5. Appropriate language use: sentence structure; vocabulary; grammar; spelling; punctuation

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON MINISTRY

What is it? Contextual theology, i.e. learning from experience: a hermeneutical circle(movement) from experience through the sources of Christian tradition to action, or practical implications for improving one's ministry.

Evaluative Criteria:

1. The experience–Select an event that is meaningful and describe it using concrete facts: tell the story, reveal emotions, include the political, social, cultural, economic, and gender dimensions that apply (Who, what, where, when, how)
2. God's presence – Discover God's presence by being attentive to clues provided by the experience e.g. persons, situation, place, images, objects, gestures, etc.(entering in)
3. Faith tradition –Illustrate a new understanding/interpretation or application of the faith tradition from the experience, i.e. Let the ministry teach.(connecting)
4. Integration–Put the learning into life and ministry (knowledge, being, doing)
5. Mechanics – Follow the format provided for TR: 1. Event or encounter with a person; 2. Social and cultural context; 3. Reflect theologically and prayerfully; 4.

Integration/action/new learning. Be attentive to correct grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.

PASTORAL PROJECT

What is it? A presentation of applied knowledge and skills to a specific pastoral setting.

Some examples of a pastoral projects are a liturgical binder, outline for a teaching event, homily, personal plan for ongoing formation, case study, pastoral research, etc.

Evaluative Criteria;

1. Purpose – The goal of the project is clearly articulated and demonstrated.
2. Content - The content selected is appropriate, audience friendly, complete
3. Interest/Creativity – demonstrates an interesting/creative approach to the content
4. Resources – The number and kind of resources use should reflect the perspectives found in the theological community.
5. Organization-The material is well organized; there is a natural flow and good transitions
6. Mechanics-Grammar, punctuation is correct; Spelling has been checked.

HOMILETICS/EVALUATIONS FROM CONGREGATION (faculty, students, parish)

What is it: Aggregate of the subjective assessment by professionals and nonprofessionals in the field

Evaluative Criteria:

1. Audience - attention to the composition of the intended audience/congregation
2. Exegesis - good/correct use of the biblical text
3. Pastoral application - critical/creative application to the pastoral situation
4. Resources – Sufficient number and type of resources used.
5. Mechanics – Accepted communication; Language usage and style.

INTEGRATING SEMINAR

Evaluative Criteria:

1. Self-reflection –self insight(ability to identify one’s strengths)
2. Depth of understanding of priesthood (ministry) – theological and pastoral
3. Integration of theology in the pastoral ministry setting – knowledge, being, doing
4. Continuing education- attention to the four pillars of ongoing formation
5. Mechanics – attentive to correct grammar, punctuation and spelling

WRITTEN EXAMINATION

What is it? An essay or paragraph or an outline in response to a question

Evaluative Criteria:

1. A full sentence response. Detailed outline.

PASTORAL MINISTRY/FIELD EDUCATION EVALUATION REPORTS

1. Relationship to co-workers, supervisors, etc. – collaborative, communication, leadership,
2. Ministry to others –culturally sensitive, compassionate, inclusive
3. Sense of responsibility- moral integrity, social concern, initiative, motivation

ACCULTURATION/REFLECTIONS

Level One: Recognizes multiculturalism in US

- Recognizes religious diversity in US
- Promotes Christian community in class, seminary and on trips
- Able to reflect on the above

Level Two: Demonstrates self confidence in engaging cultural diversity

- Engages in works of justice and charity
- Able to collaborate with people of diverse backgrounds
- Able to reflect on the above and change his behavior

ORAL PRESENTATION

Rubrics:

Organization and Preparation

Clearly defined topic or thesis and its significance

Content: student explains the process and findings of the project and the resulting learning Ability to engage the audience

Questions and Answers: demonstrates extensive knowledge

Language Use and Delivery: clear, understandable

EXEGESIS PAPER

What is it? Exegesis is a careful investigation of the original meaning of a biblical text in order to determine what the text means for faith and action in the present time. By using the tools provided for working through the text the writer becomes aware of what influences the way the scriptural text is read and should come to an appreciation of what is involved as scholars undertake such endeavors.

How to “do” exegesis – a simplified procedural

- I. Delimit the text (determine precisely the scope of the periscope)
- II. Set the Text (textual criticism)

III. Work up the Text (grammar and syntax) It is presumed this will be weak since students have no knowledge of Greek/Hebrew, however, note should be taken when commentaries mention significant grammar/syntax usage.

IV. Parallels (where applicable)

V. Line by Line Analysis and Interpretation

A. Raise questions/issues if applicable

B. Apply Criticisms

1. Source Criticism

2. Form Criticism

3. Redaction Criticism

C. Determine senses

1. Literal Sense

2. Fuller Sense (if applicable)

3. Typical Sense (if applicable)

Students should note historical interpretations, such as patristic or medieval views when noted in commentaries.

D. Resolve questions/issues (if applicable)

(Note: Steps IV, V and VI may be interchanged.)

VI. Pastoral Application (Accommodated Sense)

A. Homiletic and pastoral considerations

Cite sources for all steps