

VDS Writing Tutor Policies & Procedures, 2016-17

Writing Tutor: Alex Ayris

Office: G-22C (next to IT)

Hours: T/W 1:00-5:00, R 1:00-3:00*

Contact: alexander.a.ayris@vanderbilt.edu

* During busy weeks, office hours may be expanded.

1) What does the writing tutor do?

My job is to assist you in the writing process by helping you craft your own arguments while preserving academic integrity and intellectual curiosity. I don't tell you *what* to write, but I try to guide you in *how* to write. I help with any stage of the writing process whether preliminary planning, first drafts, or final revisions, so feel free to bring everything from notes scribbled on scrap paper to polished drafts!

Because my job is to help you develop your own thoughts as you write, it is important to note that there are some things I do not do:

- read papers ahead of time
- proofread, copyedit, or spellcheck
- tell you if you're "right" or "wrong"
- help with your course materials
- guarantee you a better grade
- make "house calls"
- consult via phone or Skype

Two caveats:

- 1) I may make exceptions for reading papers ahead of time for those in need of additional assistance with pressing matters (e.g., in danger of failing, citations for academic dishonesty, etc.).
- 2) In the event that you are unable to come to campus (due to inclement weather, car trouble, etc.) but are in dire need of help, I can consult via email. Please give as much notice as possible in such cases so that I can set aside time to do that.

2) How do I schedule an appointment?

I have a sign-up sheet on the door with blocks of time during my office hours. Sign up for any available space using a pen. (Please note that sessions are 55 minutes.)

If you are absolutely, positively unable to come to any of my office hours, I can arrange to meet with you at a different time. However, please only ask if it is truly impossible, not just inconvenient.

In the event that you need to cancel or swap, send me an email and I will take care of it. If you are trading appointments, make sure to include all involved persons on the email.

If no one signed up for a session, the hour is free and open to walk-ins on a first-come, first-serve basis. And there is no cost to visit the writing tutor!

Three important notes:

- 1) If you are more than ten (10) minutes late, your appointment will become open and available to the first walk-in.
- 2) If you are late for or miss more than three (3) appointments, you will lose the ability to schedule appointments (though you are still welcome as a walk-in).
- 3) For security and FERPA reasons, all emails MUST be through a valid vanderbilt.edu address.

3) What can I expect during a session?

Because my job is to help you through the writing process, I will likely ask you a lot of “big picture” and clarifying questions so that we can work together to explain and elaborate what you’re trying to say in your paper. In other words, expect a dialogue, not a discourse.

We may undertake any number of writing or revision strategies (e.g., outlining, reverse outlining, free-writing, etc.) to help you draw out what you want to say in the most effective manner possible.

I strongly suggest bringing what you have written so far as well as materials to write (or type) with. In the case of completed drafts, it would also be beneficial to bring two copies so that I can read along with you. Bringing what you have will certainly make the session more productive!

4) Final Word

At the end of the day, my job is to help and I wish to do that well. When in doubt, always ask, and please feel free to email me any time.

5) Some Resources

Though there is an endless supply of resources on writing, here are a few to get you started:

- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2014.
- Vanderbilt Writing Studio: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/> (they also have lots of resources on their website)
- VU Library Reference Tools: <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/ref/>
- VU Library Research Help: Getting Help With Your Research: <http://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/heard/researchhelp.shtml>

- Divinity Library Databases: <http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/databases.html>
- Duke Divinity Writing Resources: <https://divinity.duke.edu/academics/center-theological-writing/writing-resources>
- *The Chicago Manual of Style* (online access through Heard Library): <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/home.html>
- Turabian Quick Guide: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html
- Chicago Online Citation Guide: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th edition. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory Colomb, Joseph M. Williams and the University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.