

CMSC 304 Peer Writing Workshop

October 2, 2013

Process:

- You'll be working in groups of three:
- The 75-minute class will be structured as follows:
 - o 7:00-7:10 – review process, exchange papers
 - o 7:10-7:30 – read and mark up papers (see objectives below)
 - o 7:30-7:45 – discuss, dissect, and improve paper #1
 - o 7:45-8:00 – paper #2
 - o 8:00-8:15 – paper #3
- Your goal is to help each other improve the paper by ensuring that there is a **clear statement of a thesis (assertion or claim)**, that the paper is **well organized and logical**, and that the writing itself is **clear and correct**.
- As you read your peers' papers, you should comment on both specific and general places where the presentation is unclear or could be improved. You should also explicitly indicate what parts of the paper are particularly good, both to be supportive/constructive and to be thinking about strategies that might work in your own writing.
- The ideal paper will be successful in all three of these areas:
 - o **Analysis of Vulnerability Selling:** Is the main thesis (assertion, claim, or conclusion) clear? Does the first paragraph clearly state the problem to be analyzed and indicate the main focus within the area of vulnerability selling? Can you discern the key information from the analysis methodology? (What are the facts, policies, stakeholders, principles and values, consequences, laws, tradeoffs, and overall conclusion?)
 - o **Organization:** Does the writing emphasize the important aspects of the analysis? Does each paragraph and sentence have a clear purpose, following logically from the previous paragraph/sentence? Does the author avoid repetition and include enough detail to be understandable?
 - o **Clarity and Correctness:** Is each point stated clearly and concisely? Is the grammar and spelling correct? Is the writing phrased smoothly, avoiding chopiness? Are sources cited for specific factual information, and if quotes are included, are they clearly marked and cited? Is there a reference list/bibliography?
- During the “discuss, dissect, and improvement” phase, you'll spend 15 minutes working together on one paper at a time, sharing your thoughts about what's working well and what's not working, and brainstorming ways to improve the weaker parts of the papers.
- Rules of engagement:
 - o As a critiquer, you need to be constructive and helpful. There is no value in saying “This is terrible” or “This is incoherent.” Be specific about what you think needs to be fixed: “You need to state the problem more clearly” or “You use a lot of repetition and it gets confusing and hard to figure out what your main point is.”
 - o As an author, you need to be receptive and avoid becoming defensive.
 - o As a group, you need to make sure that everyone is contributing to the discussion and benefiting from your shared discussion about effectively presenting complex ethical questions and analyses.