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UTA English Writing Center Newsletter SEPTEMBER 2016

#WritingTheirStory

This October, the UTA community will have exciting opportunities to express how writing impacts our lives. Join us on October 6 for National Poetry Day as we enjoy the nationwide event in our own UTA Maverick style. This year’s theme is “Messages,” and we welcome everyone to gather on the library mall to share ideas and celebrate their unique voice. Follow us on Twitter at #UTAWriteOn and #UTAPoetryDay. We encourage everyone to come out and enjoy the opportunity to be creative. You will be surprised by your own talents!

Another event to look forward to will be on Tuesday, October 20th. Every year, this date marks the National Day on Writing, a time to reflect on the role writing plays in our lives. This year will be a great time to consider the many reasons we write and to appreciate the experiences of other writers here at UTA. Come to the library mall and express yourself in an eight-word story and follow the event at #UTAWriteOn & #NDoW. (See what happened at last year’s National Day of Writing on page 4!)
The concept is simple: you can take any book you’d like, as long as you bring a book to replace it. You don’t even have to bring the same book back after you finish it. This means there is a constantly changing inventory of books and every time you stop by you can find something different! The best part is, the libraries are available to everyone and open at all hours of the day and night.

Professor Spotlight

Dr. Brenda Davis, from the Office of Graduate Studies, emphasizes the importance of written communication, no matter what one’s field may be. She believes the ability to communicate in writing is one of the most important keys to professional success. For graduate students, this means being able to communicate the value of your research to people inside and outside of your discipline. Sharing your research with people inside your discipline, she explains, is important to further your academic field. Meanwhile, communicating with people outside of your field is important to increase awareness of your research and obtain grants/funding. For this reason, she always encourages graduate students to visit the Writing Center.

Davis finds that many graduate students aren’t aware that this resource is available to them—they may be under the impression that the Writing Center is only available to undergraduate students. On the contrary, she’s found that many graduate students, after first meeting with Writing Center consultants, are pleasantly surprised by the level of great advice and guidance they receive. They discovered that even if a consultant was of a different discipline, the consultant could still help them improve their writing and confidence levels. Davis advises that meeting with Writing Center consultants and taking advantage of the various workshops and programs—many of which are geared toward graduate students specifically—can help graduate students improve their writing skills, increase productivity, and further their academic and research goals.
Where Are They Now?

After graduating from UTA in May 2015, our former tutor Scott Peel returned in the fall as a graduate student in the Criminal Justice department. Scott was a consultant at the UTA English Writing Center from Fall 2013 until Spring 2015. In addition to being a graduate student, he works at Defense Solutions Group Incorporated, DSG Inc. His experience as a writing consultant has helped him not only improve his writing skills for graduate school, but also in his job. He works in sales and often corresponds in writing with potential clients. He also mentioned that one of the reasons he was initially hired was because of his writing experience. His boss expressed to him that employers like to know that their employees can communicate effectively, and writing is one of the most important skills in that capacity. Scott hopes to eventually enter the field of intelligence collection and analysis.

Reflecting back on his time as a consultant, Scott really values his experience holding embedded graduate tutoring sessions for the criminal justice pro-seminar class, CRJS 5301. It gave him professional experience in the graduate world in which he is now immersed. He also enjoyed attending the SCWCA conference in 2014 and 2015 and learning what other writing centers where up to.

Featured Tutor

As an undergraduate English major, Alaina began working at the Writing Center in Fall 2014. Since then, she continues to work with us in the first year of her Master’s in English. She has worked within a wide variety of literature, including Russian, African-American, and LGBT lit.

As a consultant, Alaina at times feels challenged by the new concepts and terminologies that clients from other fields can bring to the session, but she assures us that “even if I don’t understand the content, I know I can still help with issues like organization, sentence structure, style, and clarity.”

With her many semesters of experience, she mentions that “it’s become second nature to apply the same scrutiny to my own writing.” She has learned to pay close attention to her essays’ flow, organization, transitions, and, most of all, writing for her intended audience. As she considers going on to pursue a PhD, Alaina says that her consultant experience will be “invaluable” if she decides to become a professor, improving her confidence and communication skills. She calls her work “enormously fulfilling” and recalls looking into the commencement program at graduation to see the name of a PhD student she had helped with his dissertation. Of this moment, Alaina says she “couldn’t have been more proud.”

OWL Offers New Programs!

As part of an ongoing effort to ensure that students are receiving the best help possible, the UTA Writing Center has been increasing its range of services to faculty and students by conducting in-class workshops, embedded tutoring, and graduate cohorts. In-class workshops are flexible and can be designed from existing Writing Center workshops. They can also be tailored for a class or instructor’s specific needs and assignments. Instructors can request a workshop for his/her class by filling out a request form on our website, www.uta.edu/owl.

Similar to in-class workshops, embedded tutoring involves an in-class, hands-on practicum tailored directly to the assignments for ENGL 1302. Since this program is still in an experimental phase, only select courses were chosen; some courses were used as test groups and others as control groups. The goal was to allow each student in the class an opportunity to discuss concerns about his/her essay with a consultant for 5-10 minute mini-sessions. The results of the embedded tutoring experiment is still being assessed, but students and instructors have primarily expressed positive feedback.

For graduate students, the UTA Writing Center has partnered with the Office of Graduate Studies to provide graduate cohorts for Masters and PhD candidates. Cohorts can be organized by discipline or across disciplines. Students may form cohorts with colleagues, or may apply for a cohort individually and be placed in a cohort by the Writing Center executive staff. The purpose of the cohort is to provide a support group for graduate students and their writing projects, whether they are working on a seminar paper, thesis or dissertation, or an article for publication.
#WritingTheirStory (continued)

Last year, we celebrated the theme #WhyWeWrite on the National Day of Writing. The sponsors set up a decorative booth in the Central Library mall from morning until evening, offering passersby the chance to write an eight-word story on a post-it note, tweet their story, or Instagram a photo about why they write. Many people took this opportunity to let their writing voice out in eight simple words. It could have been because of the candy being handed out at the booth, but almost all who stopped to celebrate the power of the pen left with smiles. Even if their story went something along the lines of “because my classes make me write,” which was a top response, people reveled in the chance to write for themselves.

And that is what the National Day on Writing last year was all about – encouraging people to write and helping them think about how writing occupies so much of their lives. From essays to journaling to texting or tweeting and beyond, writing allows us to create so many possibilities in our world. This coming October 20 will offer another interesting opportunity for us to create possibilities in a voice uniquely our own.

## Fall 2016 Workshops

### Graduate Workshops

**Writer’s Studio, Central Library Room 4ll, Wednesdays @ 6:00 p.m.**

- Sep 14: Be Your Own Editor
- Sep 28: Abstracts
- Oct 5: Plagiarism and Citations
- Oct 12: Literature Reviews

Click [here](#) to sign up.

### ENGL 1301 Workshops

**Writer’s Studio, Central Library Room 4ll, Wednesdays @ noon and Thursdays @ 5:00 p.m.**

- Sep 14: Discourse Community Analysis
- Sep 15: Discourse Community Analysis
- Oct 5: Critical Reading
- Oct 6: Critical Reading
- Oct 12: RAE
- Oct 13: RAE

Click [here](#) to sign up.

### Grammar Workshops

**Writer’s Studio, Central Library Room 4ll, Mondays @ 7:00 p.m.**

- Sep.12: Revising & Editing
- Sep 19: Choosing Words Wisely
- Oct 7: Active/Passive Voice
- Oct 10: Sentence Structure

Click [here](#) to sign up.