

Dissertation Seminar
Tuesdays 2-3:15pm
Coffee shop writing group: Wednesdays 12-2pm
Professor Sara Bernstein

Two types of challenges face dissertation writers: *intellectual challenges*, such as finding a topic, discovering that a topic is too large or too small, dealing with a shifting topic, writing clearly, and engaging current literature; and *psychological challenges*, such as writer's block, lack of confidence, non-productive ruts, procrastination, and perfectionism. This dissertation seminar will address both types of challenges.

In addition to dissertation research presentations, we will discuss such issues as:

- finding a topic and narrowing it appropriately
- staying consistently productive throughout one's dissertation career
- what to do when one is stuck
- how to stay passionate about one's topic
- how to receive feedback and incorporate it into one's work productively
- how to start writing rather than getting bogged down in reading
- how to construct dissertation chapters with an eye to the job market
- how to find work/ life balance in the dissertation years

This course is required for fourth and fifth year graduate students in residence.

Additionally, there will be an optional but strongly recommended writing group in area coffee shops throughout the semester. It will be at 12-2 on Wednesdays, with exact location jointly decided and announced one day prior.

Course Requirements:

- One presentation of draft dissertation material
- One five minute commentary on someone else's dissertation material
- Participation in class discussion

Recommended reading:

- Robert Boice, *Professors as Writers*
- Robert Boice, *Advice for New Faculty Members*
- Joan Bolker, *Writing your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*
- Joli Jensen, *Write No Matter What*