

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Boston Campus – CUME – Spring 2012

Masters Equivalent Preparation Program: Writing Skills for Ministry

Instructor: Cherry R. Gorton

617- 427-7293 Ext. 1653 cgorton@gcts.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Taught in sequence with Critical Thinking Skills, this course will review for students such basic writing skills as the purpose of words, the parts of speech, construction of sentences and paragraphs. Seven essential qualities of good writing will be discussed and examples from Biblical material as well as classical and contemporary literature will be presented. Students will fulfill several writing assignments followed by peer editing as well as instructor analysis.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

1. To learn the basic writing skills to effectively prepare class assignments at CUME in essays, research papers, and book reviews.
2. To learn personal strengths and weaknesses in effective writing.
3. To explore a personal style of writing and enjoy the writings of others.

Required Text books:

Rees Cheney, Theodore A. *Getting the Words Right: 39 ways to improve your writing.* 2nd edition. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 2005. ISBN: 1582973586

Braun, Frank X. *English Grammar for Language Students*, Ann Arbor, MI: Ulrich's Books, 1947. ISBN: 0914004034

Recommended:

Raimes, Ann. *Universal Keys for Writers*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2004
ISBN: 0618406646

OR

Raimes, Ann. *Pocket Keys for Writers. Second Edition*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2006, ISBN: 0618445463 spiral

OR

Any grammar book for a variety of publishers. List will be provided at first meeting.

Class One:

Go over syllabus, give personal credentials, have students introduce one another.

Go over the textbook

The Word made flesh: denotation, connotation, parts of speech, diction

Words as parts of speech:

Timothy 3:16 and the Apostles' Creed Ecumenical Version

Reading Assignment in Rees Cheney: Chapters 28 & 29 pgs. 154-164.

First Writing Assignment: Observe an object or person for 15 minutes.

Class Two:

Share observations from homework

Sentence structures and how they communicate: subordination, modification, independent and dependent clauses:

Sentence ADLIBS

Second Reading Assignment: Rees Cheney: Chapter 30 & 31 pgs.165-178.

Second Writing Assignment: Using your notes from last week's observation to create a series of sentences according to the class example.

Class Three:

Paragraphs as units of thought: analyzing paragraph structure

Topic sentence and supporting information

Exercise: The Paragraph Puzzle

Taking notes from paragraphs

Third Reading Assignment: Rees Cheney: Chpts. 10, 11, 13, 14, 15

Third Writing Assignment: Develop a paragraph from your sentences on your observations from the first and second weeks.

Class Four:

Share paragraphs and discuss their strengths and weaknesses

How a piece of writing develops: narrative, comparative analysis, cause and effect, discourse analysis

Seven qualities of good writing: Handout

Fourth Reading Assignment: Rees Cheney: Chpts. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26

Write a Special Occasion letter to your family, your congregation, your staff

Examples: Christmas, Easter, Wedding, Birth of a Child, Turning 50, 60, etc. Retirement, Moving away

Class Five:

The mechanics of writing and how to use good punctuation and grammar

Exercises on the overhead projector.

Take home exercises from the textbook.

Class Six:

Continuation of the mechanics of writing: punctuation and grammar.

Proofreading and editing our work in teams

As time allows we will cover notetaking and study skills

Teaching techniques will include

- 1 lectures utilizing the overhead projector, the LCD projector, and handouts
- 2 group activities
- 3 correcting the homework exercises together
- 4 discussion to analyze good writing samples

We will also be viewing several episodes of the PBS Television Series, *The Story of English*, and *Do You Speak American?* narrated by news anchor, Robert McNeil. These episodes show how language develops, how writers like Shakespeare affect the language, how a publication like the King James Version of the Bible standardizes the language, and how people groups like the African Americans enrich the language. There is also an episode on the effect Hispanic immigration is having on English.