



MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE COURSE SYLLABUS

FALL 2017

RESEARCH AND WRITING WORKSHOP INSTRUCTOR: MARY L. CONWAY, PH.D.

Divinity College Room 228

Phone: 1.905.525.9140 x26002

Email: conwam2@mcmaster.ca

Dates: 5:30–7:30 Mondays, Sept 25, Oct 2, 16, 23, 30, Nov 6.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This workshop will teach research and writing skills to enable students to engage successfully with their academic work. Focusing on the areas of content, argumentation, and written presentation, this workshop will introduce tools for proper research, clear and logical argumentation, proficiency with language, and oral presentations. A major component of this course will be providing students with the technological expertise to successfully carry out online research in a 21st century context.

N.B.: This is not a credit course, neither is it a remedial course. It is designed for any student, in any program, who wishes to improve their skills in researching, writing, and presenting. It may appeal to students who would simply like to refresh and extend their academic skills, those who have not worked in an academic context for a few years, those who are not familiar with the Canadian education system, those who would like to be more informed about internet and computer based resources, or those who want to learn more about the academic expectations at MDC.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES



a.  Knowing

-  To understand how to use modern technologies effectively for research and writing, including online journals, books, bibliographic software, biblical language software, Avenue to Learn, and other vital resources.
-  To understand the fundamental elements of clear argumentation.
-  To know the academic expectations of MDC.

-  To understand the criteria for the types of assignments at MDC (e.g., book reviews, essays, research papers.)
-  To become aware of resources for continuing improvement in research and writing skills.

b.  Being

-  To develop increased confidence in one's ability to research and write.
-  To grow by voicing academic concerns and difficulties and exploring strategies for dealing with these.
-  To understand the potential for academic work to be a spiritual endeavor.
-  To cultivate a community of trust by freely sharing challenges and offering positive feedback and resources to others to help alleviate these concerns.

c.  Doing

-  To develop organizational skills in researching and writing.
-  To gain facility in using the English language, including its grammar and syntax.
-  To think more critically, express oneself more clearly, and research more effectively.

III. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Text Resources:

- Collins, Billie Jean and Society of Biblical Literature. *The SBL Handbook of Style*. 2nd ed. Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press, 2014.
- Hacker, Diana and Nancy I. Sommers. *A Canadian Writer's Reference*. 5th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, 2012.
- "Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses/Dissertations" [n.d.], <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf> [n.d.].
- Messenger, W. E., et al. *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*. 2nd ed. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Porter, Stanley E. *Inking the Deal: A Guide for Successful Academic Publishing*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.
- Strunk, William and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 50th Anniversary ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2009.
- Turabian, Kate L., et al. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- University of Chicago. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 17th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.
- "Wipf and Stock Author Guide" [n.d.], http://wipfandstock.com/media/wysiwyg/WS_AuthorGuide.pdf [n.d.].

Online Databases:

-  ATLA (American Theological Library Association religion database) <http://library.mcmaster.ca/articles/atla-religious-studies-database-with-atlaserials>
-  JSTOR (online journal for humanities) <http://library.mcmaster.ca/articles/jstor>

Other Online Resources:

-  Writing Resources for English Learners <https://gs.mcmaster.ca/writing-resources-english-learners>
-  Common Errors in English Usage (Washington State University) <https://brians.wsu.edu/common-errors/#errors>
-  Guide to Grammar and Writing <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>
-  English Grammar Tutorials <http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/resources-multilingual-writers/downloadable-english-grammar-tutorials>
-  What is Plagiarism? (Concordia University) <http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity/plagiarism.html>
-  What is Plagiarism? (Yale University) <http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism/what-plagiarism>
-  Other Plagiarism Tutorials: <http://www.library.dal.ca/How/LibCasts/>
http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html
<http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/episodes/>
<http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/gradait/>
www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm

IV. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

This workshop will not burden students with “extra” work, because students will be encouraged to bring samples of their own current coursework to edit and use for practice. The workshop will include lecture sessions, discussions, question and answer periods, and practice sessions with hands-on exercises. Students are encouraged to bring their computers for practical experience in editing and using the internet for research. Advice on obtaining, evaluating and outside proofreaders will be given.

V. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date (Mondays, 5:30–7:30)	Topics
Sept 25	Academic Writing 1: Forms, styles, purposes, expectations.
Oct 2	Academic Research 1: Finding and evaluating resources. Text and online resources. Bible software.
Oct 16	Academic Research 2: Using and citing resources. Plagiarism. Bibliographic software. ¹
Oct 23	Academic Writing 2: The writing process. Organization and argumentation. Use of footnotes.
Oct 30	Academic Writing 3: Grammar and syntax. Common errors. Editing and revising.
Nov 6	Academic Presentations: Oral presentations. Presentation software, strategies, handouts.

¹ Note: This will be an overview of bibliographic software, its advantages and disadvantages, not hands-on training with specific software.

V. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR, ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION

- Students are expected to be on time for class. Admittedly, unavoidable delays do occasionally happen. If you arrive late, please enter as quietly as possible and give an explanation to the professor after class.
- Students are also expected to stay for the entire class session.
- Computers and tablets should only be used for class related purposes, not for social networking and the like.
- All thoughtful student participation is welcome. There are no “dumb questions” or “stupid answers.” Students will respect the contributions of other students and respond to them without ridicule or scorn.
- Students may eat or drink in class as long as they do so quietly and unobtrusively and clean up afterwards.

VI. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.