

# Writing at Millsaps College

Millsaps College Writing Program  
2011-2012

**The Millsaps College Writing & Core 1 Programs**

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## Every One a Writing Major: Writing at Millsaps College

Writing is an integral part of college life, the main mode of transmission of ideas. From your admissions application to your senior project and final Core 10 essay, your Millsaps education will be characterized to a large degree by the writing that you do to document, explore, and achieve it. I speak here not only of the writing you expect to do, the essays and examination questions or the tests and quizzes that help your instructors mark and evaluate your learning progress; while these means of evaluation are important, we believe they are the tip of the metaphorical iceberg, a visual manifestation of the deep thinking and writing that goes on below the surface.

This belief underscores our pedagogical commitment to Writing Across the Curriculum, a well-established school of thought that acknowledges the importance of writing and literacy skills to all disciplines and areas of study. During your tenure at Millsaps College, you will write often and for a variety of educational purposes. Not all of your writing will be graded or formally assessed, but this fact should not make that writing appear lesser; on the contrary, the writing you do when no one is looking can have a profound impact on the writing you submit to a reader's or evaluator's eyes.

Your writing journey began with your admissions essay and your response to the summer reading. Your Core 1 class gives you an opportunity to focus on and practice the sorts of reading, writing and thinking tasks you'll undertake throughout your time here, an opportunity that will continue in your other Core Curriculum classes. At the close of your second year, you'll submit a portfolio to the Writing Program offices for review; this portfolio represents your academic writing and demonstrates your ability to produce proficient academic prose. During your graduation year, you will undertake at least two capstone writing projects: one will showcase your skills in your major area of study, the other your ability to reflect upon your experience of the liberal arts education. Along the way, you will write hundreds and thousands of words: words that you share with others to communicate your ideas and thoughts as you grapple with challenging issues, and words that you keep for yourself, words that may shape and guide and document the person you are becoming.

Make your words count.

# The Millsaps Core Curriculum and The Liberal Arts

## The Core Curriculum

Core 1 is the first piece of a carefully designed, two-year introduction to a liberal education known as the Core Curriculum. Throughout a series of nine courses to be completed by the end of sophomore year and a tenth in senior year, students acquire key intellectual skills and perspectives—our “liberal arts abilities”—within an interdisciplinary context. In the humanities, Core 2, 3, 4, and 5 take a chronological approach that explores a particular historical epoch and may be fulfilled in one of two ways: either via the theme-based IDST Topics sequence during your first four semesters, or else over the course of a single year in a double-credit program called The Heritage of the West in World Perspective. Taken as a whole, either option enables a student to “focus” on particular fields of knowledge: fine arts, history, religion, literature, and philosophy. By contrast, Core 6, 7, 8, and 9 are drawn from the areas of social and natural sciences as well as business; they may be fulfilled in any order. Core 6-9 courses introduce students to the scientific method, and each contains an element of writing appropriate to its discipline. Like all other Core courses, these courses pursue the liberal arts abilities as far as possible, within the context of mathematics, laboratory sciences, social sciences, business, and computer science. As a final step in your undergraduate education in the liberal arts, Core 10, “Reflections on Thinking & Writing,” may be part of your own major’s senior seminar. Core 10 asks every Millsaps student to reflect in a careful essay upon an education that enables you to take charge of your own learning and to examine the relationship between your chosen field of study and our college’s liberal arts curriculum. Millsaps believes that the liberal arts abilities you acquire in the Core Curriculum form the life-long basis of every educated adult’s most useful tools.

## The Liberal Arts

The word “liberal” in *liberal arts* and *liberal education* means *free*. First of all, a liberal education is the education of a free man or woman, of a *citizen*, an education that gives you the knowledge and, above all, the competencies of thinking and judging necessary to carry out the responsibilities of an adult citizen in an era of change. Secondly, a liberal education is traditionally understood as a process that frees or *liberates* those who undertake it. What does it free you *from*? The limiting chains of ignorance, incompetence, false opinions, illusion, prejudice. What does it free you *for*? Knowledge and the development of your powers of reflection, judgment, discovery, and vision—powers which allow you to be competent and fully aware in your thinking and acting. Thus, a liberal education not only gives you knowledge but transforms your powers as a person and contributes to your whole life.

In order to acquire a liberal education, you must begin to master a set of basic abilities. Core 1 introduces you to these abilities and the remainder of your Core courses will give you further opportunities to advance in them.

**Reasoning** – the ability to analyze and synthesize arguments, to question assumptions, to evaluate evidence, to argue positions, to draw conclusions, and to raise new questions; varieties of reasoning include quantitative, scientific, ethical, and aesthetic:

*Quantitative* - the ability to use mathematical reasoning as a tool of analysis and as a means of conveying information

*Scientific* - the ability to understand and to use the scientific method

*Ethical* - the ability to analyze the principles and assumptions of moral claims and to make informed and reasoned moral arguments

*Aesthetic* - the ability to analyze visual, performing, or literary art

**Communication** – the ability to express ideas, arguments, and information coherently and persuasively orally and in writing

**Historical Consciousness** – the ability to understand the achievements, problems, and perspectives of the past and to recognize their influence upon the course of events

**Social & Cultural Awareness** – the ability to engage perspectives other than one’s own

Deceptively simple, these four definitions cover a remarkable range of human inquiry. The liberal arts abilities and the fields of study that teach them are not independent but interconnected; they work together to enable us to reach a truer grasp of experience in all its complexity.

## **Core 1 and the Liberal Arts**

In your Core 1 seminar, you will encounter a variety of interesting, important, and controversial issues—scientific, artistic, ethical, economic, and so forth—within the context of your instructor’s chosen theme. You will be challenged to think for yourself in ways that draw upon your personal experience, the experiences of those in your class, and the evidence you read, produce, or observe. There is a strong emphasis on writing and revising your writing in this course because the process of revision is important for clarifying your thinking.

Because Core 1 is conducted as a seminar, the pedagogy is interactive, with students taking an active role in every class. Each section’s readings are drawn from a number of disciplines, and artwork and films are often viewed and analyzed. These materials are not taught as introductions to the disciplines, but as ways to help you discover how to answer your own human questions. No faculty member is a full expert on the multi-disciplinary content of the course. Rather, the role of the Core 1 instructor is to help you in learning how to learn and how to reason.

For these reasons, this class introduces you to a different kind of educational process that at the beginning may seem strange to you. Rather than being a class in which you learn information passively from an expert, this class will encourage you to become responsible for your own thinking and learning.

As you progress in the course and in your undergraduate education at Millsaps, you will increasingly become your own teacher.

### **Core 1 Major Assignments**

While each instructor will develop a schedule of readings and assignments that are individual to their class, all Core 1 students will complete the following five major assignments:

- **Assignment 1:** Using Critical Analysis (750-1000 words) **15% of final course grade**
- **Assignment 2:** Synthesis of Material in a Timed Context (in-class writing)-- **15% of final course grade**
- **Assignment 3:** Gathering and Evaluating Different Perspectives (1000-1500 words) **20% of final course grade**
- **Assignment 4:** Research Writing germane to the topic/discipline at hand (1500-2000 words) **30% of final course grade**
- **Assignment 5:** Critical Reflection on Personal Learning (ungraded/assessed for portfolio)

A combination of these assignments will provide the start of your Millsaps Writing Proficiency Portfolio.

### **Writing Center and Library Contact Requirements**

All Core 1 students are required to have two contacts with the Writing Center and one contact with the Library during the term in which they take their Core 1 class.

The **Writing Center requirement** can be filled in one of two ways:

- Students can attend one Writing Center workshop and one tutoring session, or
- Students can attend two tutoring sessions.

We strongly advise you to complete at least one of the two required Writing Center contacts prior to the midterm; not only will this result in a more even distribution of tutoring appointments, but you'll get the benefit of gradual work with the Writing Center staff.

The library offers a variety of workshops designed to introduce you to the resources available for your research projects; the **Library requirement** should be met by attending at least one of these workshops.

### ***Writing Center Workshop Schedule & Contact***

Beginning Week 2 of the fall semester, Core 1 Writing Workshops will be offered weekly on Monday and Thursday:

Monday 3 p.m. – 4 p.m.  
Thursday 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

This semester we are covering the topic: Using Evidence and Documentation with MLA, APA, and CMS Style Guides. Below is the schedule of dates for when the workshops will take place. These workshops will be conducted in the computer lab at John Stone Hall.

Each workshop will be limited to 10 students; therefore, you must sign up by sending Dr. Richard Boada an email [boadar@millsaps.edu] to schedule an appointment. Students may “drop in,” but if the class is full, you may be asked to attend a different session. Attendance will be taken, so professors will be notified.

Week 2	Mon 8-29		Week 9	Fall Break
	Thurs 9-1			
Week 3	Mon 9-5		Week 10	Mon 10-24
	Thurs 9-8			Thurs 10-27
Week 4	Mon 9-12		Week 11	Mon 10-31
	Thurs 9-15			Thurs 11-3
Week 5	Mon 9-19		Week 12	Mon 11-7
	Thurs 9-22			Thurs 11-10
Week 6	Mon 9-26		Week 13	Mon 11-14
	Thurs 9-29			Thurs 11-17
Week 7	Mon 10-3		Week 14	Thanksgiving
	Thurs 10-6			
Week 8	Mon 10-10		Week 15	Mon 11-28
	Thurs 10-13			Thurs 12-1



## ***Library Research Workshop Schedule & Contact***

Library research workshops are designed to introduce you to the library and help you find, evaluate and use information. Beginning August 29, 2011, half-hour library research workshops will be offered Monday – Thursday in the Millsaps Room. The daily time of each workshop will remain the same from week to week, but the topic scheduled for that time will change weekly. Listed below are the daily times, the workshop topics, and a link to the full schedule showing which topic will be taught on specific dates:

### **Daily Times of Library Research Workshops**

Monday	6:00pm-6:30pm
Tuesdays	noon-12:30
Wednesdays	4:00pm-4:30pm
Thursdays	noon -12:30

### **Workshop Topics:**

<b>Finding Books at Millsaps and Beyond</b> – Not everything is on the Web. Learn the basics to help save you time and avoid headaches when searching for books on your topic.
<b>Finding Scholarly Journal Articles</b> – Learn what makes a scholarly article different from a popular article and how to find scholarly articles in Ebsco Academic Search Premiere, our largest full-text database, and other databases.
<b>Internet Research</b> –This workshop helps you learn how to search the web more effectively and how to critically evaluate the sources you find online. It also helps you decide when the web might provide the best sources for information and when it would be better to use a database, print journal, or book.
<b>Advanced Search Strategies</b> – Learn how to make the most of your searches within the library catalog and databases. This workshop will illustrate how to effectively use various advanced search options, including searches limiters, wildcards, truncation symbols, and parenthetical searching.

Workshop topics rotate throughout the week; you can find out what topics will be offered at which days/times at the Library website:

<http://library.millsaps.edu/index.php/services/instruction/researchcalendar/>

Each workshop is limited to 10 students; therefore, you must sign up by sending an email to [librarian@millsaps.edu](mailto:librarian@millsaps.edu) or by stopping by the library. Attendance will be taken so professors can be notified.

For more information regarding Library Research Workshops, or to sign up, contact Ryan Roy at 601-974-1072 or [roywr@millsaps.edu](mailto:roywr@millsaps.edu).

### **Research Consultations**

The library also offers students the opportunity to make an appointment for half-hour research consultations with a librarian or a library peer tutor. To make an appointment, email [librarian@millsaps.edu](mailto:librarian@millsaps.edu), call 601-974-1072, or stop by the desk.

## The Millsaps Writing Proficiency Portfolio and Requirement

All Millsaps students must demonstrate writing proficiency via a Writing Portfolio as a requirement for graduation. This portfolio contains papers written in the freshman/first and sophomore/second year of study at Millsaps and is assessed by both faculty and members of the Writing Program to determine writing proficiency.

The table below illustrates what documents go into the portfolio, who is responsible for submitting them, and when they are due to the Writing Program:

Course/Year	Documents	Who Submits	When Due
Core 1/First Year	<p>Critical Reflection on Personal Learning (Assignment 5)</p> <p>Synthesis of Material in a Timed Context (Assignment 2)</p> <p>Revision #1: Assignment 1 or 3</p> <p>Revision #2: Assignment 4</p>	<p><b>Students</b> submit clean, revised copies of the papers to their instructor at the end of the term.</p> <p><b>Instructors</b> evaluate the packet and submit it to the Writing Program.</p>	<p><b>Students:</b> submit papers to instructor by date specified in your syllabus.</p> <p><b>Instructors:</b> submit evaluated packets to the Writing Program no later than the second day following the submission of Fall semester grades.</p>
Core 3 or Heritage/First Year	<p>Core 3 or Heritage Spring Paper</p>	<p><b>Students</b> submit clean, revised copies of the papers to their instructors.</p> <p><b>Instructors</b> evaluate the essay and submit it to the Writing Program.</p>	<p><b>Students:</b> submit papers to instructor by date specified in your syllabus.</p> <p><b>Instructors:</b> submit evaluated essays to the Writing Program no later than the second day following the submission of Spring semester grades.</p>
Second Year	<p>Two essays written during the second/sophomore year.</p> <p>One essay must be from Core 6, 7, 8, or 9 OR from an appropriate Science, Women's Studies, or Business course.</p> <p>The second essay may be from Core 4 or 5 or from another sophomore level class as outlined above.</p> <p>Instructors in those courses will identify what assignments in the course qualify for</p>	<p><b>Students</b> submit clean, revised copies of the essays directly to the Writing Program office (John Stone Hall, First Floor). Each essay must be accompanied by a signed coversheet, which can be obtained via the web (<a href="http://www.millsaps.edu/academics/writing_program_writing_portfolio.php">http://www.millsaps.edu/academics/writing_program_writing_portfolio.php</a>) or at the Writing Program office in John Stone Hall.</p>	<p><b>Students:</b> Both essays are due to the Writing Program no later than 4 p.m. on the Thursday before pre-registration for the following fall term. You will receive several emails during the spring semester from Rebecca Swords/the Writing Program noting this date, but ultimately, the student is responsible for submitting their essays in a timely fashion. Failure to submit those essays by this deadline</p>

Course/Year	Documents	Who Submits	When Due
	portfolio submission.		will delay registration for the fall term.

**Note:** Your instructors will have varying requirements for the work you submit for their classes and their assessment of your work will reflect those requirements. Be aware that individual class assignment requirements may not touch on all dimensions of the College’s proficiency requirement; you may have to revise portions of your work before submitting it to the portfolio. The most common issue here deals with citation and documentation of source material. We recommend that student writers apply correct and consistent documentation practices in all of their written work; if you are unsure of which style guide to use, consult with your individual instructor about which one is appropriate for the project.

Your portfolio will pass through three evaluation points:

1. At the end of the Core 1 and Core 3/Heritage courses, student portfolios are evaluated by the instructor of the course for which the papers were written. Portfolios assessed as “below proficient” along any of the assessment dimensions will be reviewed by the Writing Program staff; students in this category may be required to enroll in a writing course targeting their particular area of need (WRIT 1000, 1001, or 1002) or to attend a series of workshops or meetings with Writing Program staff.
2. Once the portfolio is complete, the Writing Program or its designated agents (i.e., faculty members) will evaluate the portfolio, paying particular attention to the second year/sophomore essays, to assess proficiency.

Writing proficiency is assessed along the following dimensions:

Area	“Proficient” Writing:
<b>Context/Purpose of Writing</b>	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience’s perceptions and assumptions).
<b>Content Development</b>	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.
<b>Genre/Disciplinary Conventions</b>	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation.
<b>Sources &amp; Evidence</b>	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.
<b>Control of Syntax &amp; Mechanics</b>	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.

When you are preparing your essays for submission, be sure to consider these elements; if the assessor is unable to evaluate a particular dimension (eg. no identifiable style guide to govern application of

Genre/Disciplinary Conventions), your portfolio will not be assessed until you have submitted appropriate work. All papers submitted for assessment should have a sole author, and that sole author should be the student being assessed.

Portfolios are assessed as either proficient or below proficient.

- Students who are found **proficient** will be notified by email and their records will be updated to reflect the completion of the graduation requirement. Proficient portfolios will be returned to the students during their Senior Seminar course.
- Students found **below proficient** will be notified by email and will be required to meet with the Writing Program to develop a plan to address the proficiency requirement. This plan can include a variety of approaches, including but not limited to revisions of submitted work, supplemental workshops and/or classes, and individual consultations with members of the Writing Program staff.

For more information about the Writing Proficiency Portfolio requirement, see the current Millsaps College Catalog (<http://www.millsaps.edu/records/catalog>).

## The Millsaps Writing Program

The Millsaps Writing Program acts as an umbrella for a variety of writing resources on campus. Every Millsaps student will come into contact with the Writing Program in some way: through the completion of the Writing Proficiency requirement; by utilizing the Writing Program and Writing Center's classes, workshops, and resources; or by serving the campus community as a Writing Center tutor.

Unlike many college and university campuses, Millsaps College locates its Writing Program outside of the English Department. While the physical and administrative home of a writing program may not seem very important at first glance, deeper consideration of the matter may yield a better understanding of the role that writing plays on the Millsaps campus.

Millsaps College has long been recognized on the national level as a school committed to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), a pedagogical approach to writing instruction that takes as a fundamental belief that good writing and good writing instruction happen at all levels of a student's career and in all disciplines of a school's curriculum. While we may not always associate writing with careers in, for example, science or mathematics or business, we can't deny the fact that everyone who works in any field that requires facility with written communication needs to be good at both understanding (reading) and producing (writing) that communication. Therefore, the Millsaps faculty have committed to including appropriate writing opportunities and instruction across the campus curriculum.

In short, at Millsaps, everyone's a writing major.

The Millsaps Writing Program, then, exists as a separate entity so that we can best support writing across the entire campus. The program is operated by

- Dr. Anita M. DeRouen (deroua@millsaps.edu), Assistant Professor of English, Director of Writing and Teaching, and Director of Core 1
- Dr. Richard Boada (boadar@millsaps.edu), Postdoctoral Fellow in Rhetorical Studies and Writing Center Administration

Their offices are located on the first floor of John Stone Hall, where you'll also find the Writing Center and a dedicated computer lab for writing instruction and work.

## **The Millsaps Writing Center**

The Millsaps Writing Center offers diverse support services to any student writer at any stage of the writing process. The goal of the Millsaps Writing Center is to help writers become more comfortable, confident, and capable by talking with peer tutors about ways to improve their writing.

The Writing Center is located in John Stone Hall, the two-story frame house just south of the Christian Center. Tutors are also available at the Library.

Drop-ins are always welcome and appointments can be scheduled by calling the Writing Center at 601-974-1308 or by emailing Dr. Richard Boada at [Richard.Boada@millsaps.edu](mailto:Richard.Boada@millsaps.edu).

### **Our Hours:**

#### **John Stone Hall**

Sunday - Thursday, 7-10 p.m.

Monday - Thursday 3-6 p.m.

#### **Library**

Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 7-10 p.m.

### **Who We Are and What We Do**

The Millsaps Writing Center provides one-on-one support from trained and experienced writing tutors for currently enrolled students. Our tutors are Millsaps students, and they major in several disciplines, not only English. Therefore, our tutors can help you through writing assignments from across the curriculum. Peer tutors and faculty offer students several services, daily, including the following:

- Instruction on Topic Selection; how to understand the assignment and what it requires
- Understanding how student writing is working and isn't working
- Coaching on Organizational Strategies
- Suggestions for Editing and Revising
- Tutoring on Grammar and Mechanics

In addition, we offer Writing Workshops for Core 1 students throughout the academic year on these and other topics as needed:

- Using Evidence and Documentation with MLA, APA, CMS Style Guides

The Writing Center's friendly and welcoming atmosphere provides students with a comfortable working-space for their writing. Our approach to tutoring is to ask questions and help you to discover your own purposes for writing and the ways in which those purposes can be achieved. We are committed to providing opportunities for you to become a more self-motivated, self-sufficient, and empowered

writer. We invite you to visit the Writing Center multiple times for each writing assignment in order to build writerly skills and confidence.

### **How to become a Writing Center Tutor**

Our Writing Center Tutors aren't just great writers; they're also students who enjoy working with other students and who find their own learning and study enhanced by continued conversations about writing and thinking. Tutors work with students from all majors and at all grade levels; in addition, each tutor participates in a one-hour advanced teaching/writing seminar each semester that they tutor. If you're interested in becoming a tutor, we invite you to apply to be a part of our Writing Center staff.

**To apply**, you must submit a letter of interest and a confidential and sealed letter of recommendation from your Core 1 instructor to the Writing Center Coordinator during finals week of the fall term. Applications are due by 4:30 p.m. Friday, December 9, 2011. Upon receipt of your application materials, the essays in your Writing Portfolio will also be evaluated as part of the application process. A successful candidate will usually score "Well Above Proficient" at the Core 1 evaluation point. We typically select four or five new tutors each year.

The selected applicants will be required to enroll in WRIT 2001 (a one-credit hour Tutor Training Practicum) in the Spring 2011 term. Upon successful completion of WRIT 2001, those students will be invited to work as Writing Center Tutors, and enroll in WRIT 3001 (one-credit hour course for ongoing tutor training). For more information, please contact Dr. Richard Boada at 601-974-1308 or Richard.Boada@millsaps.edu.



# The Millsaps Honor Code and Avoiding Plagiarism

## The Millsaps Honor Code

The Millsaps College Honor Code was developed by students and faculty to best represent and articulate the commitment that students make to academic integrity. The full text of the Honor Code, including a representative list of violations, can be found in Major Facts ([http://www.millsaps.edu/student\\_life/student\\_life\\_major\\_facts.php](http://www.millsaps.edu/student_life/student_life_major_facts.php)). To signify their commitment to the Code, students sign the following pledge when they enter the College:

**As a Millsaps College student, I hereby affirm that I understand the Honor Code and am aware of its implications and of my responsibility to the Code. In the interests of expanding the atmosphere of respect and trust in the College, I promise to uphold the Honor Code and I will not tolerate dishonest behavior in myself or in others.**

Students reaffirm their commitment to the code by including the following text on their assignments: **"I hereby certify that I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment. (Signature)"**

### What does it mean?

The Honor Code deals with appropriate assistance on your work at the College. Students at Millsaps promise to do their academic work on their own or, in cases where assistance is allowed, within the constraints identified by the person giving the assignment. In addition, students promise to notify the appropriate person (usually a faculty member or school administrator) when they become aware of another student or other students violating this promise.

The most common ways that students violate the Honor Code are through copying the work or others/allowing their own work to be copied, using unauthorized materials to complete assignments (eg. using calculators when not allowed on mathematics exams or using translation software in foreign language classes), and plagiarizing. The issue of most pressing concern in the Core 1 classroom is plagiarism.

### What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of the ideas and/or words of others without attribution; the plagiarist incorporates some portion of the work or thinking of another into their own work, but does not acknowledge the source of that work or thinking. Instances of plagiarism can appear small (for example, the use of a single sentence of text from the work of another author) or enormous (the wholesale copying of chunks

of text or entire documents), but any instance of plagiarism is anathema to the pursuit of the liberal arts education. Your instructors value your contribution to the classroom and the larger academic dialogue; while your contribution may incorporate the ideas of others, you do those others, your instructors, your classmates, and yourself a disservice when you fail to acknowledge which components and ideas are your own and which are the work and thoughts of others.

## How can I avoid plagiarism?

Many people think that it's hard to avoid plagiarizing, but it's really quite simple: you just have to acknowledge/credit the sources of the ideas and words you incorporate into your own arguments. Doing so demonstrates that you are an ethical participant in the academic discourse, a demonstration that helps to establish and maintain your credibility as a thinker and a writer.

So why do people think it's so hard to not plagiarize?

The answers to this question are as varied as the people who find avoiding plagiarism difficult. Some students are unclear about the appropriate use of work they're done for other classes. In some cases, plagiarism appears to be a viable option when pressed for time in completing a writing assignment. In others, the question of what is and is not "common knowledge" proves confusing, particularly when students are dealing with information that appears right on the border between the commonly known and unknown. Still other students may find the process of documenting sources confusing, while other writers may not fully understand the difference between direct quotes, paraphrases, and summaries.

Sometimes the work you do for one class dovetails nicely with work you need to do for another. If you're considering **exploring a topic in more than one class**, your first course of action is to speak to the instructor(s) in question. This conversation should happen EARLY in the writing process, as early as the receipt of the assignment if possible. In most cases, your teachers will be glad to encourage further or new exploration of a topic, but they will expect that the text you produce for their assignments will be new or substantially revised and reworked.

The main remedy for the second instance is, of course, better **planning and use of time**. One of the easiest ways to avoid plagiarizing when writing papers is to have all of the documentation information you need at your fingertips while writing. Good note taking practices will prove invaluable to you in your academic work; when taking notes from sources (be they your textbook, a journal article, or a website), always note the page number and source information alongside the actual notes. If you're photocopying information to review later, spring for a photocopy of the cover of the book or journal and the page containing copyright information; having that information at your side while you're putting the finishing touches on your masterpiece at 2 a.m. can make the difference between the grade you've rightfully earned and an unwanted visit to the Honor Council.

**Common knowledge** is a bit trickier. We consider known information like "the sky is blue" to be common knowledge and, therefore, not requiring citation, but the designation "common knowledge"

becomes harder to assign when considering what's commonly known or understood within a particular discipline or for a particular audience. Rule of thumb: when in doubt, ask your instructor.

**Documenting sources** is one of the most mechanical aspects of writing, so, in theory, it should be one of the easiest to master: when you use the work or ideas of another writer/thinker, you have to signal who said it and where the reader can find it. Source documentation becomes complicated because good writing flows; we want to know who wrote it and where to find it, but we don't want to find our reading interrupted by cumbersome (and repetitive) listings of names and titles. Instead, we need a system that lets the reader know the who/when/where without getting in the way of words and ideas.

Different academic disciplines (like English and Biology and Psychology) use different systems to identify their source materials. These systems appear in books known as style manuals. You are probably familiar with the Modern Language Association's style manual (the MLA), which is the standard guide for scholarly writers in English and Modern Languages (e.g., French, Spanish, German). Scholars in Psychology would most likely use the APA style manual, which is a publication of the American Psychological Association. These style manuals tell writers how to show their readers where their source materials come from, and they provide a sort of code for researchers who may be interested in examining the source materials they come across in a paper or book that they've read.

From the outside, these style manuals appear complicated and full of rules; that's pretty much how they look from the inside, too! The good news is that you'll likely only have to use less than a tenth of the information contained in those books; that tenth is what you'll find in the Handbook your instructor has assigned to your class. Each Core 1 student is required to purchase Andrea Lunsford's *Easy Writer*. This book contains the basic and most commonly used portions of the major style manuals (MLA, APA, Chicago or CMS) in one reference book. **We encourage you to keep your manual after your Core 1 class; it will be an excellent reference for you as you continue your Millsaps education.**

Perhaps the most complex issue relates to the different ways we might **incorporate the words/thoughts of others into our own writing**. There are three options for bringing in the writing of others: direct quotes, paraphrase, and summary. Each method is used to different writing effect and for different purposes; your writing Handbook (Lunsford or Hacker) will have sections discussing when and why you'd use each method and how to properly use them. For example, *direct quotations* require the inclusion of BOTH the citation for the quoted work AND quotation marks indicating which words come from that source material. *Paraphrase* requires a wholesale rewriting (or putting into your own words) of an idea/statement, not just changing a few words in the passage. These are examples of common misunderstandings that can have damaging consequences in a student's academic career.

## Learning More

Bedford/St. Martin's, the publisher of both the Lunsford and Hacker handbooks, offers a very good internet-based tutorial on avoiding plagiarism and acknowledging sources. As a supplement to the instruction you'll receive in your Core 1 class regarding this important topic, **all Core 1 students are**

**required to complete the portions of the online tutorial as noted below and submit their results to Dr. Anita DeRouen, Director of Core 1, by 5 p.m. Friday, September 2.**

To complete the tutorial:

1. Go to the Bedford St. Martins Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial website (<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/plagiarismtutorial/>).
2. Create a student account.
  - a. In the green bar on the left side of the screen, under “I’m not registered. Sign me up as a(n):”, select “Student”.
  - b. Fill in the form, using your Millsaps email address and your first and last name. In the field labeled “Instructor email”, enter [deroua@millsaps.edu](mailto:deroua@millsaps.edu).
  - c. When you have finished filling out the form, click submit. You will be taken to a screen confirming your registration; click through to the tutorial or return to the tutorial website screen (<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/plagiarismtutorial/>).
3. There are six parts/topics in the tutorial: Introduction, Managing a Project, Taking Notes, Knowing Which Sources to Acknowledge, Documenting Sources, and Avoiding Plagiarism. Complete the following for each section:
  - a. Introduction: Read.
  - b. Managing a Project: Read “Tutorial”.
  - c. Taking Notes: Read “Tutorial”; Work and submit (to [deroua@millsaps.edu](mailto:deroua@millsaps.edu)) “Exercise: Recognizing Summaries”, “Exercise: Recognizing Paraphrases”, and “Exercise: Recognizing Integrated Quotations”.
  - d. Knowing Which Sources to Acknowledge: Read “Tutorial”; Work and submit (to [deroua@millsaps.edu](mailto:deroua@millsaps.edu)) “Exercise: Acknowledging Sources”.
  - e. Documenting Sources: Read “Tutorial”.
  - f. Avoiding Plagiarism: Read “Tutorial”; Work and submit (to [deroua@millsaps.edu](mailto:deroua@millsaps.edu)) “Exercise: Recognizing Plagiarism”.

# Writing Majors: Voices from the Campus

## Faculty

### "REAL WORLD", Dr. Priscilla Fermon, Modern Languages

Too often I hear that a student who is enrolled in college and who is pursuing an academic degree is not living in the "real world." I strongly disagree with that characterization. Although you receive no salary, your assignments are real, your deadlines are real, your grades are real. Throughout your time here, the work you produce is real, the knowledge you gain is real, the progress you make is real.

To be a successful student, you should regard your experiences as "real world" and act accordingly. By that I mean make decisions using the criteria you would follow if you were earning a salary, a salary you need to pay for the most basic of necessities (lodging, food, utilities, clothing, transportation). Would you arrive late, fail to hand in work on time or miss work if you risked losing the salary you need to pay for the most basic of necessities (lodging, food, utilities, clothing, transportation)? Would you ignore instructions, come to work unprepared, fall asleep at your desk if you risked losing the salary you need to pay for the most basic of necessities (lodging, food, utilities, clothing, transportation)?

I believe that the answer to those questions would be in the negative. Not only would you not risk losing your salary-paying job, you would come early, stay late, never miss a day, do superior work in order to get an increase in salary and then a promotion.

If you still think that "real world" is a description which applies not to students but to wage earners only, then re-adjust your mind-set in the following way. Treat your course work as a job and each instructor as your boss and the syllabus as a contract and your final grades as your salary. Moreover, remember that jobs and salaries change, but your final grades do not. They remain perpetually a part of your permanent record, a record which precedes you and follows you, a record which will be examined carefully by your future employers.

Take your work as a student seriously even though you don't receive a salary for it. Take your work as a student seriously because the life of a student can be as "real world" as it gets. Take your work as a student seriously because your future depends upon it.

## **“On Preparation and Participation”, Elise Smith, Fine Arts**

Core 1 is designed as a seminar - a forum for sharing ideas, exploring new subjects, and helping each other to understand multiple viewpoints. A seminar format encourages active learning, so that each member of the class assumes an ever greater responsibility for his or her own education. Your teachers at Millsaps will expect you to move beyond being merely a passive recipient of information; instead we want you to engage the material actively: questioning, debating, empathizing, and counter-proposing. You'll be given ample opportunity in classroom discussion, written exercises, oral reports, and so forth, to examine the imagery and texts for yourself and to comment upon their meaning, value, and/or significance. While there'll certainly be room for spontaneous reactions in informal discussions and writings, I want to see the intellectual journey you'll take in formulating your own well-reasoned viewpoints based on close looking and reading.

It is the responsibility of each member of the seminar to prepare ahead of time by reading the appropriate material and thinking and writing about it so as to be able to participate fully in each day's discussion. It is also your responsibility to respect the views of others, even when you offer sharply contradictory opinions. Lively debate and cogent argument are stimulating, unlike verbal sniping and put-downs, which are stifling and thus interfere with learning. The purpose of a discussion isn't to score points, to say what we know (or think we know) and then keep quiet, or to pass the time with witty remarks. Instead, the purpose of a discussion is to explore uncertain areas in the hope of finding new understanding. One product of fruitful discussion is new questions. A good discussion is one of the most enlightening, energizing, and enjoyable experiences of learning. We can have good discussions if we work at them. They do not happen by chance.

Here are two important standards of good discussion:

1) We're all willing and prepared to discuss. "Willing" implies that we acknowledge we can learn from others, that we actively listen to others and get caught up with them in thinking about our collective topic or problem, and that we pursue collective as well as individual satisfaction. "Prepared" implies that we come to class having read, thought, and written about the matters at hand and that we have something--questions, insights, or observations about the material--to contribute.

2) We're aware of how each of us is helping or hindering the discussion. There are numerous roles which individuals can play in discussion, some beneficial and some detrimental. Among the beneficial roles are: initiating the discussion, asking for and giving information and reactions, sponsoring and encouraging others to speak, comparing or synthesizing the comments of others, and relieving group tension if the discussion becomes frustrating. Among the detrimental roles are: sidetracking the group to strictly personal concerns, interrupting others, monopolizing the discussion, putting others down, failing to listen, and failing to speak.