

NAVIGATING THE MASTER'S DEGREE

A WRITING WORKSHOP

Navigating the Master's Degree Workshop Series

This interactive online writing workshop is designed to help students develop an individualized plan for understanding graduate school more generally and graduate writing more specifically. This workshop is designed for students in both the early and latter years of their master's degree.

This 3-hour workshop will concentrate on understanding the transition to graduate school, navigating master's degree coursework and graduation options (thesis, exams, portfolios, etc.), locating and using professional and personal support resources, and writing for both the degree and future job. Participants will create academic timelines for their master's work (coursework, conference presentations, internships, etc.) at MSU and discuss technologies and habits that can help them stay on task. Participants will also discuss how to manage the stress that often pervades the life of master's students and how to select and work with a committee.

The workshop will end with participants exploring and sharing their current writing practices, writing and revision strategies, and strategies for overcoming writer's block and procrastination. Facilitators will help guide discussions on adopting and maintaining productive practices to help maintain focus on academic and professional goals in times when we are collectively working through the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing racial and systematic injustice and police violence against the Black community.

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It's important to remember that graduate school is an intricate web of resources and socialization. What's more, it's important to keep in mind that graduate coursework is only one part of graduate school, and that networking (e.g., at conferences, in internships/externships, and so on), socializing, and balancing other life commitments are part of your responsibilities as well. Simply put, graduate school is a lot like a full-time job.

Your Master's Degree Timeline

As Master's degree students, there is a lot we have to keep track of every day. It is quite easy to forget about programmatic requirements, to spend more years than necessary taking courses because of all the interesting classes that are offered, and to be surprised by deadlines. One way to help alleviate some of these surprises is to have our degrees mapped out clearly. While we each might have our own goals, there are some things that we just have to do, those marks of progression through the degree that our individual programs, departments, colleges, and the university require. Below is an example of one way to organize requirements on a timeline in a table form.

Plan of Study

Jane Doe PhD in Ambiguous Studies	Fall 2015-Summer 2017		
Year 1	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Summer 2016
Coursework	AS 881 AS 885 AS 805	AS 848 AS 870	AS 891
Total Credits	9	15	18
Funding	WC, BCC	WC, AS 201	WC, GWG
Attended	MI-WPA	ECWCA	
Presentations		IWCA/CCCC	
Publications			"Stuff" in AS Quarterly
Goals		Annual Review	Revise MA thesis for publication
Year 2	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Summer 2017
Coursework	AS 860 LIN 401	AS 882 LIN 471	
Total Credits	24	30	33
Exams		Core	Thesis submitted
Funding	WC, GWG	WC, GWG	WC, GWG

	Research			
Attended				
Presentations	IWCA			WPA
Publications	Metamorphosis			
Goals	Prepare for Core	Annual Review		

Now, we want you to create your own timeline. You can choose the organizational method we've used as an example, or develop one of your own. Whatever works best for you. In order to complete your timeline, you will probably need to find some specific information. Take this time right now to find your graduate program's handbook online. Based on the information in your handbook, look for when you will need to complete the following:

- Forming a committee
- Submitting any annual reports
- Applying for additional funding, like travel funding, research grants, or completion fellowships and scholarships
- Finishing coursework
- Preparing for exams
- Scheduling exam time(s)
- Scheduling internship(s) or externship(s)
- Collecting research
- Storing and cataloging data
- Drafting each thesis chapter
- Meeting with the committee on each thesis chapter
- Defending the thesis

When faced with multiple tasks that are a part of academic work, it's important to prioritize and recognize that we often plan to accomplish more than we are actually able to do. In addition, large goals may require that you set frequent smaller deadlines on your path to the long-term completion deadline. Consider how you might do this as you expand and add detail to your timeline.

Additional information and goals to be added to timeline:

Managing Non-Academic/Academic Realities

Graduate school is a challenge for everyone. However, if you are a member of a non-dominant social group, things can be even more challenging. Facing systemic racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, exclusionary practices and a host of other obstacles inherent to participation in white, settler-colonialist institutions can affect your studies as well as your wellbeing.

At MSU, our institutional data reveals for example....

We have begun to compile a list of preliminary resources for social and emotional support (to supplement our list of institutional resources) if you experience any of the above. Most importantly, these resources are meant to point you to safe spaces, spaces of strength and care for their members—places to encounter joy and build resistance. Please refer to page (blank) in the appendix.

Activity We will take a few minutes to explore some of our listed resources and crowd-source any additional resources you might know about that we might not have included.

Your Strengths and Limitations

One of the best ways to be successful as you complete these requirements is to know yourself as a student and as a writer by defining for yourself your own strengths and limitations. Consider what you are good at and where you struggle both as a student and in other aspects of your life.

In the following table, note some of your strengths and limitations. Feel free to talk with your group during this activity.

Strengths	Limitations

As we discuss our strengths and limitations, as a full group, think about ways that you can use your strengths to compensate for and work through your limitations. This is why self- awareness is so important.

Strategies for Facing and Working Through Limitations and Obstacles

Sometimes, though, we cannot just rely on what we are good at to make up for where we struggle. We need to learn new strategies to work through obstacles. Some common obstacles for graduate students are establishing systems of organization, managing and using technologies, facing limited resources of time and money, fighting procrastination, dealing with stress, and developing a supportive community.

We are going to discuss these obstacles as a group, and share strategies for working through them. We encourage you to note any useful ideas as they are presented by your fellow workshop attendees.

Establishing Systems of Organization

Based on our conversations, take note of useful strategies and tools for organizing your coursework, your research, your teaching, and your other responsibilities.

Fighting Procrastination

Be aware of your particular method(s) of procrastination. Are there any patterns you can recognize? Below, list your procrastination "tools": the things you do or use that keep you from being as productive as you could. We rarely have the chance for such self-reflection, so we are going to take this time now.

Managing and Using Technologies

The following are several computer-based organizational tools. In your groups, choose one to explore. Play with the technology a bit. When we come back together as a full group, we will ask you to share your opinions about the tools.

ANALOG "TECH"

Passion Planner	http://www.passionplanner.com/	A premium planner that provides daily, weekly and yearly modules for planning and reflection
Plum Paper Planners	https://www.plumpaper.com/	One of several sites that allows you to customize, adapt and create a planner that works best for you.

STUDY/RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Zotero	https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/3504/	A free bibliographic tool. It helps you keep track of what you've read and what you want to read. You can tag books and articles, attach notes and other documents, and link to websites.
Endnote	http://www.endnote.com/	Bibliographic software you can purchase, though free trials are available. You can use EndNote to search online bibliographic databases, organize references, images and PDFs in any language, and create bibliographies and figure lists.
OneNote	www.onenote.com	A Microsoft Office software component that is included with some of the Office Suites. It allows you to capture text, images, as well as video and audio notes. Users can share 'notebooks' with other OneNote users, which allows simultaneous taking and editing of notes with

		people in other locations. You can view and edit notes from virtually any computer with an Internet connection or a Windows phone.
Evernote	http://www.evernote.com/	Similar to Zotero, Evernote is a note-taking system. You can save links to websites and screenshots and write notes. This is a fairly robust system.
ShoveBox	http://wonderwarp.com/shovebox/	A place to stow away ideas you run across. This keeps snippets of ideas together in one space. This is perfect for folks who are always trying to keep track of multiple scraps of paper with inspiration on them.
Delicious	http://delicious.com/	A bookmarking tool that allows you to keep track of websites of interest. You can label websites with multiple tags.
DropBox	www.dropbox.com	Free and paid versions are available, with varying options. Dropbox allows you to sync your files online and across your computers automatically, to share files, to back up your files online, and to store files on its server.
Mendeley	http://www.mendeley.com/organize-research-collaboration/	A research tool helps you organize research and collaborate. It is a tool specifically made for academics to coordinate with one another and to keep track of their own research projects.

TIME & TASK MANAGEMENT

ATracker	http://www.wonderapps.se/atracker/	A time tracker that allows the user to enter tasks, categories and activities in order to track daily, weekly and monthly time use. Provides pie chart graphs for visual clarity. Better to pay for the pro version.
Habitica	https://habitica.com/static/home	An app that boasts a way to "gamify" your life. Build avatars, get rewards for tasks completed and organize your life! ;)
30/30	https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/30-30/id505863977?mt=8	App that sets time limits for each task to keep you moving and on track!
Forest	https://www.forestapp.cc/en/	App that encourages you to put your phone down and focus on tasks. Get rewarded by building a forest.

WRITING PRACTICE

Written Kitten	http://writtenkitten.net/	Writing app that rewards you with a photo of a kitten (!!!) or puppy or bunny, after you complete a number of words.
750 Words	http://750words.com/	Writing practice app that works by engaging a social community and challenges you to write 750 words every day. Helps with goal setting and consistency.
Pomodoro	https://francescocirillo.com/pages/pomodoro-technique	Writing practice technique that challenges you to complete timed writing and builds in brief breaks. Good for burst writing practice.

WRITING STYLE/READING/DIAGNOSTIC

Beeline Reader	http://www.beelinereader.com/	Online tool to make screen reading easier on your eyes.
Hemingway Editor	http://www.hemingwayapp.com/	Online tool to help analyze your prose and edit for clarity and concision.

SELF-CARE

Pacifica	http://www.thinkpacifica.com/	App that helps the user track emotion and stress levels and find better coping mechanisms for emotional challenges. Aimed at stress reduction.
Stop, Breathe and Think	https://www.stopbreathethink.com/	Helps bring mindfulness to your daily life. Guided meditations and reflective tool.
Insight Timer	https://insighttimer.com/	Meditation app complete with guided meditations of varying lengths and themes, talks by meditation teachers, a timer to meditate by and a social media component to encourage your practice.
Calming Manatee	https://calmingmanatee.com/	Sitting in class and feeling stressed out? Go here for an affirmation and picture of an adorable manatee ☺

Activity

Do you work with any other tools that you'd like to recommend to other workshop participants? Please share them with us.

Take 10 minutes in groups, to share or find an app that isn't on our list and present it to the group.

What does it do? What is it for? What are its strengths and limitations? Why would it be useful for you?

Writing Processes & Strategies for Academic Writing

Now we'll shift slightly and talk about doing activities related to writing processes. We'll also cover some information about high-stakes writing (comprehensive exams, thesis, and so on).

Reflecting on Your Writing Processes

What kind of writing do you do for your degree program?

What kind of writing do you do outside of school?

What kind of writing do you expect to do as part of your career after you obtain your Master's degree?

Exploring Your Writing Processes

The French word for rough draft is *brouillon*, which is derived from a verb meaning "to place in disorder, to scramble." This messiness is an integral part of writing, but in English, we have no equivalent for *brouillon*. Rough draft, instead, suggests something that must

be polished and smoothed not something deliberately scrambled. Similarly, the word outline, which is frequently used when discussing writing, suggests an inert structure, a clear plan. The way we usually talk about writing in the US makes it seem like a very orderly and straightforward process instead of the messy, recursive, knowledge-making process that it usually is. 1

A Model of the Writing Process We're Familiar With:

- Choose a topic
- Narrow your topic
- Write a thesis
- Make an outline
- Write a draft
- Revise
- Edit

A More Realistic Model of Writing Processes:

- Start with a problem or a question
- Explore the problem through research, freewriting, and discussion
- Take time away from the problem
- Explore some more
- Write a complete draft using exploratory writing and research
- Reformulate/revise writing by thinking through the problem again and considering audience more than before
- Polish and edit for unity, coherence, and structure

Writing is hard to talk about realistically in a step-by-step way because so many steps are repeated throughout the composing (this is what it means when people say writing is recursive) and every piece of writing is different, requiring different kinds of repetition. Writing processes are difficult to represent in alphabetic text, which often works in a linear way.

What are other ways you and/or others talk about writing? What are the processes and practices involved with writing for you?

On a separate sheet of paper, write about, map, and/or draw your typical writing process for writing a paper for class. What do you do? What kinds of activities not typically considered "writing" are part of your process? (Note examples below for guidance)

Once you've completed your map, share it with other participants at your table. Note how your approaches to writing are similar and different.

Similarities	Differences

Why do you think these differences exist?

Will you consider adapting your approach to include some of the processes mentioned by others? Which ones?

Overcoming Writer's and Reader's Block

Both writer's and reader's block have plagued us all at one point or another. It can be debilitating.

Consider this approach

Try writing every day, or almost every day, for at least 15 minutes. Try to cultivate a "writing addiction" mentality by using your daily writing to keep your mind engaged with ideas even when you're occupied with other tasks. Motivate yourself to write by building it into daily work or pleasures, and start small so it will build from there.

Ask Yourself

What do you think are the causes of writer's and reader's block?

What strategies have you used in the past to keep yourself writing and/or reading?

What are the minimum number of minutes you are willing to commit to working on a daily (or every other day) basis?

How have or will you motivate yourself, or reward yourself, when you reach your daily or weekly writing goal? How have you reached your writing deadlines?

Your Academic Department and Program

While this workshop and The Graduate School provide many resources, advice, and information, you should also check and engage with your department and program, which will be very useful in navigating your degree. Try to attend as many department events, social gatherings, and other meetings as possible in order to develop relationships, ask questions, and obtain information. And, of course, you should ask your mentor/advisor many questions.

Working within an Academic Community

Advisors, committee members, other faculty, and colleagues are a major influence on our levels of stress and our capacity for success, depending on how supportive they are. Therefore, we are going to spend the rest of our workshop talking about working with members of our academic committees, especially advisors and committees. Keep in mind that "non-academic" relationships are important to your academic success too; see the appendix for strategies and suggestions for interacting with people outside your academic community.

Developing a Supportive Community

How do you feel supported in your academic community? What advice do you have for other Master's students?

Choosing an Advisor

For most Master's degree students, our advisors function as our academic mentors. First, you should figure out whether or not you get to choose your advisor. More generally, you will need to understand what your advisor and committee selection process is. If you can choose your advisor, you will need to consider what we consider a good mentor to be. Then, you will be able to make the choice in selecting your advisor.

At your tables, develop a list of the qualities you believe a good mentor possesses and the responsibilities of a good mentor. Then, choose what you all think are the top three most important qualities you have listed. You will share them with the full group.

It is unlikely that one person can meet all of your needs. That's where your committee comes in. If you have the power to select your committee members, it will be important

when you choose the faculty who will make up your committee to consider who will “fill in the blanks” left by your advisor.

If you have already chosen an advisor and a committee, do they possess these qualities? If not, do you have the power to make changes?

If you have already established a committee, list your members and their best mentoring qualities. Are you getting what you need from them?

If you have not chosen a committee, are there any people in your department you are thinking about including? Who are they, and what needs do you think they each will meet? If you don't yet have committee members in mind, list the qualities you will most need from your future committee members.

Whether or not you have chosen your committee, can change your committee, or have chosen the best possible faculty members to support you and your work, you will still face challenges in working with these people. It is important for you to anticipate these challenges and how you would deal with them.

The following challenges are fairly common problems or are serious issues. In your groups, choose one problem to discuss and try to come up with ways to deal with or work through it. Think about the resources available to you, both personal and external. We will ask you to present your solutions to the entire group.

- If you are not in agreement with a member?
- If you need additional support?
- If a member is not accessible enough?
- If feedback on your work is slow in coming?
- If members are not getting along?
- If your relationship with your advisor becomes problematic?
- If you begin to wonder whose work this really is?

- If a committee member moves/retires/dies?

Based on your conversation, if you could give one piece of advice to other Master's students choosing or working with committee members, what would it be?

The Advantages and Disadvantages of a Terminal Degree

Some of you may be in a Master's degree program that is designed to be the stopping point in your education. In the United States, this degree is called a terminal degree. A terminal degree is the highest degree in a given field of study or academic discipline. The phrase "terminal" is used more frequently in the United States, than it is outside of North America.

To explain further, a terminal master's degree means that once you've completed the requirements for the degree, the assumption is that you're done with school. Some non-terminal master's degrees are more like a checkpoint along the way to a more advanced degree (i.e., the doctorate). Terminal master's degrees often do not lead to admission into a doctoral program.

Take the next few minutes to figure out if your degree is terminal or not. Look in your department or program's handbook for definitive information about the kind of degree program you're part of.

Master's Degree Completion Options: Comprehensive Exams, the Thesis, Portfolios, and Internships/Externships

All Master's degree students are required to complete something that signifies the completion of their degree. Some Master's students take comprehensive (or exit) exams or write a thesis, while others compile a degree portfolio or fulfill internship/externship requirements. You may also do some combinations of these requirements. These processes and documents are different for every degree program.

Use the information below and your graduate handbook to help you develop a plan for approaching and/or completing your comprehensive exams, and/or your thesis, and/or your portfolio and/or your internship or externship requirements.

Comprehensive Exams

1) Find out how many components your comprehensive exam has. Do you take more than one exam? Will the exam(s) take place in a specific location? How much time do you have to complete the writing? Will the exam be long-or short-essay questions? Will you be responsible for writing your own exam questions? Is there an oral component to the exam?

2) When do students usually take their comprehensive exams? Many programs have students taking their exams in the first or second semester of their final year. Make sure you know what is expected and that you are on track.

Thesis

- 1) Find out the processes and structures for theses in your discipline. Do you need to write and defend a thesis prospectus/proposal? How are theses in your discipline structured? How many chapters do they have? Consider reviewing completed theses by checking them out from the library and seeing their content and structure.
- 2) When do students usually begin their thesis? How long will you have to complete your thesis? How might this affect the research methodologies you would like to employ?
- 3) Use this information to develop a timeline and plan to approach your topic selection, proposal/prospectus writing, and thesis writing with confidence. If need be, refer to the timeline activity earlier in this workshop.

Portfolio

- 1) What kind of relevant materials should you include in your portfolio (coursework documents, conference presentations, consultations or collaborations with community partners, course evaluations, syllabi, and instructional materials)? How long should it be? Is there an oral component to the portfolio?
- 2) Will you include an overview essay that provides evidence of reasoning about and reflection on how your program has affected your research, teaching, and professional goals?
- 3) Who will you submit your portfolio to? Often, your committee members and your graduate program secretary will need a copy of your portfolio.

Internships/Externships

- 1) What are the specific requirements put forth by your department or program for meeting internship or externship requirements that fulfill graduation?
- 2) Are you required to find your own internship, or will you be placed by your program? Are you able to have an internship counted that isn't mandated by your program?
- 3) Will you also be enrolled in coursework while you are completing your internship or externship?
- 4) Will you include an overview/reflective essay that provides evidence of reasoning about and reflection on how your internship/externship has affected your research, teaching, and professional goals?
- 5) What is required of you for the people at your internship/externship (e.g., a short memo explaining what you did and what you learned while completing your internship or externship)?

After the Master's Degree: What Do I Do Now?

Once you've finished your Master's degree, you'll need to find a job (if you decide against furthering your education at the doctoral level). The process of finding a job can often be overwhelming. But this can be mitigated by preparing yourself *before* you graduate, particularly in the fall of your last year or in the beginning of your last year. There are many things to consider when looking for a job, which we will discuss in our small and large groups.

Preparing for Your Job Search

Find a partner (or small group) and discuss some of the important considerations when finding a job. When you've finished, we will share these points with the larger group. Some questions may help think through these considerations:

- What kinds of jobs does your discipline value?
- What strengths would you bring to those kinds of jobs?
- What kinds of job(s) do you want?

It's important to keep in mind that there's no one right way to find a job, but researching other student experiences is a great way to begin. You should also talk to your advisor.

After the Master's Degree: Is the PhD Right For Me?

One of the more difficult decisions you'll make as a Master's student is whether or not to continue your education at the doctoral level. Deciding to pursue a doctorate is no easy or small decision; a PhD is a big commitment, and one that may or may not be right for you. There are many things to consider when making this decision, which we will discuss in our small and large groups.

Making the Decision

Find a partner (or small group) and discuss some of the important considerations when deciding to pursue a doctorate. When you've finished, we will share these points with the larger group.

It's important to keep in mind that there's no one right way to make this decision, or to know whether pursuing a PhD is right for you, but researching other student experiences is a great way to begin.

Options for Interdisciplinary Opportunities

It's important to keep in mind during your Master's program that there may be many possibilities for interdisciplinary work (depending on your department and program). When we talk about interdisciplinary work, we mean there are options for you to work with others both inside and outside of your field or discipline, and both in academia and the surrounding community. The hardest part, as some of you might already know, is knowing how to find this work.

Here are just a few ways in which to explore options for interdisciplinary work:

- Internships or jobs, either on or off campus
- Attending campus events outside of your department (speakers, symposiums, etc.)
- Choosing a committee member from another discipline
- Getting involved with graduate student groups (COGS, Graduate Student Life and Wellness, your own department and program)
- Graduate writing groups with the Writing Center (or on your own!)
- Volunteering (in campus departments/labs; with faculty; with off-campus offices)

University Services and Resources

Michigan State University Covid-19 Related Resources

"2019 Novel Coronavirus-Resources." *Michigan State University*, <https://msu.edu/coronavirus/resources/>

"Coronavirus (COVID-19)Workplace Health Screening." *Michigan State University*, <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MHEXli9k2UGSEXQjetVofRr5465eeclGIAHCZg1x3UfUQU1EWTRBtkZTMzVESEJDTzRPMTBHNEFHVC4u>

"Office of Cultural & Academic Transitions (OCAT)- Coronavirus (COVID-19 Updates)." *Michigan State University*, <http://ocat.msu.edu/covid-19-coronavirus-updates/>

"Student Health and Wellness-COVID-19 Info & Resources." *Michigan State University*, <https://studenthealth.msu.edu/coronavirus.html>

"Recreational Sports and Fitness Services- Virtual Group Ex." *Michigan State University* <https://recsports.msu.edu/fitness/groupex.html>

Resources and Information for International Students

"Resources for DACA and Undocumented Community." *Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions Michigan State University*, <http://ocat.msu.edu/resources-for-the-daca-and-undocumented-community/>

"International Studies & Programs- Office of International Health & Studies." *Michigan State University*, <https://oihs.isp.msu.edu>

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resources

Source: The Information in the "Diversity and Inclusion Resources section" are from Paulette Grandberry-Russell's compilation of "DEI resources and programs available to the Spartan Community."

"Asian Pacific American Studies Program." *Michigan State University*, https://apastudies.ssc.msu.edu/?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"elevate U."- Human Resources -Spartans @ Work" Michigan State University, https://hr.msu.edu/professional-development/elevateu/?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"Education- Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives." Michigan State University, https://inclusion.msu.edu/education/index.html?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"Lesbian Bisexual Gay And Transgender Resource Center." Michigan State University, https://lbgtrc.msu.edu/education/?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"Multiracial Unity Living Experience & Intercultural Aid Program-The MRULE-ICA Program." Michigan State University, http://mrule.msu.edu/?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"Muslim Studies Program." Michigan State University, <https://muslimstudies.isp.msu.edu>

"The Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions." Michigan State University, http://ocat.msu.edu/?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"The Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel." Michigan State University, https://jsp.msu.edu/?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"Understanding Implicit Bias Certification Program-Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives." Michigan State University, https://inclusion.msu.edu/education/understanding-implicit-bias-certification-program.html?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

"Womxn of Color Initiatives." Michigan State University, https://woci.cal.msu.edu/?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

Conferences, Grants, Events

"2nd Annual Women of Color Community Conference." Michigan State University, https://grad.msu.edu/events/2nd-annual-women-color-community-wocc-conference?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-

[resources](#) (This year's passed. It would be good to have some updated information on this).

"Call for Proposals: Queer Conversations III." *Michigan State University*, https://grad.msu.edu/news/call-proposals-queer-conversations-iii?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources (Not recent)

"Creating Inclusion Excellence Grants- Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives." *Michigan State University*, https://inclusion.msu.edu/research/creating-inclusive-excellence-grants/index.html?utm_source=other-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dei-resources

Additional Resources

"MSU Student Foodbank." *Michigan State University*, <https://foodbank.msu.edu/distribution/index.html>

MSU Library Services

MSU libraries have much to offer for graduate students. In fact, the MSU library has a dedicated website page for graduate students: <https://www.lib.msu.edu/graduate/>. It would also be highly beneficial to contact a Subject Librarian who has a specialized area. These Subject Librarians can help in myriad ways as you research during your Master's degree. Locate your subject area and find the contact information here: <https://www.lib.msu.edu/contact/subjectlibrarian/>.

MSU library also offers services for publishing books and even your own work. The library uses The Espresso Book Machine, which can print books in 15 minutes. Check out their website: <http://www.lib.msu.edu/about/ebm/>

MSU is also a HathiTrust Digital Library partner. This service allows you to download digitized books from a large digital archive, as well as create your own digital collection. Visit: <http://www.hathitrust.org/>

Dealing with Stress

What causes the most stress in your life? Below list three stress factors and ways you cope with them.

Remember: MSU offers free counseling to students. The MSU Counseling Center is located at 207 Student Services Building. Phone: 517.355.8270.

Health Services

In addition to the Counseling Center, MSU provides a variety of other health services. Olin Health Center is the main location for MSU Student Health Services. Olin is located on the north end of campus between Berkey Hall and the Grand River Parking ramp, just down the street from the Broad Art Museum. The center includes a pharmacy, laboratory, radiology, and many other services.

More information can be found on their website: <http://olin.msu.edu/>

The Graduate School

The Graduate School at MSU provides many resources, news, and information. The school is located in 110 Linton Hall 110 (phone: 517.353.3220). Visit: <http://grad.msu.edu/>

The Writing Center

The Writing Center @ MSU provides free one-on-one consulting sessions with you and your writing. The center can help at any stage in the writing process – from brainstorming to revising – and with a variety of genres (essays, reports, proposals, resumes, CVs, cover letters, scholarship applications, personal statements, presentations, et al.). The center's philosophy is committed to:

- Working with and developing multiple literacies
- Encouraging and facilitating collaboration
- Supporting interdisciplinary methods of thinking, writing, and researching
- Promoting diverse understandings of writing and the disciplines in which they are situated
- Utilizing new technologies in pedagogically responsible ways

The main hub of The Writing Center @ MSU is located at Bessey Hall room 300 (phone: 517.432.3610). But the center has numerous satellites across campus. For more information and to book an appointment, visit <http://writing.msu.edu/>

Graduate Writing Groups

Joining or starting a graduate writing group can serve many functions, such as expanding your knowledge of writing processes, establishing regular deadlines for your writing, receiving constructive feedback on your work, and creating a system of support for yourself during the dissertation process.

The Writing Center supports graduate writing groups. If you are interested in joining a group, go to <http://writing.msu.edu/writing-groups> for more information and to fill out an interest form. Groups are usually formed at the beginning of each semester, so placement is easiest in September and January.

Another option is to start your own group. If you go this route, here is some advice:

- Keep your group to about 3 to 5 members. You want to be able to create a feeling of close community and trust, and you want to be able to have time for each participant to share his/her writing every couple weeks.
- If you have the opportunity, form a group with graduate students who have similar interests, goals, and views about writing so that your group will work collaboratively together.
- Make sure members are committed and will stick with the group. Ask members to make a commitment of at least two semesters to create continuity.
- Schedule meetings regularly to minimize the problems related to everyone's hectic graduate life. For example, decide to meet every Tuesday from 3:00 to 5:00PM or set your specific times and dates at the beginning of each semester.
- Set a definite agenda for each meeting—socialize either before or after business. One way to structure the group, for example, is to take turns bringing your own work to the meetings.
- If you form a leaderless group, set up parameters and guidelines. You can take turns facilitating, but be sure you lay out guidelines when you begin, so that all group members know the expectations of the group.

A group leader can be helpful in dealing with problems or eliminating unproductive members or habits of the group. If someone is willing to lead, and others concur, this can help streamline the process.

Encourage each other to set goals and support each other in reaching them. Use contracts or other goal-setting tools and let the group be your cheering section and support network.

Learning Resource Center

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) provides academic support for MSU students, aids in helping MSU students become more effective students, and access to educational support and electronic literacy training. The center has specially trained academic specialists, technology literacy specialists, and graduate assistants. A few services are:

- Individualized sessions and consultations
- Study skills seminars
- Anatomy study groups
- Math study groups
- Test taking skills instruction
- Technology skills instruction
- Time management advice

The center also has a fully equipped lab with:

- Interactive computer software programs
- Computers with word-processing, database management, web page authoring, and presentation software
- An enthusiastic lab staff to answer your computer application questions
- Classroom materials and tests placed on reserve by faculty members

The LRC is located in Bessey Hall 202 (phone: 517.355.2363). Visit: www.lrc.msu.edu

English Language Center

The English Language Center lab provides enrolled international students with free tutoring from trained ESL writing consultants. More specifically, the ESL Lab consultants can help with any or all of the following:

- Understanding a class assignment
- Understanding class readings
- Planning and organizing your essays
- Revising your drafts
- Incorporating source material effectively and properly citing sources
- Improving the grammar and vocabulary of your drafts

The ELC lab is located in Wells Hall B230 (phone: 517.353.0800). Walk-ins are welcome, but the lab recommends you make an appointment to ensure getting a session. For the ELC website, visit: <http://elc.msu.edu/>. For the ELC lab, visit: <http://elc.msu.edu/esl-lab/>

Useful References for Writing & Career Options

Dissertation & Thesis Writing

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