

# WRITING TO PERSUADE

A worked example for  
Pharmacy 387: Pediatrics & Geriatrics

Roger Graves  
Director, Writing Across the Curriculum

# Roger Graves



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Director, Writing Across the Curriculum  
Professor, EFS

May 4, 2010

- wac
- c4w
- writing initiatives
- webmail
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As Director of Writing Across the Curriculum, I'll be working with faculty and students across the university to improve student writing. I consult with instructors and departments, and I teach writing in a wide variety of courses when students in those courses are starting a writing assignment. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies, my home department.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of six books and 29 articles, including *Writing Instruction in Canadian Universities*. My current research interests include the development of doctoral student writing, writing assignments across disciplinary fields, and rhetorical approaches to text encoding. Currently I serve as co-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW), the

### Recent presentations to classes

This page contains links to slides displayed at presentations I've given to classes.

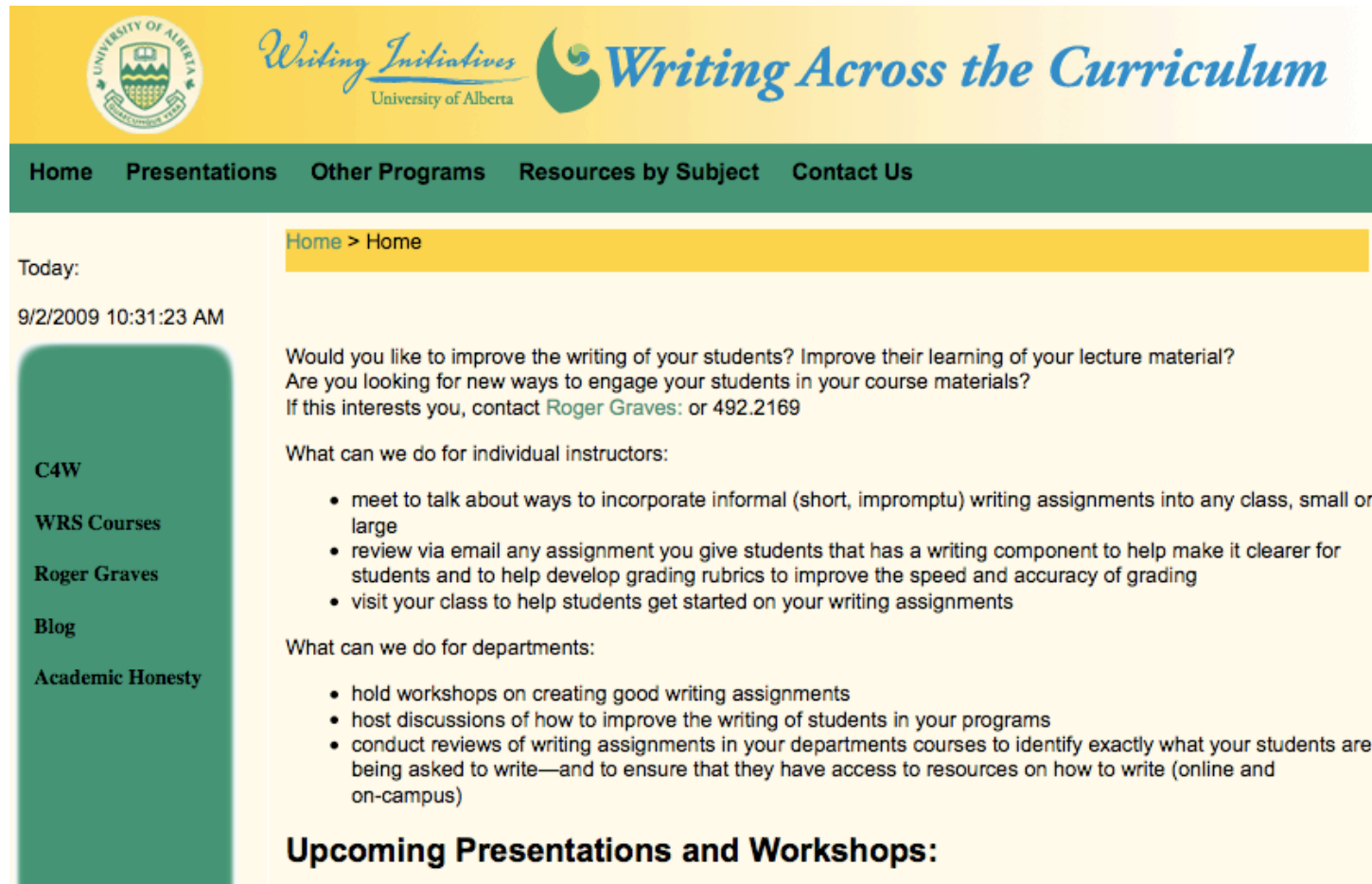
### Research and faculty presentations

### Digital rhetoric



<http://www.ualberta.ca/~graves1/index.html>

# Writing Across the Curriculum



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Writing Across the Curriculum website at the University of Alberta. The header features the University of Alberta logo, the text "Writing Initiatives University of Alberta", and the main title "Writing Across the Curriculum". A green navigation bar contains links for Home, Presentations, Other Programs, Resources by Subject, and Contact Us. The main content area includes a breadcrumb trail "Home > Home", a date and time stamp "Today: 9/2/2009 10:31:23 AM", and a sidebar with links for C4W, WRS Courses, Roger Graves, Blog, and Academic Honesty. The main text asks if the user wants to improve student writing and provides contact information for Roger Graves. It also lists services for individual instructors and departments, and mentions upcoming presentations and workshops.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Writing Initiatives  
University of Alberta

Writing Across the Curriculum

Home Presentations Other Programs Resources by Subject Contact Us

Home > Home

Today:  
9/2/2009 10:31:23 AM

C4W  
WRS Courses  
Roger Graves  
Blog  
Academic Honesty

Would you like to improve the writing of your students? Improve their learning of your lecture material? Are you looking for new ways to engage your students in your course materials? If this interests you, contact [Roger Graves](#): or 492.2169

What can we do for individual instructors:

- meet to talk about ways to incorporate informal (short, impromptu) writing assignments into any class, small or large
- review via email any assignment you give students that has a writing component to help make it clearer for students and to help develop grading rubrics to improve the speed and accuracy of grading
- visit your class to help students get started on your writing assignments

What can we do for departments:

- hold workshops on creating good writing assignments
- host discussions of how to improve the writing of students in your programs
- conduct reviews of writing assignments in your departments courses to identify exactly what your students are being asked to write—and to ensure that they have access to resources on how to write (online and on-campus)

**Upcoming Presentations and Workshops:**

<http://www.humanities.ualberta.ca/WAC/>

# Centre for Writers



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Centre for Writers at the University of Alberta. The header features the University of Alberta logo, the text "Writing Initiatives University of Alberta", and the "Centre for Writers" logo. A navigation menu includes Home, Appointments, Contact Us, Location, Coaches, Resources, FAQ, and WAC. The main content area has a breadcrumb "Home > Home" and a "Welcome to the Centre for Writers" section. This section states that free one-on-one writing coaching is available to all students, instructors, and staff. It lists services such as thesis formation, organization, idea development, grammar, and documentation style. A link to "Request a class room visit by a tutor" is provided. A notice for the Fall 2009 term states that tutoring hours begin on Monday, September 14. The right sidebar contains a timestamp "9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM", an "Express News" section, a "Twitter Updates" section with a tweet about the fall term opening on Monday, September 14, and a "GramWOW" section with a video player showing a person holding a sign.

 *Writing Initiatives*  
University of Alberta  *Centre for Writers*

Home Appointments Contact Us Location Coaches Resources FAQ WAC

Home > Home

## Welcome to the Centre for Writers

We offer **free** one-on-one writing coaching and support to all students, instructors and staff at the University of Alberta - in any faculty or at any level of study.

Our writing coaches are available to assist clients with higher order concerns in their writing, such as thesis formation, organization and idea development, as well as more specific details, like grammar and documentation style. Clients can bring in any writing project at any stage of development: essays, lab reports, creative pieces, scholarly articles, thesis drafts, application letters - and more. Our coaches will also help students read instructor comments on already-graded papers. ESL and EAL students are welcome!

[Request a class room visit by a tutor.](#)

**Welcome back for the Fall 2009 term! Tutoring hours will begin on Monday, September 14. The online appointment-booking schedule will be available to clients as soon as possible prior to this date. We look forward to working with you!**

9/2/2009 10:34:15 AM

**Express News**

**Twitter Updates**

The Centre for Writers will open for the fall term on Monday, September 14! 5 days ago

[follow me on Twitter](#)

**GramWOW**



<http://www.c4w.arts.ualberta.ca/>

# The assignments



The deliverables:

Part 1: Topic proposal

Part 2: Annotated bibliography

Part 3: Evidence-based position paper

- ◆ Note: Assignments are linked: the proposal leads to the annotated bibliography which is the research you will report in the paper

# The writing process



## Getting started

- ◆ Explore the assignment
- ◆ Make rough notes
- ◆ Pick a tentative topic

## Getting feedback

- ◆ Make an appointment at the writing centre for later in the week
- ◆ Get feedback on your draft/revise

## Revising

- ◆ Work on style and lower order concerns
- ◆ Proofread, consult checklist for assignment

# Sample Topic for 387



- ◆ Ella, an emergency contraceptive that can be taken up to 5 days after unprotected sex
- ◆ Slate Magazine: “Is ella birth control or abortion?”
- ◆ LifeNews: “Pharmacy group pans FDA decision to approve ella abortion drug”
- ◆ New York Times: “FDA approves 5-day emergency contraceptive”

# Thesis statements



- ◆ Specific
- ◆ Manageable
- ◆ Interesting



# A sample thesis statement




According to new approaches in pain management, nurses must obtain **three kinds** of knowledge if they are to **respond effectively to a patient's pain: knowledge of self, knowledge of pain, and knowledge of standards of care.**

Specific  
Manageable  
Interesting

[original/passive voice] New approaches to pain management stress three kinds of knowledge for nurses to obtain if they are to respond effectively to a patient's pain: knowledge of self, knowledge of pain, and knowledge of standards of care.<sup>1</sup>

[www.mbon.org/practice/pain\\_management.pdf](http://www.mbon.org/practice/pain_management.pdf)

- 
- ◆ While contraceptive drugs can be viewed from religious, political, and scientific viewpoints, I believe that safety and efficacy of the drug should determine whether or not pharmacists should distribute them. The new contraceptive pill, ella, highlights why efficacy and safety are the most important criteria for distribution.

Specific  
Manageable  
Interesting

# Other possible thesis statements



# The proposal

- ◆ **What is the health care issue?** The issue is whether or not pharmacists should distribute ella, a new contraceptive that works up to 5 days after unprotected sex. This drug is more effective than Plan B and can be taken later. Although ella is a chemical relative of RU-486, it has little effect on women who are already pregnant. Anti-abortion groups argue that it works by reducing the lining of the uterus and thus aborts the new fetus.
- ◆ **What is your position?** While contraceptive drugs can be viewed from religious, political, and scientific viewpoints, I believe that safety and efficacy of the drug should determine whether or not pharmacists should distribute them. The new contraceptive pill, ella, highlights why efficacy and safety are the most important criteria for distribution.
- ◆ 125 words so far

# Outline



◆ Title:

# Argument structure



**Claim:** efficacy and safety are the most important criteria for distribution

**Stated reason:** **because** other bases for deciding — such as religious faith—do not consider the health of the patient as the primary value

**Grounds/evidence:** anti-abortion groups warn that “men might slip ella to unsuspecting women,” a clear instance of fear-mongering rather than considering patient health

# Argument structure



## **Unstated assumptions**

- ◆ Health promotion should trump religious-based ideas in public policy

## **Evidence supporting unstated assumption:**

- ◆ Religious organizations are buying hospitals in major American cities and then refusing to allow abortion procedures in them. Public health policy is circumvented through this tactic.

# Part 2: Annotated bibliography



- ◆ Sample: *Brief Penguin Handbook*, pg. 208-210
- ◆ Title
- ◆ Introduction (edited from proposal)
- ◆ Citation/annotation 1
- ◆ Citation/annotation 2
- ◆ Citation/annotation 3
- ◆ Citation/annotation 4
- ◆ **Note:** Audience is non-medical reader



# Analytical/critical annotations

An objective evaluation of a work's contents, quality, and limitations. Length is typically between 100-200 words.

- ◆ Gives full bibliographic information for the work.
- ◆ Gives the authority and the point of view of the author.
- ◆ Evaluates the contents, scope, and quality.
- ◆ Points out the merits and deficiencies.

# Annotations



- ◆ Summarizes the article (2-3 sentences; 45-60 words)
- ◆ Evaluates (“discuss the value”)

# Citations



## **Use ICMJE style**

- ◆ Phillips, C. D., Spry, K. M., Sloane, P. D., & Hawes, C. Use of physical restraints and psychotropic medications in Alzheimer special care units in nursing homes. *American Journal of Public Health* 2000;90: 92-6.

# Sample summary



- ◆ The authors question whether or not Alzheimer's patients are less likely to be restrained or medicated as a result of residing in Special Care Units (SCU) in nursing homes. They found, however, that these patients were no less likely to be restrained and, in fact, they were more likely to receive psychotropic medication. (53 words)

# Hints for summarizing



- ◆ Previous summary took 5 pages of article and turned it into 2 sentences
- ◆ Look in the article's Introduction for the question they are asking (in this case, paragraph 2)
- ◆ Look in the Results for the findings (in this case, the last paragraph of the Results)

# Sample Evaluation



- ◆ This study looked at a large amount of data (1 100 residents in 48 SCUs) from a small geographical area—only four U.S. states. The extent to which the findings of this study apply to Alberta are unclear, particularly since these standards vary considerably from state to state. Nevertheless, the authors speculate that SCUs led something of a revolution in Alzheimer’s patient care—these units demonstrated that the use of physical restraints could be avoided, and that may account for the similarity in use in both SCUs and regular units. (89 words)

# Part 3: The paper



- ◆ About 2 pages long
- ◆ Consider using the introductory paragraph from the annotated bibliography as the intro
- ◆ Use the summaries of research from the annotated bibliography in the body of your paper
- ◆ Include a summary of other, alternate positions on the topic and an explanation of why you did not adopt them

# Drafting/Revising



- ◆ Get a “trusted reader” to get feedback
- ◆ Consider using other students in the course, the Centre for Writers, or the WAC TA for this
- ◆ Ask readers to read for specific purposes: thesis, structure, transitions, development of a particular paragraph or idea



# Don't hand in a first draft



Towards the due date, switch your focus from

**higher-order concerns** (arrangement, arguments, evidence) to

**lower-order concerns:** proofreading, grammar, citation format, grammar/spelling

# Good luck

- ◆ Get help from the WAC TA
- ◆ Use print resources like books—copies of the Brief Penguin Handbook are in the Centre for Writers
- ◆ Revise