
A Princeton Writing Seminar is a microcosm of the University: a community of writers and readers working together to strengthen and refine ideas.

Princeton faculty devote much of their time to research and writing—work that takes place not in isolation but in dialogue with others in their field of study. On the way to publication, scholars and scientists typically revise their writing multiple times in response to feedback from colleagues. This kind of collegial exchange is at the heart of academic life.

The Writing Seminars give Princeton freshmen an early opportunity to belong to a lively academic community in which members investigate a shared topic and discuss their writing together, with the aim of clarifying and deepening their thinking. Focused instruction on the writing process and the key elements of academic writing enriches and guides the Writing Seminar experience.



“In my writing seminar, I learned to pose questions and engage in scholarly debates. This intellectual experience has helped me understand the significance of my other work at Princeton.”

—SHU HAUR TANG '12



Writing Seminar Topics

Students choose from among dozens of topics representing a wide range of interests—from scientific breakthroughs and historical events to influential artistic traditions and urgent social issues. Each topic is grounded in ongoing academic debates, giving students compelling material to write about.

Interdisciplinary Faculty

Writing Seminar faculty come from diverse fields of study—anthropology, biology, engineering, history, literary studies, politics, psychology, religion, and others—and have special training in the teaching of writing.

Small Class Size

With a maximum class size of 12, students work in a highly collaborative environment that encourages intense, dynamic discussions of course readings and each other's writing. Students also meet regularly with their professor for detailed conversations about drafts.

Experience in Effective Revision

As every experienced writer knows, good writing is the result of strategic revising. In the Writing Seminars, students have the chance to revise in response to extensive feedback, often from a variety of readers, and develop revision strategies that enrich their thinking.

Writing Workshops

In workshops, students discuss their classmates' drafts in depth. Everyone benefits: writers learn first-hand how real readers respond to their work, and readers become adept at constructive critique, the central building block of intellectual inquiry.

Opportunities for Research

As part of each Writing Seminar, students conduct research in the University Library, where they learn to use advanced research tools and manage complex searches.

Some Recent Writing Seminars . . .

- American Revolutions
- Cityscapes
- Crisis of Democracy
- Darwin in His Time and Ours
- The Ethics of Human Experimentation
- Fans and Consumer Culture
- The 14th Amendment
- History of the Body
- Main Street, USA
- Modern Memory
- Saints and Martyrs
- Society and the Witch
- The Sound of Subversion
- Technology and Culture
- Witnessing War



“My Writing Seminar taught me that the ability to write is not an innate gift, but a learned skill that develops through experimentation, practice, collaboration, and faith in the process.”

—CAROLINE PINKE '12

“Above all, my Writing Seminar taught me how to ask a worthwhile question and develop an original, well-researched argument in response.”

—HENRY BARMEIER '10
Rhodes Scholar



“I came to Princeton as an engineering major determined never to dedicate time to writing. I left Princeton four years later as a proud Writing Program alumna, eager to apply my skills in both quantitative reasoning and effective communication in the field of international development.”

—JANE YANG '11 *Spirit of Princeton Award*

PRINCETON WRITING PROGRAM

www.princeton.edu/writing

Established in 1991, the Princeton Writing Program is dedicated to encouraging excellence in writing and the teaching of writing throughout the University. The Writing Program fulfills its mission through these core initiatives:

- *The Writing Seminars*— small, intensive courses in intellectual inquiry and critical writing designed especially for Princeton freshmen.
 - *The Writing Center*— one-on-one conferences for all Princeton students on papers and research projects in any discipline.
 - *Writing in Science and Engineering (WSE)*— writing workshops for undergraduates and half-term courses for graduate students.
 - *Writing Across the University*— consultations with faculty and graduate student instructors, resources for writers and teachers of writing, and programs in support of academic writing including senior thesis boot camps.
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THE WRITING SEMINARS

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