

General Overview of ENG, PHL, & THE course expectations: A Writing focused Handbook

English

Common Assignments to Expect:

- Literary Analysis Essays
- Critical Reflection Essays
- Argumentative Essays
- Research Projects
- Narrative or Creative writing pieces

Tips for Success

- Focus on clear & effective Organization of your paper
 - Ensure your sentences/paragraphs flow together by adding transitional phrases & building off your previous ideas
 - The organization of your ideas/points should make sense and be ordered to ensure clarity
- Audience & reader awareness
 - Consider who is your audience? Your professor, fellow classmates, or professionals in the field?
 - This will help you determine how much detail you need to add, what terms you may need to define if your audience is unfamiliar, and if any summaries are necessary if your audience isn't familiar with the material used.
 - Peer-review can help get feedback from an "audience" by allowing a second pair of eyes on your paper
- Engage with texts
 - Engage w/primary and secondary sources throughout your paper
 - Don't let quotes take over, but definitely lean on them to *support* not *make* your arguments/points
 - Annotate/note-take as you read, re-read texts if time allows, discuss text with peers if possible
- Clarity
 - Easy to read? Understandable, no confusion about intent? Ask yourself these questions while writing and revising your paper.
- Significance: Clear why the reader should care about this, show that you also care about it, and why.
- Originality/personal voice:
 - Is your voice present, ideas original, and personal conclusions drawn?
 - Requires deeper understanding of the text/material
- Write for audience, not yourself
 - Tailor your piece to your audience (this priority will help format your writing)

- Add clarity for maximum understanding, depending on type of audience
- Lack of revision:
 - Revise your pieces!
 - Read out loud
 - Have another pair of eyes (writing assistant, professor office hours, or even roommate/friend)
- Maintain confidence, you can do it! No matter what level you feel you are at as a writer, there's always plenty of resources and people willing to help you.

How to get started:

- Ensure understanding of assignment & texts given
 - Go over & annotate the rubric/instructions provided to you
 - If still uncertain, feel free to reach out to your professor! They're there to help you any way possible, including clarifying instructions!
 - Re-read texts more than once & annotate along with them
 - Allows for deeper/critical analysis of the texts, new ideas will form
 - Annotating while you read will help you refer back to text when citing and looking for patterns to reflect on
- Start rough Organizing
 - Visual Learners: *Mind mapping!* Draw out your ideas/concepts to cover in your writing & how they connect to each other.
 - Verbal Learners: Talk out what you want to write about to a friend or writing assistant as they take note of what you discuss. Have them re-run what you discussed and what seemed important to you. This will help with brainstorming and get a general idea of what you'll discuss and which topics (and how) flow together naturally.
 - Visual/Literal learners: Bullet point your biggest ideas (even "Intro", "body paragraph 1", "conclusion" for example) & add more and more details underneath each (e.g. What to cover under that section, what quote to use for that point, etc.). This will help list out what you need to write about, brainstorm/shift organization of your paper easily, and serves as a great jumping off point for your essay without "just starting" with full sentences.
- Once a general rough map of your paper is in place, start writing topic sentences for each section's key point/argument to serve as a jumping off point to move from organization to full-worded sentences
- Write a *very* rough draft, potentially several, until your paper shapes up to how you'd like it
- Get feedback from a peer (from a writing assistant, study group, roommate/friend, even professors may be open to peer review during their office hours)
- Review & revise yourself
 - With all the feedback, go over your paper generally, then sentence by sentence
 - Ask the intent of what you wrote and if it matches how an external audience member would interpret it. *Why did I write this, does that message come across?*
 - Ask yourself these leading questions
 - Read out-loud: While not always fun, it's the most effective method to point out issues in grammar, flow, etc.

- Remember: Writing is a continuous journey, you're still growing and will learn from each assignment. So, maintain confidence in your ability to write and improve, you got this!

Common Citation styles

- MLA
 - Online Resources: University of Portland Subject Guide (click [HERE](#)) & Purdue OWL (click [HERE](#))
 - Citations section: Author's last name, first name, "Title," Title of Site, sponsor/publisher, Day Month Year, URL.
 - In text citation: (Last Name Page#), e.g.: (Weiger 142)
- Chicago
 - Online Resource: Purdue OWL (click [HERE](#))
 - Citations section: Author(s) Last Name, First Name. Title of Book [Edition]. City of Publication: Publisher, Year Published, page Number (if applicable)
 - In-text citation: Use footnotes at the bottom of the page referencing a source, with a superscript number at the end of the reference quotation marks in your text. Examples from Purdue Owl below:
 - "an indeterminate and potentially unlimited number of interconnected nodes [that] communicate with no central point of control."²
 - Footnote example below:

2. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "Postmodernization, or the Informatization of Production," in *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 299.

Resources when writing for this class:

- Writing center (click [HERE](#))
 - Book appointments [HERE](#) (login with your school login)
- Professor Office hours
- UP's Library English Subject Guide (click [HERE](#))
 - Librarians are great for research help (you can book appointments with them)
 - 24/7 library chat (click [HERE](#))
- Your peers (setup "study group" not just to study, but get feedback & discuss material)

Philosophy

- **Common Assignments to Expect:**
 - Interpretive Philosophy Paper:
 - You will be either asked to use your own interpretation of a provided philosophical text or to defend an argument/interpretation of a philosopher.
 - Needs many in-text citations, as you'll need to supply your (or the philosopher's) arguments as evidence/reference to the text in question.
 - Argumentative Philosophy Paper:
 - Creating a specific stance/perspective or thesis on a subject/material.

- Requires an argument for the chosen stance/thesis & a counter-argument (where you acknowledge the opposing viewpoint(s), followed by a transition back to why you argue your chosen viewpoint instead).
 - Many philosophy papers may combine strategies of writing from both styles (argumentative & interpretive)

Tips for Success:

- Create a layout of your paper, including introducing the key points that will be discussed in each body paragraph, in your introduction
- Stay on Topic
 - **Signpost** throughout your paper to keep things on track! This let's the reader know where you are in your paper, based on the roadmap created in your introduction
 - Keep your discussion on the main focus of your paper, staying discussion to other anecdotes (even if "related" to your discussion) will distract the reader from your argument, making it less effective
- Use specific language
 - **Define terms:** There's a lot of philosophy-specific lingo that outside audiences may not be able to understand and interpret. To be inclusive & make your arguments effective, define the jargon you use.
 - Keep track of unique terms for your own understanding and benefit too
- **Use First-Person perspective**
 - Emphasizes that it is *you* making the argument or sharing *your* opinion, so express that in your use of perspectives!
- Engage with text
 - Annotate/Note-take and clarify any confusions with given resources, re-read if time allows
 - Understand the context of the text: Consider who wrote the piece, when, the cultural context, etc.
- Pay attention to you reactions/interpretations of readings
 - Where do you agree, disagree, or feel tension from the points expressed by the material
- **How to get started:**
 - Step 1: Make a **Roadmap**
 - Go over the material once more, any notes, identifying the arguments made and citing where. Note the strong and weak points, what confuses you (and use your resources to clarify), areas that match what is asked of you for the given assignment.
 - Can be visual (mind mapping) or written (bulleted list, note page, etc.)
 - Step 2: Find Where You Stand
 - Determine where in all your evidence, you feel you agree with the main points/conclusions made by the author(s) of the material. Identify why you may agree or feel the same, cite the areas where this happens/supports the idea(s)
 - Step 3: Start writing in fully-fleshed sentences, drafting:

- Take time to write a *very* rough draft (as many as you need) until your paper starts to come together. Your ideas/thesis may change or get figured out as you go through this process.

- **Common Citation Styles:**

- **Chicago style citation:** Philosophy as a subject uses footnotes
 - Philosophers use footnotes to add additional questions/comments outside the main paper, including comments on their references
 - Otherwise, you may get to choose citation style, or may be dependent on the professor
 - If you're confused on citations, which are being asked to use, always feel comfortable to clarify with your professor after-class or during office hours!

- Chicago

- Online Resources: University of Portland Subject Guide (click [HERE](#)) & Purdue OWL (click [HERE](#))
 - Citations section: Author(s) Last Name, First Name. Title of Book [Edition]. City of Publication: Publisher, Year Published, page Number (if applicable)
 - In-text citation: Use footnotes at the bottom of the page referencing a source, with a superscript number at the end of the reference quotation marks in your text. Examples from Purdue Owl below:
 - “an indeterminate and potentially unlimited number of interconnected nodes [that] communicate with no central point of control.”²
 - Footnote example below:

2. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “Postmodernization, or the Informatization of Production,” in *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 299.

Resources when writing for this class:

- Writing center (click [HERE](#))
 - Book appointments [HERE](#) (login with your school login)
- Professor Office hours
- UP's Library Philosophy Subject Guide (click [HERE](#))
 - Librarians are great for research help (you can book appointments with them)
 - 24/7 library chat (click [HERE](#))
- Your peers (setup “study group” not just to study, but get feedback & discuss material)

Theology

Common Assignments to Expect:

- Research Papers:
 - Develops skill of utilizing various sources to conduct research & grow in understanding of subject matter or passages examined
 - Requires evidence: search for primary and secondary sources

- Responsal or Reflection-based Essays
 - Asks you to reflect on class-given texts
 - Your interpretation is of value here. Your goal, therefore, is to clearly explain and support your *unique* or *original* interpretation
- Presentations:
 - Focus on the big picture here, while occasionally zooming in on fine details
 - Provide nuanced viewpoints and a diverse variety of perspectives
 - Summarizing (provide context for your presentation, make sure you understand the sources or class-give text(s))
- Reading Assignments/Worksheets
 - Focus on deep/critical analysis of & interactions with class-assigned texts
 - Consider reading more than once, annotating, etc. to engage deeper with the content
 - Often contains specific open-ended questions (need to understand the material well, utilize your professor's office hours!)
 - Pinpointing quote is a necessary habit to practice & build
- Creative Writing Assignments:
 - Give more freedom here, focus is more on general objectives and given rubric criteria
 - Provide reflections with real life examples/applications of material with potentially differing perspectives

Tips for Success:

- Get into the headspace of this particular subject when writing
 - Considering your audience, the sensitivity of the topics being discussed, varying viewpoints
- Prioritize deep engagement with the material provided during class
 - To be successful in any writing assignment, one must understand the material at a level of depth that discussion via writing is possible. Therefore, if your understanding of the text is weak/general, your writing won't meet the level demanded.
 - Engage with your texts: Annotate/note-take while reading, read out-loud, try to find real-life applications of the text while reading, consider re-reading if there's time
- Don't understand the material/concept(s)? Don't be shy to reach out to your professor. Their job is to help you, take advantage of their professional-level of knowledge and understanding of the material.
- Always seek out a variety of interpretations, and keep your mind open to best engage with each perspective.
 - In doing so, it's important in this subject to ask a wide variety of questions, to respond to the texts during class, and keep track of these sources in notes to later refer back to when needed (a particularly helpful habit for this course and others in general)
 - Being able to see a variety of viewpoints (with differing cultural or historical contexts in the texts or responses to the texts) is a particular priority for this course, keep this in mind.

How to get started:

- Have a clear understanding of Material(s)/Text(s)
 - If you lack depth of understanding of the given text(s), it will show in your writing. Make sure you clarify any deficits in knowledge before getting started.
- Identify important points from your text(s) & notes for the expectations of the given assignment
- Get started with organization:
 - Mind mapping: collect & organize your ideas/points together visually
 - Bullet-points: Start listing what you need to discuss, what points belong to each topic/argument, where in the text supports what you need to discuss
 - After both of these methods, it can be helpful to write a topic sentence for each section as a jumping-off point from a Road-map to a fully fleshed-out paper
- Take time to write a (or several) *very* rough drafts
- Review & Revise
 - Re-read your piece thoroughly, asking yourself questions like, “Would my audience take away the same messages I intended?”
 - Read aloud: This is the most effective method to point out issues in grammar, flow, wording, run on sentences, etc.
 - Receive peer-reviewed feedback if available to you

Common Citation styles

- Chicago Style 17th ed.
 - Online Resources: University of Portland Subject Guide (click [HERE](#)) & Purdue OWL (click [HERE](#))
 - Citations section: Author(s) Last Name, First Name. Title of Book [Edition]. City of Publication: Publisher, Year Published, page Number (if applicable)
 - Include a collection of your sources at the end of your paper, titled a *Bibliography*
 - In-text citation: Use footnotes at the bottom of the page referencing a source, with a superscript number at the end of the reference quotation marks in your text. Examples from Purdue Owl below:
 - “an indeterminate and potentially unlimited number of interconnected nodes [that] communicate with no central point of control.”²
 - Footnote example below:

2. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, “Postmodernization, or the Informatization of Production,” in *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 299.

Resources when writing for this class:

- Writing center (click [HERE](#))
 - Book appointments [HERE](#) (login with your school login)
- Professor Office hours
- Library Theology Subject Guide (click [HERE](#))
 - Librarians are great for research help (you can book appointments with them)
 - 24/7 library chat (click [HERE](#))
- Your peers (setup “study group” not just to study, but get feedback & discuss material)

Advocate for yourself! (Encouragement w/some resources)

The University of Portland provides so many resources to students, but not everyone takes advantage of these *free* and incredibly beneficial tools! Below are some general resources to check out as you continue your education at University of Portland, and feel free to dive deeper into these resources for more to find ones that match your particular needs, major, background, etc. And of course, keep asking questions and make your voice heard when you need help!

- Library Course/Subject Guides (click [HERE](#))
 - Provides specific resources for each subject, specific classes, you name it!
 - Professional research search engines exclusively paid for by our university for your convenient access!
 - Citation guides for the given course subject
 - Contact Librarians who can help you in the research process (gathering sources, learning how to use certain search engines effectively, etc.)
 - Access to books, articles, e-books, etc.
- Writing Center (@ UP's Learning Commons)
 - In addition to other subject-specific tutoring, the writing center is here to help students not only improve their writing, but *become better writers* with the help of passionate student-writers.
 - By booking an appointment on WC Online ([click here](#)) with your school long-in, you can meet with a writing assistant who can provide a multitude of services that can benefit you as a writer, and your assignment:
 - Provide peer-review feedback, and act as another perspective on the assignment overall
 - Help students get started (brainstorming, organization, drafting, etc.)
 - Discuss/walk-through general grammatical rules, citation rules, formatting rules & practice them together
 - “Talking out” the assignment, examining rubrics & text-materials together
 - Discuss various methods to attack writing assignments
- Professor Office Hours
 - Not enough students take advantage of their professors’ office hours! Professors are here to be a resource to your learning. If you feel a gap in your knowledge, or lack of clarity on material or an assignment, it’s important to reach out to your professor.
 - As mentioned, professors can help provide clarity on not only material, but their assignment if instructions/rubric is unclear
 - Some professors may even be comfortable providing peer-review feedback on your writing assignments, or even general advice if you’re having trouble getting started or finding an idea
 - Professors can help clarify what they expect in regards to formatting, including citation style: Some professors may have unique/individual preferences for formatting in their writing assignments (which a writing assistant may lack experience with), so it’s important you understand these, or reach out if not.
- [Purdue OWL](#)

- An online resource that provides resources on citations/formatting styles
 - Explanation of formatting style
 - Example papers (to visualize formatting style in application)
 - Explanation of citations for specific sources (e.g. how to cite a website vs. a textbook)
 - In-text citations & others depending on format
- Provides an accurate citation generator
 - **REMEMBER:** Always **double check** the citations with your own eyes before submitting them. There can be missing information/errors with the generated citation
- Peers/Classmates:
 - Though not “official” or “professional” resources, reaching out/networking with classmates is *very valuable* to academic success!
 - Reaching out to peers/creating a study group can...
 - Help you understand material at a deeper level through study sessions/discussions
 - Discuss & analyze texts or assignment requirements together
 - Peers/Classmates can also help provide very valuable peer-review to your writing, or even just a second lens to look at your paper for clarity & flow
 - Missed a class or a professor’s explanation of an assignment? Ask your peers/study group!

Keep networking & looking for more resources to help you along your academic journey. Don’t be shy to reach out, it’s an important habit to develop!

Special recognition Writing In the Disciplines guides created by students of ENG 317 from years ‘22- ‘24, which served as a key inspiration and baseline for this handbook concept.