

Sweetland

GAYLE MORRIS SWEETLAND WRITING CENTER

**Sweetland
Writing Center
/ English
Composition
Board**
1139 Angell Hall
764-0429
ECBinfo@
umich.edu
[http://www.lsa.
umich.edu/ecb](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/ecb)

Writing Workshop Fall 1998

Monday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tuesday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wednesday
9 a.m. - Noon
and 3-5 p.m.
Thursday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Friday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Please call
for a Writing
Workshop
appointment**

Peer Tutors

Sunday-Thursday
7 p.m. - 11 p.m.
444C Mason Hall

Michigan Online Writing Lab (OWL)

owl@umich.edu
OR
[http://
www.lsa.umich.edu/
ecb/help/
owl.html](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/ecb/help/owl.html)

Works in Progress

Associate Professor Theresa L. Tinkle
Director, Sweetland Writing Center and English Composition Board

I'm delighted to report on the following new projects and works in progress at the Sweetland Writing Center.

Center for Research on Learning and Teaching & Sweetland Writing Center Collaboration

At the end of the summer, Dean Edie N. Goldenberg approved a new \$6,000 grant to enhance writing instruction in the College. This grant results from collaboration between CRLT and the Sweetland Writing Center and will be advertised as a Faculty Development Fund opportunity. These grants are awarded for innovations that enhance the quality of student learning. One grant a year is now available specifically for the development of writing pedagogy, including making innovations in writing-intensive courses, adding writing components to first- and second-year courses, enhancing the writing requirements of large lecture courses, or improving graduate students' roles in writing instruction. We are particularly looking for applications that promise to make writing instruction central to the content mastery of a course or to promote advanced writing in the disciplines. We hope that this increased support for writing instruction will be helpful to the very busy faculty of LS&A.

eNotebook

Barbara Monroe (English Department and Sweetland Writing Center) and Gonzalo Silverio (Office of Instructional Technology) have recently finished developing eNotebook, a web-based, integrated ("one stop") virtual class environment designed to foster writing and teaching with writing. A kind of electronic version of a notebook, eNotebook has several modules such as conferencing capabilities that allow students and instructors to read and respond to each other asynchronously and in "real-time"

as well as to annotate written work intertextually (comments can be embedded into "soft copy" drafts of student papers). eNotebook also offers several class management tools, including an interactive appointment book, an assignment archiver, and an electronic "coursepack" where students can make their own notes as they read on-line materials. It also tracks students' participation rates. Because eNotebook is web-based, users can access it with any web browser and from any computer connected to the Internet.

Barbara Monroe and Gonzalo Silverio are working with instructors to use eNotebook in selected courses this term. This pilot program will aid Barbara and Gonzalo to devise a professional development model that will foster collaboration within and across departments. This is a very promising project for Internet-mediated writing instruction in every discipline. We expect eNotebook to be available across the College (and country) in the near future. The developers deserve our thanks for enhancing the possibilities for innovation in undergraduate education.

Sweetland Consultants Program

The Sweetland Writing Seminar offers GSIs and faculty from across the College the opportunity to engage in an extended study of writing pedagogy. In the course of the Seminar, the graduate student Junior Fellows invent first-year writing courses that draw on their disciplinary expertise; they teach these courses as sections of English 125, College Writing. The 1997-1998 Seminars included Junior Fellows from the departments of American Culture, Anthropology, Biology, Comparative Literature, English Language and Literature, History, Linguistics, Mathematics, Psychology, and Women's Studies. The Sweetland Writing Center is currently seeking nominations for Junior Fellows for the Winter 1999 Seminar. The Junior Fellows contribute vital interdisciplinary perspectives to the teaching of introductory composition, and they gain valuable professional experience.

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The Seminar training and teaching experiences also open new possibilities for professional development. I became keenly aware of this when one of the Junior Fellows, Benita Jackson from the Joint Doctoral Program in Psychology and Women's Studies, asked me an intriguing question toward the end of her English 125 teaching experience Winter term: "What can I do next with my new skills in teaching writing?" We brainstormed about some possibilities, and I suggested she talk with Associate Professor of Psychology James Hilton, who happened to be a Senior Fellow in the Seminar that term. They decided that they (and undergraduates) would benefit from collaboration on his project to enhance writing in a large introductory psychology course. I offered Benita a stipend for her consulting work, and the Sweetland Consultants Program was born. Former Junior Fellows of the Sweetland Seminar and their department chairpersons are encouraged to come up with projects that will allow Fellows to use their new skills and experience in the context of their home departments. Working together on pedagogical projects can benefit both faculty and GSIs, and such collaborations could facilitate disciplinary innovations in writing instruction. I look forward to seeing how this new program develops.

Writing Workshop: New Directions

The Writing Workshop offers tutorial support to students enrolled in LS&A courses. For the first time, Writing Workshop tutors are contacting instructors of first-year writing courses to discuss the possibility of coordinating tutorial sessions with the writing course. Writing Workshop tutors are assigned to particular sections, and they will work with the instructors to make sure that they appropriately address the instructors' goals in their sessions with the students.

New Sweetland Faculty

The Sweetland Writing Center is pleased to introduce two new faculty members to the College.

Phyllis Frus, Associate Director

Dr. Frus has a Ph.D. in English from New York University, and she brings wonderfully diverse faculty, administrative, and writing experiences to the Sweetland Writing Center. She has taught at such institutions as Stanford University, Vanderbilt University, Hunter College/CUNY, and the Juilliard School. Besides holding editorial and administrative positions at the Center for Teaching and Learning at Stanford University, she has served as a staff writer and editor for NYU Libraries, done freelance copyediting for commercial presses, and been a freelance feature writer.

Dr. Frus publishes widely in English studies. Her first book is *The Politics and Poetics of Journalistic Narrative: The Timely and the Timeless* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), an important study of journalistic narrative and its historical development. In this book, she brilliantly challenges the

socially constructed distinction between "journalism" and "fiction." Her second book, a collaboration with Stanley Corbin of the University of Cincinnati, is entitled *An Ex-centric Discipline: American Literary Studies and the Problem of History*; this book is about half completed. Another book is at the proposal stage: *Non/Fiction: Representations of the Pacific Islands in Fiction, Film, Travel Writing, and Ethnography*. (We should compliment the author for discovering such a felicitous location for research.) She has also published essays on academic progressives, Zora Neale Hurston, Willa Cather, Stephen Crane, Virginia Woolf, autobiography in biography, the nonfiction novel, and composition. She plans to continue making contributions to English studies and composition, and she will be a welcome new intellectual presence in literary studies as well as composition pedagogy here.

While at the Center for Teaching and Learning, Dr. Frus wrote newsletters on such topics as "Designing and Teaching a Course," "Using Student Evaluations to Improve Teaching," and "Promoting a Culture of Teaching: The Teaching Portfolio." The Sweetland Writing Center (not to mention our newsletter) will be greatly improved by her journalistic talent and educational expertise.

Dr. Frus introduces herself in her Writing Teacher's Portfolio with these words: "Because I believe writing is inseparable from thinking, I'm in effect always teaching writing and always reflecting on it." She continues:

In all my classes, I try to create situations in which students will be engaged by the intellectual challenges of thinking through a problem or issue, will wrestle with them, and will use writing as a central aspect of this process. Ultimately they will express their findings, conclusion, interpretation, or position and support it with evidence, examples, and sound reasoning. Because I use my own experience as a writer to think through how to communicate my expectations, I acknowledge my bias toward argumentative writing. This is how I learned to write first as a journalist and public relations writer and then as a graduate student and literary theorist and critic. I used to keep a sign above my desk that read "Why are you writing this?" That is, why should anyone bother to read what I wrote unless I had some goal clearly in mind that I wanted to communicate to the reader? I have since learned to call this the "so what?" of any piece of writing.

Dennis McEnnerney, Lecturer III

In 1995, Dennis McEnnerney received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, where he specialized in political theory, comparative analysis, and European politics. He is currently completing a book manuscript entitled *Raising Consciousness in an Age of Resistance and Liberation: French Resistance Discourse and the Recasting of the Political*. Drawing on the techniques of conceptual history, *Raising Consciousness* traces the development of the French concept of *résistance* from

the oppositional writings of early modern Huguenot women, through the speeches and writings of participants in the French Resistance movement of the Second World War, to the struggles of francophones associated with the women's and anti-colonial movements of the postwar era.

Raising Consciousness seeks to approach the contemporary American "culture wars" from a fresh angle: it shows that, although new and certainly problematic in important respects, contemporary identity politics has enlivened contemporary political and cultural life, in part by drawing upon some of the most compelling principles, traditions, and practices of modern Western politics, particularly the belief that all voices are deserving of recognition in the public sphere. At the same time, *Raising Consciousness* seeks to encourage us all to face squarely the real tensions and the potential pitfalls that a common life based upon the recognition of a right to resist has entailed.

Dr. McEnerney's work, while rooted in political theory and political science, is of a broadly interdisciplinary character. He has delivered drafts of manuscript chapters to enthusiastic audiences of historians, sociologists, and philosophers, as well as of political scientists. For example, a session of the 1997 Meeting of the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association was devoted exclusively to discussing his new interpretation of the political significance of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. Last spring, when we interviewed him, he was working on *Raising Consciousness* in Cassis, France, where he was a fellow at the Camargo Foundation, a center for interdisciplinary French and francophone studies. He aims to complete the manuscript during the summer of 1999.

His teaching, like his research, has crossed disciplines regularly. Since 1992, he has held visiting appointments in Political Science at Vassar College, Skidmore College, and Wesleyan University. In these positions, he taught surveys of the history of Western political thought, including courses on classical, modern, contemporary, and American political thought, as well as introductory courses in Political Science, such as Basic Problems in Politics and the Moral Basis of Politics. He has also taught more specialized courses: Thought and Politics in Ancient Greece, Public and Private: Exercises in Political Thought, and Enlightenment and Modernity.

Because of his academic background and research, together with his broad teaching experience, we look forward to compelling contributions to both our graduate and undergraduate writing programs. Dr. McEnerney approaches writing from the perspective of a social scientist and theorist, emphasizing the use of writing as a way to learn about society, politics, and history. His students comment over and over again that his writing assignments are powerful instructional tools. In part, he succeeds by working to provoke students to look at themselves and their worlds through new eyes. Dr. McEnerney writes:

I attempt to develop in students what might be called a broadened understanding, an understanding of perspec-

tives, experiences, or claims that might be different from their own. In my view, an essential element in a college education is learning to see the world through different eyes, whether those of a contemporary social scientific analyst, a nineteenth-century romantic, a subaltern in our own or another society, a classical philosopher, or whatever. I aim to have the student learn to understand other perspectives on their own terms, seeing what implications such perspectives may have, both for those who hold such perspectives and for those of us who study them. This sort of skill can best be developed, in my view, through dialogue—I try to get students to explain what an author really means, and then try to lead the students from what may be a mistaken or limited understanding to a deeper, more accurate one.

Advanced Writing in the Majors Program

Since its inception in the mid-1970s as a groundbreaking writing-intensive curricular component, the Junior/Senior Writing Requirement at the University of Michigan has grown and changed. With the founding of the Gayle Morris Sweetland Writing Center we have the opportunity to turn a requirement into a program: Advanced Writing in the Majors. This program will reflect our emphasis on fully integrating writing into courses across the curriculum.

Our mission is clear: Writing makes thought visible and enhances learning. The purpose is to provide writing-centered courses in students' fields of interest that incorporate writing as a catalyst for research, dialogue, analysis, and expression. In Advanced Writing in the Majors courses, juniors and seniors build on the rhetorical foundation of the First-Year Writing Program: competence in mechanical, grammatical, and stylistic aspects of writing, mastery of expository and argumentative techniques, control of effective revision strategies, and an awareness of reader expectations. Our goal is to enhance learning and invigorate the rhetoric of inquiry by teaching the generic conventions of academic writing and the ways of constructing knowledge within specific fields.

The Sweetland Writing Center / English Composition Board establishes course guidelines and develops models for writing instruction, approves Advanced Writing in the Majors-designated courses, funds and trains graduate student instructors to assist in writing instruction, offers workshops and consultation for faculty, and monitors and reports students' completion of the Jr./Sr. Writing Requirement. Advanced Writing in the Majors courses use a number of formats. Most focus on a content area within the discipline. All courses require a substantial amount of writing (a minimum of 30 pages, often divided into sequential tasks). Most departments incorporate the requirement into established courses. This approach emphasizes to students the idea that writing and revision are integral to learning content. Faculty respond to student writing primarily through written

comments on papers and through conferences. In addition, some instructors use class time to combine feedback to students with coverage of new content.

Second-Language Students at Michigan

Dr. Helen Fox

Those of us who have struggled to learn a second language can easily understand the challenges second-language students are facing. Take for example a common and deceptively simple problem, the use of the articles “a,” “an,” and “the.” Imagine growing up speaking a language that does not employ articles at all. (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, Hindi, Polish, Hebrew and others fit into this category). How do you decide whether to say “groups of students were touring the university” or “the groups of students were touring the university”? Even if you learn that “the” is used when you’ve already mentioned groups of students earlier (or should it be the groups of students?), or when you are talking about particular groups of students rather than groups of students in general, how does that help you understand the difference between “The Huron River” and “Huron River Drive”? Conceptual habits that are learned effortlessly in childhood can become extremely confusing and taxing to non-natives’ habitual organization or style, not to mention their ideas!

Speakers of English as a second (or third, fourth, or fifth) language can enrich the Michigan experience for both students and faculty with their unique cross-cultural perspectives and first-hand knowledge of other regions of the world. Perhaps surprisingly, some of these students are among the most skillful writers that Michigan admits, surpassing most native speakers in their fluidity of expression and mastery of vocabulary and grammar. Instructors often spot mature thinking and creative ideas in these students’ writing, but feel frustrated when they have neither the time nor the expertise to give these students the individual attention they deserve. Fortunately, Michigan provides an extensive array of high quality services for international students at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Even before applying to Michigan, most international students take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), an internationally recognized assessment of their overall English skills. Applicants must achieve a score of at least 560 to be considered for admission here, though most of our undergraduates have scores of around 600. Upon arrival, they are assessed again, this time with the Academic English Evaluation, a battery of tests developed by Michigan’s English Language Institute; they may be required or recommended to take one or more courses in speaking, listening, pronunciation, and/or writing. A course in thesis and dissertation writing is also available at the English Language Institute for advanced graduate students. After completing whatever English Language Institute courses they may have been required to take, undergraduates then pro-

ceed to the English Composition Board for a portfolio assessment of their writing. On the basis of this assessment, international students, like all other entering undergraduates, are placed in appropriate writing courses or, in rare cases, are declared exempt from introductory composition.

At every point in this process, help is available for both undergraduate and graduate English as a Second Language students at the English Composition Board’s Writing Workshop, as well as through the Peer Tutors, who can be found in 444C Mason, just outside the Angell Hall Computing Center. Students can also get editorial advice by sending their papers to the peer tutors via Michigan’s On-Line Writing Lab (OWL). Non-native speakers who take maximum advantage of Michigan’s resources will see much improvement in their writing, even if they never completely master the “a,” “an,” and “the” problem. Some students set up a standing appointment at the Writing Workshop and work with the same instructor, week after week, for an entire semester. Undergraduates are usually allowed a half-hour conference per week, and graduate students may come for weekly one-hour conferences. The English Language Institute also provides a writing workshop for graduate students who have taken an English Language Institute course. Students need to sign up about a week in advance in Room 3003A, NUBS.

Writing in the College

Theresa L. Tinkle, Director

First and Second Year Studies, Department of English

The Department of English Language and Literature was able to recognize excellent instructors of composition in a new way last term when David and Linda Moscow generously founded the Moscow Prize for Excellence in Teaching Composition. The first five recipients of the prize were honored in a departmental ceremony at the end of Winter term: Anne Curzan, Elise Frazier, Troy Gordon, Steve Salchak, and Andrew Sofer. One of the instructors begins her statement of teaching philosophy as follows: “The goal of teaching, I believe, should be to inspire students to *want* to learn.” Each of these instructors accomplishes that goal. Their students praise them for their dedication, their ability to make their writing courses challenging and exciting, and their talent for helping students find ways to improve as writers. They manage to inspire their colleagues and graduate advisors as well as their students!

Dates To Remember . . .

Nominations for Sweetland Seminar Jr. Fellows Winter 1999
deadline for nominations to Theresa Tinkle

September 20, 1998

CRLT Grant - Faculty Development Fund
deadline for submission of proposals to CRLT

October 23, 1998