

**Modus Operandi**

For each of your three response papers and for your research paper, you will first develop and submit a *complete draft*. You should plan and compose the draft carefully over several days. The draft that you submit should not be the first version out of the printer, but it should have already undergone significant revision.

We will comment on the submitted draft to guide you in your revisions toward the *final version*. In our comments, we will focus on the arguments and the overall presentation. We will not edit your writing to correct all errors of grammar, syntax, and mechanics; you will be responsible for these errors. As you revise your draft, you should not merely correct individual errors and amend individual words. Reflect on the overall organization of your ideas, and recast entire paragraphs to improve their coherence.

When you submit the final version of a paper, you must also submit the draft that we reviewed. Only the final version will receive a grade. Each submission must represent your own work. You may obtain suggestions on your paper from the *Writing Workshop* and from other students, but academic integrity is required. That is, you must not represent the ideas or words of other authors as your own.

In all of your papers, your reasoning should be sound, and your ideas clear and well-organized. Each paragraph should have a clear purpose, with a logical sequencing of sentences and a variety of sentence structures. Each sentence should be graceful and coherent. Each word should be chosen precisely. There should be no superfluous words. The grammar, punctuation, and spelling should conform to accepted usage.

**Writing and Revision**

Good writing is *clear and substantive*. In examining the process of writing, there is a profound reciprocal interrelation between the degree to which a person has probed and comprehended the *substance* of a given issue and the corresponding *clarity* with which an individual is able to express one's thoughts in well-crafted prose. Clear *writing* and clear *thinking* are thus intimately connected. Clear and precise writing requires focused and sustained reflection; yet one's grasp of the essential meaning and substance of a particular concept or position is clarified and developed in the process of writing. Clear thinking is the precondition and cornerstone of clear writing, but it is through the labor of substantive reflection—actualized in the task of writing—that an idea is often crystallized and given conceptual expression. The act of *writing* is thus one of the primary ways in and through which one learns the art of clear, rigorous, and substantive *thinking*.

Writing is a *difficult and arduous process*. Good writing requires the discipline of revision: writing and re-writing, thinking and re-thinking, with hammer and chisel in hand. Ludwig Wittgenstein once wrote: "Everything that can be thought at all can be thought clearly. Everything that can be said can be said clearly." Likewise, one could add: "Everything that can be written can be written clearly," but not without *the rigorous labor of revision*. Hence, *patience, persistence, and perseverance* are indispensable character qualities that sustain and empower a good writer.