Writing-intensive courses and the required visit to the Writing Center

- Hermeneutics (BTI 1100)
- Theology I (THE 3110)
- History of Ideas IV (HOI 2120)

How does one make the required appointment?

When enrolled in a writing-intensive (WI) course, you are required to make and attend an appointment at the Writing Center (WC) at least one week before your term paper is due (not the same week as the due date). You can make an appointment at the WC web site at CampusNet / Moodle. By making an appointment, you are inviting a writing consultant into your writing process, a friendly and knowledgeable person who provides critical dialogue and informed feedback directed toward improving writing skills for your writing project to develop it with good arguments and good style. It is recommended that you make your appointment early in the semester for later, setting a preliminary due date and helping to progress through the writing process successfully. Bring a copy of your draft essay with you to your appointment.

How does one verify attendance?

The Writing Center is located in the library commons (first floor of the library). When visiting the Writing Center, you should bring a copy of your draft essay. At the end of your consultation, you need to ask your writing consultant to time-stamp the cover page of your essay, a stamp that serves as evidence of your visit. The Writing Center also keeps records of who in WI courses has attended an appointment. Again, you can make an appointment at the WC web site at CampusNet / Moodle.

Who may use the online service?

The Writing Center offers online feedback for off-campus students: students in online classes, in hybrid classes, and with circumstances preventing a visit to the WC in the library commons. Compared to a personal appointment, online feedback via e-mail has limitations: it lacks the personal dynamic of critical dialogue, so you learn less about what you want and need to know (but may not recognize at the moment) for improving critical skills, writing skills, and your writing project. Nonetheless, online feedback can be valuable feedback. So, if you cannot visit the campus site for a personal appointment, you may send the WC your draft essay via e-mail. The reply message you receive from the WC will serve as evidence of your “visit.”
Why is this a win-win situation?
By visiting the Writing Center, you cannot lose. Most student-writers conclude their visits expressing, “I wish I had come earlier, for it would have saved me time and effort.” You will gain insights about your writing process that can help you work more effectively and efficiently. Moreover, you will likely develop competence and confidence as a critical thinker and writer and, as a result, will learn more and will probably earn higher grades in the current course and in all other situations in which you use writing to generate, organize, and communicate your ideas for yourself and for others.

What is the Writing Process?
Writers proceed through five recursive phases of the writing process, where some stages require more time and attention: invention and research (50% of writer’s time), drafting (10%), critique (5%), revision (25%), and editing (10%), approximately. Southeastern emphasizes the writing process for several reasons, starting with its normalcy. Experienced writers understand that a writing process is normal and understand how to work through the writing process. Donald Murray, a Pulitzer Prize winning writer and Professor of English, explains, “The professional writer spends most of his time prewriting and rewriting. He spends the least time in the production of the first draft.” But young writers tend to think they are “bad” writers if they “have to” revise.

Likewise, inexperienced writers make the common mistake of not recognizing that writing is a process, so they begin writing too late or stop writing too soon and settle for far less than they are capable of achieving in terms of their own learning and the graded written product. In a writing-intensive class, therefore, writers are encouraged to understand and to work through the writing process, focusing on critique (inviting a writing consultant into the process) and revision (improving argument and communication). Southeastern values these essential skills and desires all students to become more competent and confident critical thinkers and writers.

What is the wise guide?
Turabian, A Manual for Writers, 8th edition (2013) is Southeastern’s official wise guide through the research-writing process (chs. 1-10), writing with sources (chs. 7 and 25), citing sources (chs. 16-19), selecting sentence style and writing conventions (chs. 11 and 20-25), and formatting papers (ch. A.1). Wise writers become familiar with this excellent guidebook to the research-writing process, and since it is Southeastern’s official style guide, it also gives students the right to be right about the many conventions and formal features of writing. Other helpful resources are available at the Writing Center’s campus site and web site.