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Director, Writing Across the Curriculum  
Professor, English and Film Studies

● **THE SCHOLARLY  
ESSAY:  
Biology 107**



# Roger Graves



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Director, Writing Across the Curriculum  
Professor, EFS

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- wac
- c4w
- writing initiatives
- webmail
- efs

I'm new to the University of Alberta, having come from the University of Western Ontario where I was Director of the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. In my new position here I'll be working with faculty and students across the university as part of the Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. I will also be working with students and faculty in the Department of English and Film Studies.

I am the author, co-author, or editor of five 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-Vice-President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Discourse and Writing (CASDW) and a member of the Executive Board of the Canadian

### Recent presentations

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

### Books

This page displays the covers and descriptions of books I've authored, co-authored, or co-edited



### Blog: Thinking About Writing

A new blog on writing-related issues

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

# Centre for Writers



Writing Initiatives  
University of Alberta



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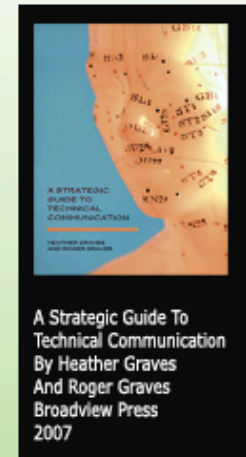
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Publications:

## Welcome to 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!



A Strategic Guide To  
Technical Communication  
By Heather Graves  
And Roger Graves  
Broadview Press  
2007

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

# C4W




Over 1300 students last year


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# Writing Across the Curriculum



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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/>



# The assignment

The deliverable:

- 500 word essay
- Body: structure within it seems open; do you have to answer all these questions or are they meant to be suggestive? What does the rubric suggest?
- “Describe” plus answer 3 questions



# The writing process

## Getting started

- Explore the assignment
- Make rough notes
- Pick a tentative topic
- Make an appointment at the writing centre for later in the week
- Get feedback on your draft/revise
- Work on style and lower order concerns
- Proofread, consult checklist for assignment



# The Writing Process: Aristotle

- Invention [prewriting]
- Arrangement [organizing the draft]
- Style [working on sentences and words]





# The process: Not specified

How should you get started?

Prewriting strategies:

- Brainstorming
- Note-taking
- Sample thesis statements
- Idea maps
- Talking, **reading**—see suggestions in **assignment: Dorit + textbook**



# Topics to thesis statements

Three questions to ask about a working thesis:

1. Is it specific?
2. Is it manageable for this assignment?
3. Is it interesting for your readers?

Sample thesis for this assignment:



## A sample thesis

As new research appears in the study of bacteria, some argue that we need to re-think our conceptions of the role of antibiotic compounds in bacteria. Older understandings of antibiotic compounds characterized them narrowly by focusing on their behavior in large concentrations. But new research challenges that view. For example, Dorit (2009) argues that ...



# Possible 107 thesis statements?

- Routes of resistance in antibiotic bacteria have evolved in response to overuse of prescriptions in ways that have created problems, particularly resistant strains of bacteria.
- Antibiotic compounds are a key concept in biology because they affect many aspects of human life in a global society. The recent concerns with Ecoli contamination are just the latest example of how important antibiotic compounds are.



## I07 thesis hints

Write something leading into the answers of the questions:

- There's a lot of talk about antibiotic compounds as they pertain to human use. And more recently we are coming to understand the roles of these compounds in the bacteria's lifestyle, particularly the role of the "environmental resistome." Ultimately, a more sophisticated understanding of these compounds will lead to better uses of them.



## Sketch the argument: Q I

What are the two distinct roles of these compounds in the life history of bacteria?

- Role 1: kill bacteria
- Environmental competition
  
- Role 2: signalling
- Intercellular communication for survival, mutation



## Q2

- How does the concentration of these compounds influence their effects on bacterial cells?
- Large concentrations work to kill bacteria; small concentrations do the opposite
- Different concentrations can make different signals between cells



## Q3

What does the existence of environmental resistome suggest about the natural function of antibiotic compounds in the bacterial ecosystem?





## Q4

- How does the widespread natural resistance to antibiotics relate to the clinical and agricultural uses of these compounds in the future?

Your own thoughts:

- increasingly ineffective;
- reliance increases as the immune system weakens;
- need to create new antibiotics;



# Outline

- Order of the questions: Describe, Q1 Q2 Q3
- Pyramid style—most general to most specific;
- order of relevance—human effect, then the biology of the life cycle of the cell



# Drafting/Revising

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



## Next steps: Drafts, books, C4W

- Towards the due date, switch your focus from higher-order concerns (arrangement, arguments, evidence) to lower-order concerns: proofreading, grammar, citation format, grammar/spelling
- Make appointments at C4W
- Consider getting a handbook to help you with your writing