**TCORE101E, Introduction to Academic Writing:**

**Social Justice and Community Service**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Nicole Blair **(**[**nblair@uw.edu**](mailto:nblair@uw.edu)**)**

**Service Learning Curriculum Specialist and**

**Course Consultant**: Paul Prociv ([**paulpro@uw.edu**](mailto:paulpro@uw.edu)**)**

**Office:** MDS #307A

**Telephone:** 253-692-4786

**Classroom Location:** BB106

**Meeting Days:** MW 9:30 – 10:50

**Office Hours:** MWF 11:00 a.m. to noon and by appointment

**Required Texts:**

Deans, Thomas. *Writing and Community Action:*

*A Service-Learning Rhetoric with Readings*. Longman, 2003.

Hacker, Sommers: *A Writer’s Reference*, 8th edition

**Required Technological Access:**

A Canvas Account (<http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/canvas/getting-started>)

A UW email account

**Course Description**

This is a course in Academic Writing, the theme of which is *Social Justice and Community Service.* **The subjects of your papers** will come from a variety of resources, such as academic essays, reports, websites, as well as your own research and service. We will start our **inquiry into the social concerns of our community** with issues such as homelessness, hunger, lack of access to adequate housing and food, and environmental issues in Tacoma and the surrounding areas.

You will be working on **a major project this quarter which will be broken down into component parts**: 1) Personal Essay, 2) Community Asset Map, 3) Self and Community paper, 4) Proposal for Research, and 5) **Your choice of one of four paper assignments** based on the proposal: a) **Essay on an Ethical Concern** associated with service, b) **Agency Profile Report** (of the agency you are working with) c) **Community-Based Research Essay**, or d) **Argument for a specific service project**.

You will write in class most weeks. These writings will be graded at random, so you must be prepared (read the material before you come to class). In addition, brief, regular discussions of your work in class throughout the quarter will help you to articulate your ideas.

It is important to remember that writing is a **practice. Successful writers have formed a habit of writing**. Writing does not happen in a vacuum—getting feedback all along the way while composing a paper is crucial to your **process** as a writer. Focus on the process, not the product.

**Basic Expectations**

**First**, this course will work best if we are all actively engaged. This means that you will need to participate in all class discussions, ask questions that are relevant and move the discussion forward, share all work in progress, and respond thoughtfully to the drafts of other writers. You are, thus, expected to attend class regularly.

**Secondly**, all assignments must be turned in on time. **I do not accept late papers**. Coming to class without a draft when one is due results in a zero and an absence for that day.

**In addition**, it is essential to understand that you will be collaborating with classmates and community partners during the quarter. **Our community partners will be relying on you: therefore it is vital that you demonstrate motivation, respect, and accountability when you serve.**

**Lastly**, understand that a significant amount of your learning will take place **outside** of the classroom—in your reading, writing, and work on various activities. I would encourage you to view my office hours as an extension of class time—if you would like to continue discussing an issue with me that we did not have time to cover in class, if you have questions that were not answered, if you have an exploratory draft you want to discuss: this is what office hours are for. I will have a one-on-one conference with you in Weeks 4, 8, and 11. These conferences are required.

**Learning Goals and Objectives**

* Create and sustain an original, **thesis-driven argument**
* **Summarize** main arguments in texts
* **Synthesize** readings in support of an argument
* **Analyze** key ideas within academic articles and represent those ideas in your papers
* **Apply strategies** for planning and composing a paper, a speech, or other kind of presentation of your research
* **Revise** papers to improve both content and structure
* **Conduct research** through UW Tacoma library
* **Give and receive real time feedback** on your work
* Develop your **academic voice**: become part of the conversation!
* Think **outside of the box** of your own cultural norms and values
* **Reflect** on your own learning (**metacognition**): personal, academic, social strengths as well as how to address weaknesses in these areas
* Take the **big questions** (the problem of homelessness, literacy, hunger) and learn strategies and techniques to break them down into manageable pieces for analysis and argument in your papers and presentations
* **Make meaningful connections** between readings, experience and written assignments
* **Connect your service to your writing**, through reading, research, service experience and reflection**.**

**SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIRED WORK**

1. **FOUR PAPERS and ONE PRESENTATION (70%)**: See descriptions below
2. **CLASS PARTICIPATION, 15%--**in order to earn points in class participation, you must be in class on time, be prepared for the day’s work, and contribute in a positive manner to class discussion. Texting during class will result in deductions from class participation points, as well as being disruptive (talking while others are talking, making inappropriate comments, etc.). Class participation includes online discussions and weekly writings (If you are absent on the day we write, **which will vary week to week**, you may not make up the assignment)
3. **SERVICE, 15%: At least 8 hours of service** at one of the organizations listed below. I would ask that before you make a decision, do your research. Visit the websites and listen to what each of the guest speakers have to say about his or her work. Your formal application to service, due in Week 6 counts as part of your Service for the course.

**Brief Descriptions of Four Writing Assignments and a Presentation for the Quarter:**

Guidelines for these assignments can be found on our Canvas website:

* **Paper 1, Personal Essay, 750 words (approximately 2 PAGES) (10%)**
  + **Draft** due **October 12th** at 9:30 a.m. on Canvas
  + **Final** due **Week 11** in your portfolio with a 1 page reflection
* **Paper 2: Proposal for Service 350 to 400 words (1 – 2 pages) (10%)**
  + **Draft** due **October 26th** at 9:30 a.m. on Canvas
  + **Final** due **Week 11** in your portfolio
* **Paper 3, 1000 WORDS (3 – 4 PAGES)—Analysis of Community (15%)**
  + ***Community Asset Map (Part I, and a critical component of this paper, is due November 2nd)***
  + **Draft** due **November 2nd**  at 9:30 a.m. on Canvas
  + **Final** due **Week 11** in your portfolio with a 1 page reflection
* **Paper 4, 2000 WORDS (6 – 7 PAGES) (35%)**

**For the final paper and project, you have a choice of four different assignments.** You may either write an **Essay on an Ethical Concern**, an **Agency Profile Report**, a **Community Based Research Essay**, or an **Argument for a specific service project** (based on your assessment of a community need). *The description of these assignments can be found in your textbook,* Writing and Community Action.

* + **Draft** due **November 21th** at 9:30 a.m. on Canvas (Saturday)
  + **Final** due **Week 11** in your portfolio, along with a one page reflection
  + You will create a **presentation** , based on your paper, using a program called **Read/Fold**. This presentation will be the story of your service: the people, the place, the experience itself and what you learned from it. Please see the FOLD website for a preview and to set up your **free account**: <https://readfold.com/>
  + You will **present your project** (the \*Read/Fold presentation) in **Week 10**.

**Community Service Organizations**

Below is a list of service organizations I have contacted to work with us this quarter. You will choose to work with one of these organizations after listening to their presentations in class and conducting some research—this will give you time to get to know the organization(s) before you serve and also get you started on the research for your final paper.

* **Write@253:** [**http://write253.wordpress.com/get-involved/**](http://write253.wordpress.com/get-involved/)
* **Peace Community Scholars** [**http://peacecommunitycenter.org/**](http://peacecommunitycenter.org/)
* **Forterra:** [**http://www.forterra.org/**](http://www.forterra.org/)
* **Tacoma Rescue Mission:** [**https://www.trm.org/**](https://www.trm.org/)
* **Tacoma Community House:** [**http://tacomacommunityhouse.org/what\_you\_can\_do/volunteer**](http://tacomacommunityhouse.org/what_you_can_do/volunteer)
* **Northwest Leadership Foundation:** [**http://northwestleadership.org/volunteer-opportunities/**](http://northwestleadership.org/volunteer-opportunities/)
* **Franke Tobey Jones** [**http://www.franketobeyjones.com/make-a-gift/volunteer/**](http://www.franketobeyjones.com/make-a-gift/volunteer/)

**SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES**

**All readings and assignments are due on the date listed**

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**Week One: Orientation (Weekly Writing #1)**

**September 30: Welcome to TCORE101: Community Service and Social Justice**

Paul Prociv, special guest

TED Talk on Social Justice <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdHBWL4LK88> (also on Canvas, Module One)

October 2: Chapter 1 in *Writing and Community Action* (*WCA*), “Writing as Social Action,” pp. 1 –

24 and pp. 71 – 81 in *A Writer’s Reference* (*AWR*)

Speaker: **Terry Vickery from** **Franke Tobey Jones**

**Week Two: Social Justice, Community Service and You (Weekly Writing #2)**

October 5: Chapter 2 in *WCA*, “Writing Your Life,” pp. 25 - 67, and pp. 3 - 20 in *AWR*.

Speaker: **Mary Fox from Write253**

7: Tour of the **Tacoma Rescue Mission (9:50 – 10:50; we will meet in the classroom and walk**

**over together)**

9: Speaker: **Jordan Rash from** **Green for Tacoma/Forterra**

Read “What Do You Mean By Service” (Canvas, Module Two)

**Week 3: You and your community (Weekly Writing #3)**

12: Chapter 3 in *WCA*, “Exploring Community,” pp. 94 – 133, and 22 -38 in *AWR*

See “Getting to Know Your Community” and “Varieties of Service” (Canvas, Module

Three)

**\*Draft of Personal Essay due (see list of assignments above)**

Speaker: **Amy Diehr from** **Tacoma Community House**

14: Walking Tour of Hilltop with **Brendan Nelson from** **Peace Community Scholars (**find your own transportation)

16: Speaker: **Noah Buckett from** **Northwest Leadership Foundation**

“Making a Community Map” (Canvas, Module Four), **Paul Prociv**

**Week 4: Defining and Mapping the Community (Weekly Writing #4)**

19: Review of Chapter Three, “Exploring Community”—review essay by John McKnight, “Redefining Community”; discussion of asset map and paper #2

***21: Writing Conferences*** *(we will meet in small groups of five) (schedule on Canvas, Module*

*Four)*

***23: Writing Conferences*** *(we will meet in small groups of five) (schedule on Canvas, Module*

*Four)*

**Week 5: What does it meant to serve? (Weekly Writing #5)**

26: Chapter 6 in *WCA*, “Preparing for Outreach,”pp. 253 – 272, and pp. 357 – 387 in *AWR*.

**\*Draft Proposal for Service due today**

28: Chapter 6, continued; also read “Helping, Fixing, Serving” and “Finding a Home for Rick”

(Canvas, Module Five)

30: Review descriptions of the options for final papers on pages 254 – 255; 274 – 279; 285

- 286; 385 – 392 in *WCA*. Make it your goal to choose one of these four options for your final project before you come to class today!

**Week 6: Academic approaches to social justice and community service (Weekly Writing #6)**

November 2: Chapter 4 in *WCA*, “Writing in Academic Communities,” pp. 134 – 184; also read AWR, pp. 119 – 126, “Writing in the Disciplines”

**Speaker from Criminal Justice**, Alissa Ackerman

**\*Draft Analysis of Community and Community Asset Map due today**

4: Chapter Four, continued

**Speaker from Creative Writing**, Janie Miller

6: Chapter Four, continued

**Speaker from Arts, Media and Culture**: Kim Davenport

**Week 7 (Service Hours begin this week, to be completed by Week 10) (Weekly Writing #7)**

9: Chapter 5 in *WCA*, “Literature, Culture, and Social Reflection,” pp. 185 – 232; 245 – 248.

**11 Veteran’s Day: UW Tacoma will be closed—no classes today.**

13: **SEMINAR\*** on poetry, pages 190 – 193; “The Lesson” and “Nickel and Dimed” on

pages 193 – 232; 245 – 248 in *WCA*. [**\*Seminar** indicates a special type of discussion. Please see the last two pages of this syllabus for guidelines, which we will discuss in class.]

**Week 8 (November 16 – 20): Conferences on final paper and presentation (NO WEEKLY WRITING IS DUE THIS WEEK)**

**Draft of the Final Paper due online November 21 at 9:00 a.m.** (this is a Saturday) Bring a preliminary draft OR a detailed outline of your paper to this conference, along with your questions. We will discuss your ideas, organization, etc.

**Week 9: What is your vision? (Weekly Writing #8)**

23: **Watch the following TED Talk by Bryan Stevenson and write a 1 page**

**response to these questions**: How does Bryan’s talk highlight some of the issues we have discussed in class so far? How does your own experience with service so far relate to some of the things that he says?

**Bryan Stevenson TED Talk:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2tOp7OxyQ8**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2tOp7OxyQ8)

25: **On the Canvas discussion board, post your responses to the following questions in response to reading “Pieces of a Vision” by Paul Loeb:**

* What's the most important thing we could do now to create a better future 50 or 100 years from now?
* What does Loeb mean by "An Ethic of Connection"? Do you think such an ethic is important? Explain. Why do we allow the environment to get destroyed or our fellow human beings to be demeaned when most of us know this is wrong?
* What is your vision of a just society? What would it take to achieve it? What are the most important social problems that you think need to be solved?

[**NOTE**: you must post at least two responses to two different students during this discussion. The discussion will close at midnight tonight.]

**\*I will assess your responses by the following criteria; this rubric is on Canvas:**

* Depth of your response (you say more than “I agree with you” or “I disagree”)
* Length of your response (you write more than 3 sentences—I am looking for a substantive paragraph)
* References to the initial post to which you are responding, as well as to the text under discussion

**27 THANKSGIVING: UW TACOMA CLOSED**

**Week 10:** Project Presentations, November 30th to December 4 **(NO WEEKLY WRITING)**

**Week 11:** Individual conferences, December 7 - 11 **(NO WEEKLY WRITING)**

**NO FINAL EXAM**

**COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY:** research resources for

Social Justice and Community Service

Cho, Seewha. *Critical pedagogy and social change*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

**City of Tacoma Coalition Website:**

<http://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/neighborhood_and_community_services/human_services_division/tacoma_pierce_county_coalition_to_end_homelessness/>

*City of Tacoma 2012 Community Data Report* (May 2012)

**CQ Researcher report on Homeless Students:**

<http://library.cqpress.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2013040500&type=hitlist&num=22>

**CQ Researcher report on Service Learning in Schools:**

<http://library.cqpress.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2012012700&type=hitlist&num=35>

**CQ Researcher report on Domestic Poverty**

<http://library.cqpress.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/cqresearcher/document.php?id=cqresrre2007090700&type=hitlist&num=17>

Crawford, Matthew*. Shop Class as Soul Craft*. Penguin, 2010

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2000.

Hawken, Paul. *Blessed Unrest*. Penguin, 2007.

**Helping Hand House: What is Homelessness** <http://helpinghandhouse.org/whatwedo/homelessnessfacts>

Jason, Leonard. *Principles of Social Change.* New York: Oxford, 2013.

Kozol, Jonathan. “The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society.”

Loeb, Paul. *Soul of a Citizen.* “Pieces of a Vision.” St. Martin’s, 2010, 257 - 286.

MacGillivray, Laurie, et al. “Supporting the Literacy Development of Children Living in Homeless

Shelters.” *The Reading Teacher*, 2010, 63 (5), 384 – 392.

**'Making the invisible, visible': Haunting pictures of America's most vulnerable people shot by photojournalists**

**against poverty:**

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2117997/Making-invisible-visible-Haunting-pictures-Americas-vulnerable-people-shot-photojournalists-poverty.html>

**Mockingbird Times**:

<http://www.mockingbirdsociety.org/index.php/what-we-do/mockingbird-times>

**National Alliance to End Homelessness**

<http://www.endhomelessness.org/pages/snapshot_of_homelessness>

**National Geographic: Hunger in America**

[**http://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/hunger/**](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/hunger/)

**Pierce County Community Connections:**

[**http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/index.aspx?NID=1986**](http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/index.aspx?NID=1986)

**REAL CHANGE**: [**http://www.realchangenews.org/**](http://www.realchangenews.org/)

Smith, Hedrik. *Who Stole the American Dream*. Random House, 2013.

Story, Lisa. “Principles of community social change and empowerment supporting health promotion”

<http://www.lifepaths360.com/index.php/principles-of-community-social-change-and-empowerment-supporting-health-24108/>

***Tacoma, Lakewood, Pierce County Continuum of Care: Plan to End Homelessness* (April 2012)**

West, Cornell. *Race Matters*. Vintage, 2001.

**THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE**

**In order to be successful in this course, you should do the following:**

* Come to class every day, on time, ready to go.
* Check Canvas every day: make sure your Canvas account is linked to your UW email account
* Turn in your papers, including all drafts, on time.
* Follow directions, and ask for clarification if you don’t understand something.
* Attend all conferences with all required materials.
* Participate fully in classroom conversations.
* Be respectful of your instructor as well as your peers.
* Promote the learning environment through the kinds of questions you ask and your own attitude towards learning.

**Developing an effective process of writing is the focus of our class**. You will be writing in class most days, at least once a week. You may also have homework questions that will be assigned from the chapters we read in class.

**Writing takes practice, and perfection is not the goal.** In this course, everything you write—from weekly writings and reflections to formal papers—will help you address many aspects of writing—details, organization, use of evidence, creating an interesting line of argument, making connections between ideas, both on a sentence level and a paragraph level. I do not teach grammar, but I do comment on grammatical errors in your papers. **Once you receive a note about a grammatical error, it is your responsibility to address that error.** I would encourage you to **see me during office hours**, or **make an appointment**. I also urge you make an appointment with a writing tutor in the **Teaching and Learning Center** for each paper that you write. The tutors there can provide you with an additional audience besides your peers or me, and also help you sort out any questions or problems you may have with understanding the assignment and its parameters.

**Writing Conferences:** These conversations about your writing are a required piece for this course. When you come to your conference, be prepared to discuss your draft with me and receive feedback that will help you revise for a final paper. On days when conferences are scheduled, I will be meeting with each of you *in my office* (MDS #307A) for approximately 20 minutes. The conferences this quarter will occur weeks 4 and 8, and 11. Your specific time for your meeting with me will be posted on Canvas 1 week in advance.

**Reading:** It is **crucial** that you complete the assigned reading before you come to class. Your reflective writing will be based on the reading and may be graded at any time. But more importantly, the readings help you to build information for your papers. Each piece of writing you do will build on the one before, so if you miss class you will miss an important piece of the puzzle.

**The Revision Process:** Revising your papers is a crucial part of the writing process. I will be providing feedback for you to consider as you reshape your draft into a more finalized version. Your peer revision partner will also provide feedback regarding content and organization. Revising a paper is not about grammar, although you will want to edit for grammar and spelling before you turn in the finalized draft. **Revision is about re-seeing your paper, about fine tuning the language, the organization, the way in which you have shaped your ideas.** Sometimes it means rewriting the thesis to achieve a clearer sense of direction for the reader. Sometimes you will need to redefine the boundaries of your ideas.

**HOUSEKEEPING ISSUES**

**Talk to me:** If you have a question, don’t hesitate to ask. However, keep in mind this rule: Three Then Me: 1) Search your Syllabus; 2) Search Canvas; 3) Search your textbooks. THEN ask me.

You may reach me by email Monday – Thursday from 8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. I do not check email after 5:00 p.m. on Fridays, and I only check UW email periodically on the weekends. My office hours are MW, 11:00 a.m. to noon and by appointment. My office phone number is 253-692-4786. If I do not answer, leave a message and I will get back to you as soon as I can, usually within 24 hours unless it is urgent.

**The use of laptops and iPads or other tablets:** If you take notes on a laptop or other tablet device, DO NOT cruise Facebook or other websites during class time. Earning class participation points requires that you pay attention and contribute to the discussions and/or activities during class.

**Cell phones in class**: When class is in session, please turn off the ringer and set your phone to vibrate only. Also, I would ask that you keep your phone in your purse or backpack so as not to create a distraction for you and other students.

**CANVAS:** Make sure that you link your Canvas account to your UW email and to any other social media you like. Linking your accounts will enable you to receive notification when I update an assignment, add, or delete a reading.

**Email:** Do not use Google, Yahoo or other email for UW business. You are required to use the University of Washington’s email for all school related business because of privacy issues.

* **If you send an email to me using any other account, I will not respond.**
* When you send an email after 7:00 p.m. on a week night, understand that I will not get it until the following morning.
* In addition, **a tip on email etiquette when corresponding with a professor**: Write your email like a letter, with a greeting, a body, and a closing. Do not send an email that sounds like you are on Twitter or posting a status on Facebook. Keep your audience in mind!

**CAMPUS SERVICES**

**Teaching and Learning Center:** The TLC provides a wide variety of instructional resources and support for teaching and learning at UW Tacoma. Teaching and learning are ongoing processes that take practice, commitment, and time. We are here to assist you in achieving your goals and provide math/quantitative, writing, science, and other tutoring services: [**http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-center/teaching-learning-center**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-center/teaching-learning-center)

**Library:** The UWT Library provides resources and services to support students at all levels of expertise. We guide students through the research process, helping them learn how to develop effective research strategies and find and evaluate appropriate resources. For more information about the Library and its services, see: [**http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/library**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/library)

**Disability Support Services:** The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs more accessible to students with disabilities. Disability Support Services (DSS) functions as the focal point for coordination of services for students with disabilities. In compliance with Title II or the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UW Tacoma who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working], is eligible for services from DSS. To schedule an appointment with a counselor, please call (253) 692-4522. Consult the following web page for a complete description of services:[**http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss\_about.cfm**](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm)

**Counseling Center (Student Health and Wellness - SHAW):** The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 253. Additional information can also be found by visiting [**http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc\_about.cfm/**](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm)

**Campus Safety Information:** For complete information regarding campus safety, please visit the following website:[**http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/campus-safety/campus-safety-security**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/campus-safety/campus-safety-security)

**Escort Service:** For your safety, UW Tacoma encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to use the Safety Escort Program. Campus Safety Officers are available to walk you to your car or other campus destinations during the following hours: Monday - Thursday — 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday — 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The service is free of charge. During busy periods, the Campus Safety Officer may ask you to meet in a common location to facilitate escorting multiple people. Dial 253-692-4416 to request a Safety Escort.

* **In case of a fire alarm:** Take your valuables and leave the building. Plan to return to class once the alarm has stopped. Do not return until you have received an all clear from campus officials.
* **In case of an earthquake:** DROP, COVER, and HOLD. Once the shaking ceases, take your valuables and leave the building. Do not plan to return for the rest of the day. Do not return to the building until you have received an all clear from campus officials.
* **Inclement Weather:** Call **253-383-4636** or **866-897-4636** (toll-free) to determine whether campus operations have been suspended. In addition, see this website for further information about what to do in case of inclement weather, such as snow or other storms:[**http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38897**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38897)

WHAT’S IN A SEMINAR?

What is a seminar? How do you prepare for a seminar? What and how do you learn in a seminar?

A seminar brings together an interested group of learners who have done some preparation, including having read, thought about and written about a particularly good book or article. This solitary preparation should include marking the text for interesting passages, reviewing those sections, organizing one’s thoughts on paper and producing significant questions that need to be explored.

In the seminar the group is responsible for exploring the text and probing the ideas people have brought from their individual reading of the text. It is a time to “mine” the text, to work it over as a group, to think aloud about it, and to test some ideas against the group. For example, the following might be overheard in a seminar: “I don’t know if this is valid but it seems that the author is saying....” Or: “Here on page l5 at the bottom of the page there is this passage [read from text]. This seems to be an important passage. It is worth looking at closely....” Or: “This part connects interestingly with this other part.”

A seminar is not an arena for performance to show you’ve read the text or a reporting session to read your papers. It’s more than a class discussion and it definitely is not a time for a lecture from an expert who will tell the group what they should get from this book. There may be places for those activities but not in seminar. Seminar is a special time for a unique intellectual activity. The exchange of ideas is focused on a source (a book, play or film) and is aimed primarily at getting more deeply *into* the source.

A good way to keep focused on the text at hand is to respond to the following three questions:

**l. WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?** —Point to the exact page and paragraph so everyone

can read along.

**2. WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?** — Explain or interpret the passage in your own

words.

**3. WHY IS THIS POINT IMPORTANT?**--Agree or disagree, or compare it to other ideas

or experiences.

Make sure you keep these three questions distinct, because each question forces the group to discuss the text in different ways. The first one asks for the **facts**. The second searches for **concepts or interpretations** behind the exact words or inferences between the lines. The third seeks an **evaluation or hypothesis** -- your own analysis, reaction, or evaluation.

Sometimes the seminar will be focused and free-flowing. Sometimes it will be searching, questioning, diving in more deeply to understand ideas from a book, from others or from within yourself. Sometimes the group will come to some conclusions. Sometimes it will seem like a series of disconnected activities, like a popcorn popper, with ideas jumping around the table without clear connections. In either case, the seminar is a place to discover new ideas, to re-look at old ideas, or to develop insightful connections among ideas.

The teacher’s role in a seminar is, at best, to be a model of an experienced learner; not to be the focus of attention, or the authority who will tell you what you should learn. Don't let the faculty member give a lecture in seminar! Everyone must take responsibility for co-leading and sharing ideas.

Participants must learn to actively listen to each other and speak openly to the whole group, not just to the leader. The group must learn to be sensitive to the needs of all. The natural talkers must be disciplined in order to learn how to listen better. The quiet people must learn to be more assertive and to share their insights, even if they are not comfortable doing that. Everyone should speak during each seminar.

Speak in turn and allow others to finish their thoughts. Do not interrupt one another. Silent periods are OK. Silence gives time to process thoughts, so try to become comfortable with it. Address an idea or argument by connecting it to what someone else has said. Summarize the point you are responding to; then provide your own idea.

Finally if things are not going well, it is our responsibility individually and collectively to put things right. Keep taking the pulse of the group and make adjustments so that everyone can have the opportunity to have a meaningful intellectual experience in seminar. The best question to ask is not “how am I doing,” but rather “how is our seminar going?”

Leaving the seminar with more questions than you came with, or being somewhat confused and overwhelmed with new ideas, is a sign your seminar is working. You will come to realize in seminar that a great book or article is not something you read once and then feel satisfied you have learned all you can learn from it. Rather, a great book or article is one which stimulates continuing intellectual curiosity and which demands from you a re-reading and a continuing discussion of it — maybe for the rest of your life.