Grad School Survival Guide: Critical Reading & Getting Organized

A UW SSW Writing Center Workshop
Autumn 2021
Land & Labor Acknowledgment

We are gathering in virtual space, and in the context of a university built on stolen lands of the Coast Salish peoples. We recognize the indigenous peoples who have been stewards of this land for millennia, and pledge to do our part to care for the land and waterways.

We recognize the unpaid and underpaid labor of enslaved Africans, the incarcerated, migrant farmers, and many others upon whose work our country was founded, and pledge to support the fight for reparations and fair labor practices around the world.

Morgan Wells
Workshop Guidelines

- Interact through the chat box or unmute yourself
- We will be recording the first part of this workshop for those who could not attend
- The presentation will be followed by a Q & A session
- Please share your full name, program (Day, EDP Weekend, EDP Evening, etc.), and year (1, 2, 3, etc.) in the chat box for us to complete or cross-reference with your registration information
  - You can also rename yourself to include your pronouns
- For closed captioning: Click “Live transcript” → “Show subtitle”
Workshop Overview

- Welcome to Graduate School
- Accessing resources
- Getting organized
- Working through readings
WELCOME!
You Made It!

- Congratulations and welcome to the SSW!
- Graduate school can be a big adjustment
How are you feeling about graduate-level writing?
Resources
SSW Writing Support

- Located in SSW Room 25
- Services offered by three peers, year-round:
  - One-to-one virtual tutoring
  - Drop-in advising (virtual/in-person)
  - Group workshops
  - Weekend Writing Circle
- Make an appointment and find helpful tips and resources:
  - [socialwork.uw.edu/students/services/writing-support](http://socialwork.uw.edu/students/services/writing-support)
- Email [sswwrite@uw.edu](mailto:sswwrite@uw.edu) with any questions!
The Writing Team

Kylie Brief  
(she/they)  
Booking Calendar:  
go.oncehub.com/KylieBrief  
Services:  
● Virtual 1:1 sessions  
● Virtual drop-in advising (schedule TBD)

Erin Bernardy  
(she/her)  
Booking Calendar:  
go.oncehub.com/ErinBernardy  
Services:  
● Virtual 1:1 sessions  
● In-person drop-in advising (Fridays and Saturdays)

Marissa Rodriguez  
(she/her)  
Booking Calendar:  
go.oncehub.com/MarissaRodriguez  
Services:  
● Virtual 1:1 sessions  
● In-person drop-in advising (Thursday evening)
Lynly Beard (she/her) can help with:

- Focusing a research topic
- Course-specific guides
- Identifying and evaluating sources
- Searching library databases effectively
- Help with citation management tools
- guides.lib.uw.edu/hsl/lynly
Technology Resources

- UW Libraries Proxy Bookmarklet: [lib.washington.edu/help/connect/tools](lib.washington.edu/help/connect/tools)
- Student Technology Loan Program: [stlp.uw.edu](stlp.uw.edu)
- LinkedIn Learning: [careers.uw.edu/linkedin-learning/](careers.uw.edu/linkedin-learning/)
- SSW Tech: [sswtech@uw.edu](sswtech@uw.edu)
Taking Care of Yourself

Prioritize your holistic wellbeing in grad school

- Counseling Center: washington.edu/counseling
- Let’s Talk with Lev Cunningham (they/he):
  - Wednesdays 5-7:30 pm | Fridays 2-4:30 pm
- Hall Health Center: uwmedicine.org/locations/hall-health-center
  - Group therapy: wellbeing.uw.edu/mental-health/group-counseling/
- Intramural Activities: washington.edu/ima
- UW Food Pantry: washington.edu/anyhungryhusky/the-uw-food-pantry/
- UW Disability Resources: depts.washington.edu/uwdrs
Getting Organized
Grad School Organization

- Get physical, virtual, and mental space organized

  Physical Space
  - Where will you study?
    - Desk? Bed? Library?
    - Make do with what you have!
  - Where will you have virtual class?
  - Transition time?
Grad School Organization

Virtual Space

- Technology Apps
  - Calendar
    - Google Calendar
  - Note-Taking
    - Evernote, Microsoft OneNote
Google Calendar Example

Color coding

On phone or computer

Sends notification (optional)
OneNote Example

- **Notebook** - (Course)
- **Section** - (Readings, Class Notes)
- **Pages** - (Articles)
Make a Schedule

● Create a schedule for the quarter
  ○ Review and gather all syllabi
  ○ Plug all due dates into your physical or digital calendar
  ○ To-do lists (daily, weekly, quarterly)
  ○ To-do lists can help with prioritizing
  ○ Create a system that works for you

● Time Management
  ○ When are you best able to focus?
  ○ How can you use commute time efficiently?
  ○ When can you multitask? (dishes and podcast)
Grad School Organization

Virtual Space

- Technology Apps
  - Document/Citation Management
    - Google Drive
    - Zotero, Mendeley, Endnote
  - Email Organization
    - Make folders in your email & filter messages to go directly into those folders
  - Task Management
    - Break up assignments into bite-sized pieces
    - Asana, Trello, Notion
    - To-do lists
Asana Example

- Customizable view: board, calendar, or list
- Can measure stages of task completion
- Great for collaboration!
Grad School Organization

Mental Organization

- We learn best when we are calm and regulated
  - What sustains you? What brings you joy?
- Schedule in activities that keep your mind/body well
- Social support is crucial!
  - How do you plan to stay engaged with your community this year?
Grad School Organization

Mental Organization

- Attention Management/Wellness Apps
  - Forest
  - Flora
  - Calm
  - Headspace
Forest App Example

Forest is an app that helps you stay focused on the important things in life.

Whenever you want to stay focused, plant a tree.

Your tree will grow while you focus on your work.

Leaving the app halfway will cause your tree to die.

- App that can be downloaded and used on any device
- Includes timer system to keep you focused
These are strange times!

- You may want to try new things/techniques for organizing.
- The SSW Writing Center is here to help at any stage of the writing process—including the organizational stage!
What about the writing process brings you joy?
Working Through Readings
Expectations

- Several readings for each class
- Balancing readings and assignments
- We’re not being “tested” on this knowledge – new experience for some
- Ask instructors about priorities for readings
Strategies for Readings

- Read strategically
  - Read for depth, not breadth, on important or interesting articles
  - Systematic skimming on other articles
- Use your peers! Make a reading group 😊
- Take breaks & be gentle on yourself
- Use technology to make readings more accessible
  - Text-to-speech readers (TTS) - Speechify, Voice Dream Reader
  - Enable accessibility features on computer, web browser, or other devices
  - Encourage instructors to assign accessible readings in a variety of formats!
What is Critical Reading?

- Text is not always fact
- Contextualize the literature—who is the author, what year was it published, who is funding the research?
- Read for themes
  - Enduring tensions
- Question the ideas
  - Challenge hegemony & dominant discourse
- Take notes to guide your reading
  - Guiding questions from professors
  - Connect readings to assignments (SOC W 500)
Final Thoughts

- Every instructor is different and has different expectations.
- Hybrid learning is a trip! We are still in the midst of a pandemic, immigrant and refugee crisis, and global warming—all while balancing multiple roles and obligations.
- Be gentle with yourself 💜
After attending this workshop, how are you feeling about graduate-level writing?
Q & A

Anonymous general feedback link