

## Introduction

This handbook is intended to assist everyone engaged in the integration and production of academic writing: students, writing center tutors, and faculty. I hope it will be a useful guide in two ways. First, this text aims to coordinate writing assignments across the curriculum so that faculty not used to teaching composition can help students develop confidence in their ability to address a broad range of issues through exposition and argument. Second, it offers students and tutors a brief précis of the principles of composition in *The Harbrace Handbook* and *The Office of Assertion*, by Scott Crider, the two standard references for the Department of Literature.

In addition, the handbook establishes for the University “a clear understanding of the educational purpose and goals of its English writing requirements,” standard 11 of the General Education and Curriculum Standards for accreditation. By providing a narrative of the process of writing, the handbook offers support for achieving competency in writing set out in the Writing across the Curriculum Plan, approved in May 2004:

- In the first year: composition of thesis statements supported with textual references and orderly arrangement of proofs leading to more complex analysis and argumentation in the second semester

- In the second year: incorporation of secondary material and the development of critical and original arguments that engage scholarly opinion

- In the third and fourth years: continued development of critical reading and writing skills that lead to the successful completion of the Senior Thesis

I would like to thank especially Professor Travis Curtright, Professor Aaron Urbanczyk, Professor Joseph Spinelli of Bowling Green State University for the Checklist of Grammar Rules, the tutors and everyone else who has contributed to the work of the Writing Center. Because the ability to think critically and write clearly does not happen in a vacuum, but is dependent on a community, all the members of this university are important to this task.

Lylas Dayton Rommel, Ph. D.  
Associate Professor of Literature  
Director, The Writing Center

31 July 2006  
The Feast of St. Ignatius Loyola

# Ave Maria University Program of Writing

## Philosophy and Statement of Purpose

The Department of Literature upholds the belief that wisdom is found in the contemplation of the perennial themes of human experience: the purpose of life, the relationship between God and the human person and between man and woman, the foundations of knowledge, and the basis of human community. As a liberal arts university that focuses on close reading of the great texts of the Western tradition, Ave Maria demands, in response to such reading, clearly articulated essays that engage the issues and demonstrate strength in argument. Graduates of Ave Maria University, therefore, are expected to integrate the principles of writing through the composition of many essays, each of which leads students to a clearer understanding of the process of writing itself. The foundation for this integration of principles of writing is the Literary Tradition sequence, taught through the Department of Literature, in which students are expected to familiarize themselves with *The Harbrace College Handbook* and *The Office of Assertion*, by Scott Crider. These two books explain most of the elements of writing and academic composition.

The purpose of the Writing Center at Ave Maria University is to be an adjunct to students' own integration of the principles of writing. The Center's tutors will help students with composing, revising, and editing sentences, paragraphs, and complete essays. Because, however, tutors are themselves students, the focus of the Center is limited to the principles of writing found in *The Harbrace College Handbook* and *The Office of Assertion*. The main goal for the Center is to engage the entire University community in the habit of thinking clearly and writing well, the foundation of a liberal education.

This handbook contains a brief description of the essential elements of writing that apply across the curriculum, divided into two parts: A: General Principles of Composition and B: The Office of Assertion, followed by four appendices and a bibliography. The purpose of the handbook is to provide both faculty and students with a consistent standard of good writing and with a reference that serves to reinforce the difficult work of internalization of the principles of composition.

The Writing Center tutors provide individual coaching to students during 30-minute sessions. Tutors may refer to Appendix D for an overview of these sessions. Faculty may refer students to the Center through a referral sheet found in Appendix B or students may drop in during posted hours. In either case, students should choose one or two composition problems for the tutoring session; in no case should a student expect the tutor to proofread or otherwise actively change the student's work. Students may return for additional work any time the Center is open and a tutor is available.