



# HUMANITIES CORE WRITING INTERN PROGRAM

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# Purpose of the Program

- The Writing Intern Program is the University's approach to advanced instruction in composition. It is intended to assist students as they make the transition from using the conventions of writing in high school to using writing as a medium for academic inquiry.
- The Writing Intern Program has three constituencies.
  - ❖ For first-year undergraduates, the program emphasizes the multiple functions writing serves in college, for instance: framing useful questions; welcoming skepticism and responding to it (argument), and analytic exposition, among other modes.
  - ❖ For instructors, it provides assistance with some aspects of dealing with student writing, and an opportunity to integrate the writing component with the substantive work of the Humanities Core course.
  - ❖ For graduate students, it offers mentored opportunities to teach.

# Who are Writing Interns?

- Writing Interns are students in Ph.D. and M.A. programs from throughout the University, graduates of M.A. programs, and ex-students of these programs. Most Writing Interns are or have been students in programs within the Humanities Division, the Social Sciences Division, and the Divinity School. Before working in the Core, all Writing Interns complete a one-quarter training seminar, Pedagogies of Writing (HUMA 50000). Some have taught in Academic/ Professional Writing (The Little Red Schoolhouse), a writing course for third- and fourth-year undergraduates and for graduate students.
- Writing Interns are not subject-matter experts. While most Writing Interns are familiar with the readings in their sequence, the training for Writing Interns focuses on writing pedagogy. Writing Interns are trained to teach students how to analyze, assess, and revise, with readers in mind. In progressive steps, depending on the instructor's goals for writing for a particular quarter or a particular assignment, Writing Interns teach students how to assess whether their writing is well-organized, and whether it functions as it is intended to function (for instance, as argument, close reading, analytic exposition, elaboration of a problem). They work with students in small-group seminars, to allow for conversation between readers and writers, and provide written feedback.

# Preparing for the start of the course and setting expectations for students

- **Best practices for Instructors:**
- Before the course begins, schedule a meeting with the Writing Intern and make clear to the Writing Intern what the Instructor wants the students to accomplish, how writing instruction might work to support other goals for the course, and any specific techniques the Instructor would like the Writing Intern to teach.
- The Instructor should include the following in the syllabus:
  - ✓ the Writing Intern's name and contact information;
  - ✓ a statement about the role of the Writing Intern;
  - ✓ expectations about or goals for writing for the quarter;
  - ✓ a statement that attendance at and participation in writing seminars are required; and
  - ✓ a statement that a P/F grade for writing seminars is recorded on transcripts via HUMA 19100. (In Autumn Quarter, this statement should make clear that the Autumn Quarter HUMA 19100 grade is required for graduation.)
- In the first class, the Instructor should provide the Writing Intern a few minutes to describe their function and explain how writing seminars will work.

# Teaching Writing

- Writing Interns are not expected to teach texts assigned in the course; they are expected to teach writing in meetings outside regular class times. In Autumn Quarter, Writing Interns are expected to divide students into groups and offer three seminars to each group. Seminars must meet for eighty (80) minutes. These seminars satisfy the requirements of HUMA 19100, for which students receive credit. Writing seminars and tutorials (see below) are mandatory. The Autumn Quarter HUMA 19100 credit is also required for graduation.
- In Winter Quarter, Interns continue to hold seminars, but are free to substitute one-on-one tutorial meetings for one set of seminars. Especially in Spring Quarter, we recommend that Writing Interns hold some individual meetings with students. Writing Interns are expected to be able to provide either “pre-writing” seminars, in which students are introduced to a typical problem of student writing, and ways to resolve it, or “post-writing” seminars, in which students learn by analyzing their own drafts or previously- submitted papers.
- Writing Interns are expected to provide adequate notice of upcoming seminars, prepare teaching materials, and keep records of attendance, participation, and timely submission of assignments.

# Best practices for Instructors:

- Remind students that writing seminars are mandatory.
- Collaborate with the Writing Intern to choose the seminar plan best suited to the course curriculum, and in Winter and Spring, whether to schedule seminars or individual tutorials.

# Critiquing Papers

- Writing Interns are expected to assist in providing written feedback on the papers. They are not expected to take over the entire job. Instructors are ultimately responsible for all comments.
- **Best practices for Instructors:**
- In a quarter with 3-4 paper assignments, the Instructor and the Writing Intern should divide the papers, or divide responsibilities for commenting upon the papers. Some possibilities include:
  - ❖ For the first assignment, the instructor comments on half of the papers, the Writing Intern on the other half. For the second paper, they switch halves. And so on. The Instructor and Writing Intern should review each other's comments before the papers are returned to the students. (See “Grading Papers” below).
  - ❖ For one assignment, the Writing Intern comments on all papers. For another assignment, the Instructor comments on all papers.
  - ❖ Both the Writing Intern and the Instructor comment on each paper. The Writing Intern comments on writing (for instance, form, style, or the argument’s form or rhetorical sufficiency), and the Instructor comments on course content.
  - ❖ The Writing Intern writes comments on draft versions of student papers, and the Instructor writes comments on the final version of those papers.

# Grading Papers

- Writing Interns are expected to recommend grades for papers. The Instructor is expected to review all grades suggested by the Writing Intern before the papers are returned to the students.
- **Best Practices for Instructors:**
- Before returning papers to students, the Instructor and Writing Intern should meet to discuss comments and grades.

# Attending class

- Writing Interns are expected to read all course readings and attend all classes.
- **Best Practices for Instructors:**
  - Situating a class session in the overall plan for the course. When possible, faculty should meet with Writing Interns for a few minutes before class to explain their goals for that class discussion. Writing Interns have reported such meetings to be among the most valuable aspects of the program.
  - Class Discussion. Some instructors ask Writing Interns to participate to some degree in class discussion; others do not. Instructors should be as open and as clear as possible with Writing Interns about their preferences, specifying whether Writing Interns should participate in class discussions, and if so, how.

# Teaching a class

- Writing Interns are not required to teach a class. If an instructor must miss a class, the Instructor may ask the Writing Intern to use the class time to teach writing or a text with which they are familiar. The Instructor may provide the Writing Intern with the valuable professional development opportunity of teaching a class, for instance on a text relevant to the Writing Intern's academic work.
- **Best Practices for Instructors:**
  - ✓ If the Writing Intern is invited to teach a class, for instance on a text relevant to the Writing Intern's academic work, the Instructor should discuss with the Writing Intern how the class will complement the Instructor's plan for the course.
  - ✓ The Instructor should observe the class, and provide constructive feedback to the Writing Intern.
  - ✓ If an Instructor must be absent for more than one or two classes, the Instructor should contact the Humanities Collegiate Division to arrange for a substitute Instructor.

# Feedback and Evaluations

- Writing Interns are evaluated each quarter by their students. The Writing Program contacts each Intern about their evaluations, and follows up with additional support as necessary. In addition, the Writing Program solicits comments from Instructors, using an e-mail form for faculty evaluations. **We protect the confidentiality of all faculty comments.** The Writing Program welcomes instructors in the Core to discuss issues or concerns they have about the Writing Intern or writing instruction.
- If Interns have done a particularly good job, we encourage faculty to nominate them for the Karen DiNal Memorial Prize [for Interning]. Nominations for the DiNal Prize can be made by completing and submitting the Writing Intern Faculty Evaluation, which is distributed to faculty at the end of each quarter in which they have worked with a Writing Intern.
- If you have any praise for or concerns about a Writing Intern, please share them with Writing Program staff.

# Best Practices for Instructors:

- Support the Writing Intern's professional and intellectual development with feedback. Each year, Writing Interns testify to the value of the suggestions, corrections, and praise they receive from Instructors.
- Instructors are encouraged to contact the Writing Program immediately if they perceive that a Writing Intern needs support or correction, or if the Writing Intern cannot teach, for instance because of illness. The Writing Program will assist with remediating any issues, or make arrangements to ensure that seminars can go forward and written feedback is provided.