



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI CAMPUS WRITING PROGRAM

# e-WAC

## Spring 2013

IN THIS ISSUE

## WAC, WI, Wisdom in Writing and Why English 1000 Fits

By Bonnie Selting

It seems so often that we do not see connections between our Writing Intensive (WI) courses and English 1000, Exposition and Argumentation, often called “Freshman English.” These courses are the two writing requirements for all students who graduate from the University of Missouri (MU). Although connections between two WI courses are obvious—students have opportunities to learn there is such a thing as disciplinary writing, and this knowledge is beneficial for expanding students’ perspectives on the rhetoric of communication (different audiences, different purposes, different contexts, and different document formats)—the connections between the first writing requirement, English 1000, is sometimes not so apparent. We think of “English” as, well, English Studies—explicating and learning the cannon of “great” authors, developing cultural awareness from reading, analyzing, and interpreting novels and short stories from Dickens to Austin to Morrison, from Ancient texts to Post-Modern (now, there’s a jump!) and getting in touch with our sensibilities through finessing smart thoughts while we read both fiction and non-fiction.

English 1000, however, could be considered a special species. Instructors for this course are not only supposed to teach students where to put a comma, but also how to read more carefully and closely, to think more critically, and to write more skillfully. Academicians specializing in Composition Studies—usually a “specialty track” in an English Graduate Department—have for many years supported the notion that Freshman English can be viewed as a step toward using writing to hone the complex thinking skills that will help them excel as the professionals they will become. Thus, English 1000 can easily take on the look of a WI course.

In fact, English 1000 instructors often offer opportunities for their students to learn writing genres that are new to them. Students come away with new knowledge that “writing” involves much more than an “essay for the teacher.” They may learn to write memos, instructions, policy statements and/or proposals. They are asked to go out and interview professionals and professors in their majors and actually see what kinds of writing come with the territory. These kinds of tasks are not always easy at first.

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In my English 1000 course, I ask students to gather information on writing in their future careers and write a long memo to “new” students in the same major convincing them that, yes, they will have to write as engineers, business executives, doctors, nutritionists, etc. Students revise these documents after peer review, and the assignment carries a significant amount of weight in their final grade. Sometimes, the “newness” of such an assignment causes some serious apprehension.

For instance, a student, Amy, in English 1000 who is returning to school after 22 years at home raising four children, is now going to become a professional nurse. Imagine her surprise when—as she *just* starts back to the university—she is asked to investigate, on her own, what writing is all about in the profession she has chosen. She writes:

The writing in our major assignment seemed a little overwhelming at first. The first thing I thought about was, “How can I write about something that I know absolutely nothing about.” Being a first year student and not having had much exposure to nursing, much less writing in nursing, it took me a minute to warm up to the idea.



After her initial hesitation and concern, however, Amy was able to see the value of learning about professional writing, the same learning experienced by students in WI courses. She goes on to say: “But, honestly, it turned out to be much more informative than I thought. It was nice to learn that there was actual writing in nursing, especially, scholarly writing. Very nice to know.”

One of the more interesting outcomes of assignments like this one is that students actually talk to professors who likely may become their instructors in a future WI course. Another is that while accomplishing these tasks, they foreshadow their responsibilities in future interview situations. Amy states,

. . . the assignment gave me an opportunity to speak to actual nurses

about writing on the job. That kind of real life information gives me something to draw on in the future and gives me another window into nursing as a career. Writing the reflection was a positive experience, allowing me to maybe tweak the way I talk to people. Being more prepared ahead of time would have allowed me to stay on top of getting the information I wanted.

It seems obvious then, that Eng 1000 and Writing Intensive courses have a lot in common. They both are important to MU’s already high standards for putting meaning into learning by encouraging principles of “writing-to-learn” and “learning-to-write.”

## Student Voices: A Student’s Experience with Her First Writing Intensive Course

By Jonathan Cisco

The Campus Writing Program begins a new feature in this eWAC edition: Student Voices. In this feature, we will interview students as they work through their WI courses. This in-depth look into students’ WI experiences will elucidate how writing intensive courses affect the students. All students participated in these interviews voluntarily in accordance with IRB guidelines.

Memorial Union is bustling with students when I sit down with Jessica (pseudonym), a freshman completing her second semester at MU. New to her department’s program, Jessica decided to take a lower level writing-intensive course in her future discipline. Among the first students to answer the Campus Writing Program’s call for student interviews, Jessica seems eager to share her WI experience. Jessica finds the course more enjoyable and helpful than her other courses, particularly in regards to time management and writing’s effect on learning.

### Time Management

“Yes, it’s a lot of work, but it’s manageable. It’s a good way of learning time management.”

Jessica is enrolled in a WI course that has one of the highest total page counts across campus; including 2nd drafts, the course has

the potential to include over 90 pages of writing (the only form of assessment in this course is writing). She mentions, however, that the course’s design ensures that she stays on top of the work: “I have other priorities, other classes, things I need and want to do, so it’s nice when I know about something well in advance so I can prepare.”

Jessica argues that time management may, in fact, be one of the major benefits of taking a WI course. “There were times toward the beginning when I put off the reading or writing,” she admitted. “But the assignments force you to manage your time wisely.” Once she learned time management, Jessica was surprised how “easy the assignments were.”

### Writing to Learn

“The writing makes it more empowering. You’re taking control of what you’re reading.”

Jessica was quick to compare her learning in a writing-intensive course to a similar course with minimal writing. “You learn differently,” Jessica said. “I feel more involved with my WI class. I still learned a lot [in the non-writing course], but when it’s test-based there’s more of a disconnect.” Jessica felt that assessments through multiple-choice testing made the course seem, at times, disengaging. When writing, however, Jessica felt that she could “apply [the assignments] to my own life.”

According to Jessica, writing also complimented other means of absorbing knowledge. “You learn the basics [via lecture], but you expand on them through your own writing,” Jessica said. Writing, Jessica argued, synthesizes all pieces of a course together. “We have a lecture on the concepts, read about those concepts, and then write about them, connecting everything together.”

In sum, Jessica seemed to have preferred her writing-intensive course to other courses. Although the work was more substantial, particularly in this course, Jessica felt engaged with the material, free to be the leader in her own learning experience.



## Campus Writing Program Awards & Recognition Ceremony

On April 26, 2013 the Campus Writing Program held the Annual Awards and Recognition Ceremony at the Cast Gallery in the Museum of Art and Archaeology.



Six MU faculty members were presented with the 2013 Writing Intensive Excellence Awards in recognition of their efforts in promoting writing across the curriculum. This year's awardees were:

### Bill Horner (Political Science)

Dr. Horner has been teaching WI courses in Political Science for a number of years and has served in leadership roles with the Campus Writing Program. He describes his approach to teaching WI courses in this way: "Each time I teach a writing intensive class, I change the assignments, either to something completely new, or to make sure it is updated for current events."

### Mario Pennella (Biochemistry)

Dr. Pennella is newer to teaching WI courses, but has become involved and recognized early for excellent teaching. Based on a curriculum model from MIT, Dr. Pennella revised Biochemistry 4974 to take students through a semester-long research project. As a student explained, "the practical exploration of a 'real-life' disease made this course feel like a genuine research experience."

### Benjamin Schwarz (Architectural Studies)

Since 1993, Dr. Schwarz has been a WI instructor, and he currently teaches one of the larger Writing Intensive courses,

Architectural Studies 1600 "Environmental Design," and Arch. Studies 3600 "Environmental Analysis." He describes his teaching in this way: "My purpose is not to create trained technocrats, but rather professionals who will be able to communicate with the public in a complex world and create environments, which will delight the eye, stimulate the mind, and adapt with reason to existing conditions."

### Brian Silvey (Music)

Dr. Silvey has been teaching a writing intensive course in Learning, Teaching, & Curriculum as well as serving as Associate Director of Bands in the School of Music. His WI assignments provide authentic writing experiences for students as they prepare for student teaching and beyond. He explains his goals for the course: "In *LTC 4690: Teaching Music 3*, I help pre-service teachers to write professionally with a sense of purpose, passion, and clarity."

### Haskell Taub (Physics)

Since 1994, Dr. Taub has been involved in the Campus Writing Program. He has taught Writing Intensive courses in Physics, including Physics 4080 "Major Themes in Classical Physics" - a course newly converted to WI. As one student wrote to Dr. Taub: "I would like to thank you for being a great teacher. In your class, I had to write the longest paper of my life and while it might not be my best paper, I have never been so proud of my work before. Most importantly, working on that paper reminded me of all the reasons I love physics. I would like to thank you for all your time and patience with my paper and me. I learned a lot more than I ever thought was possible in such a 'writing' course. I am glad the physics department requires it."

### Michelle Teti (Health Sciences)

Dr. Teti teaches an online WI course in Health Sciences., HP 3900: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROCESS AND EVIDENCE BASE. Dr. Teti has carefully designed this course and then revised it to continue to effectively use the available tools to support students' learning and writing. As her colleagues explained: "Michelle substantially revised the course to integrate a new technology (called Collaborate) that would allow students to synchronously interact with one another, providing more direct contact for peer-review while producing their research papers."

## Win Horner Award For Innovative Writing Intensive Teaching

Awarded to:

**Louise Miller**  
(Sinclair School of Nursing)

MU's Campus Writing Program created the award this year to honor Horner, who is a known nationally as a pioneer in writing across the curriculum. Horner chaired the task force that formed the Campus Writing Program in 1983.

The award recognizes faculty who are starting a new WI course or taking a new direction with their WI teaching. This may include a new, innovative WI course or a new strategy and approach within an existing WI course.



Miller teaches an Evidence-Based Practice course for nurses who are registered nurses with an associate degree and already work in the field, but want to advance to the bachelor of science degree and beyond. In this course, Miller designed and instituted a writing based curriculum in which students learn to write persuasively, descriptively, and with audience awareness, research and technology skills.

Students in her course are asked to reflect on problems they see in their workplace, propose a clinical question related that problem, find relevant research to address the problem and create a video on the best solution they found based on published research.



# Summer 2013 & Fall 2013 Events and Workshops

For Registration and More Information about CWP Events:

<https://etapps.missouri.edu/cwp/event>

<b>June 3-7, 2013</b>	Mindful Writing Retreat
<b>July 11/12, 2013</b>	Summer 2013 Writing Retreat
<b>August 12/13, 2013</b>	55 <sup>th</sup> Faculty Writing Intensive Workshop
<b>August 15, 2013</b>	Fall 2013 TA Writing Intensive Workshop

Additional fall 2013 and spring 2014 events will be added soon. Check the [CWP Website](#) for the latest information about our events!

## Did You Know Campus Writing Program Offers Faculty Writing Retreats?

By Amy Lannin

Writing is part of our daily lives and a vital part of our career success. Why does it have to be so difficult? Many faculty have contacted CWP about how to get help with their own writing, including ideas on how to get into a writing routine.

To help with this, CWP started offering Faculty Writing Retreats once a month on Fridays. At these retreats, up to 15 faculty members find a good writing space at the Conley House. After introductions everyone spends the day writing. CWP staff and representatives from the Office of Research Grant and Publications office are on hand to offer feedback, answer questions, or just listen. As one attendee described: "This is like positive peer pressure to keep working and to keep writing."

The Conley House has been a good environment for these retreats. It is quiet and seems like a good place to get away and write without having to travel far. CWP provides coffee, snacks, and lunch. The retreat is free, though space is limited. As one attendee wrote following a recent retreat: "I often feel like 'I don't have time to write,' and this focused time was not only needed, it was energizing."

At the request of faculty, CWP started offering longer retreats in the Summer of 2012. These two extended retreats will be repeated in 2013. The first one will be June 3-7 and will be led by Donna Strickland, Director of Composition. Donna has been a leader at MU in the practice of contemplative, mindful writing. As Donna explains, "Writing is a physical activity. The writer needs to recognize the body's role in the writing experience." Throughout the five days, participants are writing what they need to write, while also creating a mindful writing experience.

The second extended writing retreat will be held July 11-12 at the historic Hotel Frederick Hotel in Boonville, Missouri. At this retreat participants will have time and space to write, consult with a professional editor, and take breaks as needed.

You can sign up for any of the Campus Writing Program events, including these retreats, at the website: [cwp.missouri.edu](http://cwp.missouri.edu). Space is limited, so be sure to register early. There is a \$100 fee for the summer retreats, but CWP is helping pay for some of the event costs. Contact [Amy Lannin](#) to request scholarship information.

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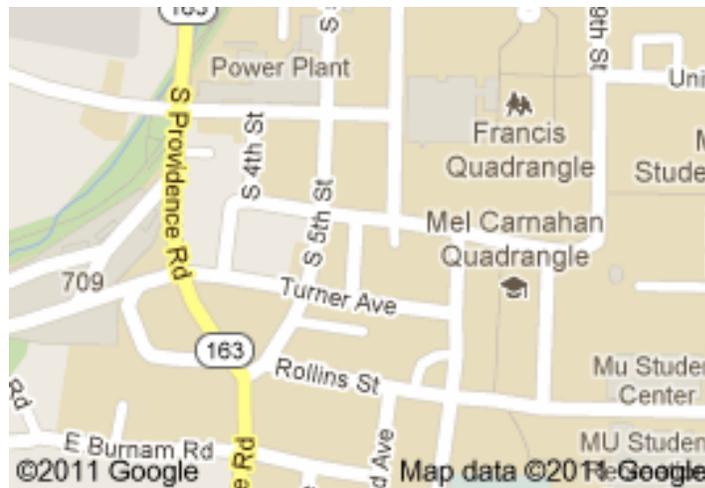
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# CWP Has A Newly Designed Website!

[cwp.missouri.edu](http://cwp.missouri.edu)

- ✓ [Teaching resources](#) such as sample syllabi and assignments.
- ✓ Lists of [Writing Intensive Courses](#) and Requirements.
- ✓ [Writing Resources](#) such as information about [Plagiarism](#).
- ✓ The latest CWP [News](#) and Information.