



# JUST WRITE!



Quarterly Newsletter of the University Writing Center at UCF



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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS:

We welcome you to the latest edition of *Just Write!*, the newsletter sponsored and organized by UCF's University Writing Center. This edition was created by Amantia Menalla and Courtney McCracken II. We would like to thank our fellow peer tutors and the center's directors, Matthew Bryan and Deborah Weaver, whose endless support has made this edition possible. We would also like to thank every writer who steps into the UWC, either virtually or physically. You all make our efforts worthwhile.

The writing center is committed to supporting writers and writing at UCF. As you would expect, a lot of essays pass through the center. But that's far from the only thing we see—from poets to scholarship applicants, all kinds of writers have found their way into our corner of campus. Writing, we have found, is everywhere. Writers are everywhere too, whether they know they are capable of being writers or not.

Anyone can be a writer, and we see that in this edition. We are proud to feature the work of writers from our community, including the winner of our sixth Flash Fiction Contest. We hope you enjoy this edition! Thank you for giving us the opportunity to keep supporting our writers.

### FROM THE EDITORS:

**AMANTIA MENALLA AND COURTNEY MCCRACKEN II**



**COURTNEY  
MCCRACKEN**

**AMANTIA  
MENALLA**

**JUST  
WRITE!**



# DIRECTORS WRITE

**By Professor Debbie Weaver**  
**Director of the UWC**

With the end of the semester approaching, the new class of tutors here in the Writing Center will soon complete their training. They have observed sessions, worked side by side with experienced tutors, and discussed alternative approaches to best help students with their writing assignments. This class is diligent, conscientious, and willing to learn, a characteristic the directors look for when making final hiring decisions. But what exactly does a willingness to learn mean and why is it important?

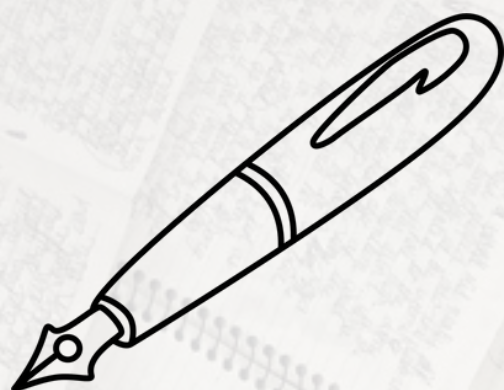
Students from every major and discipline visit here looking for feedback, and with such a large campus at UCF, it is impossible for our tutors to be knowledgeable in all fields of study. There are approximately 70,000 students' campus wide and only 35 tutors who work in the center.

For learning to happen, tutors need to act as investigators and seekers of knowledge, who inquire about a writer's process and cultural background. The best tutors want to know a writer's purpose and interest in a topic and demonstrate that resources and examples are aids in clarifying the professor or assignment expectations. We can't know everything about biology or history, nor do we claim to do so. What we can do is roll up our sleeves and dive all in and engage with the writer to help them find the answers needed. Hopefully, through the interactions, both the writer and tutor learn.

The center was never intended to be a place to drop off a draft, pick it up later, and have all the errors "fixed." We are a community of staff, undergraduates, and graduates who care about writing and understand the power of revision—that all writing has the possibility of improving. Maybe, that acknowledgment, that writing is rarely finished, is at the heart of the center and drives our desire to learn.

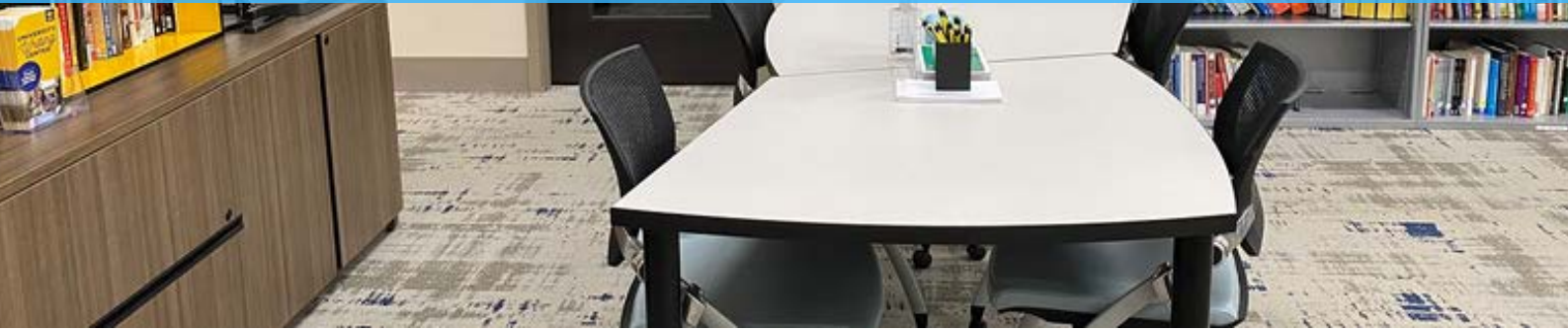
Perhaps the why is not as important as the what. What is it like to work with students who are inquisitive, who ponder alternatives, who want to give effective, clear, helpful feedback to writers? It is a privilege that I am reminded of everyday as I unlock my office door. As I sit at my desk and look out into the center, I wonder what initiatives the new tutors will present, what inquiry projects will interest them, and what new opportunities will they think of.

I guess I'll find out soon enough—when January brings another semester.



# WRITERS WRITE

By Jacob Goldberg-Murphy



I have never been confident in my writing. It doesn't come naturally to me, and I frequently get bogged down with writer's block and anxiety, regardless of what I'm working on. That feels almost blasphemous to admit, as both a Writing and Rhetoric major and consultant at the University Writing Center, but when I say that I'm not confident, I don't mean to imply that I don't enjoy it. In fact, I love writing and have always done well on writing assignments; I just struggle more than some with the process. Booking my first session at the UWC last spring was a pivotal moment in my writing journey, because it helped me truly understand the value of collaborating on writing, particularly in those moments of feeling stuck.

Admittedly, the initial motivation behind booking the appointment was because it earned me extra credit in ENC 3314, Writing and Rhetoric Foundations. I always looked forward to getting feedback on assignments once they were "finished," but my trip to the UWC was the first time I sought formal feedback during drafting. My session was with a graduate student named Megan and the paper I brought in discussed literacy in the Magic the Gathering community. The draft was essentially finished, but I had spent what felt like an eternity trying to revise it because I was worried the overall tone felt pretentious. After expressing that concern, Megan and I started talking about what aspects of writing contribute to a piece's tone. Together, we looked for example sections in my draft that might have been contributing to my not liking how it sounded. We rewrote a few sentences during the session, and afterward, she linked me to resources that explained the concepts we discussed—nominalization and the use of "I." I left feeling excited to apply what we talked about, and less insecure about my draft in general, thanks to the experience of talking about my writing with someone willing to give me feedback.

My first session at the UWC showed me a lot of things. Obviously, the writing strategies that we discussed were helpful, and I genuinely do think about what she taught me every time I sit down to write. Perhaps more importantly than that, it showed me how valuable collaborating with other people can be to writers like myself, who aren't innately confident in what they write. Getting an outside perspective can be exactly what a writer needs when they're at a difficult stage of drafting and the UWC is home to amazing tutors willing to do just that. Since my first session with Megan, I've revisited the UWC as a student multiple times. I have come to see the writing center as a valuable source of feedback and opportunities for collaboration, which enable students to continue growing as writers. This semester, I'm also excited to have begun the process of becoming a tutor at the UWC myself, with aspirations of helping other students in the same way that Megan and others have helped me.

# TUTORS WRITE

## Writing and Designing in Computer Science

By Courtney McCracken



Working as a tutor at the writing center while pursuing my bachelor's in Computer Science has left me with an interesting relationship with writing. While working at the writing center inspired me to earn UCF's Public and Professional Writing Certificate, my degree isn't really known for its writing assignments. That is, of course, until students find themselves writing up the notorious "Final Design Document" in Senior Design, with a minimum of 30 pages per team member. It's quite the jump from the lone technical writing class typically taken early on in the CS academic career.



Generally, I think that writing is under-practiced and under-valued in most CS classes leading up to Senior Design. In *Just Write! Vol. 2 No. 2*, I wrote about the importance of having a solid grasp on certain genres in technical writing. Throughout the program, this importance isn't really emphasized until the big CS capstone project, where the sheer size and complexity of design documents can blindside undergraduates. Typically, this genre serves two primary purposes: to record the design and development process and to efficiently communicate the ideas in production. It's here that writing and rhetoric conventions, such as audience awareness, clarity in language, and effective organization, are particularly important for writers to understand. Otherwise, it can be easy for teams to fall victim to miscommunication, unaccepted project proposals, and sponsor/client dissatisfaction. With all of this in mind, it would be nice to see more, smaller-scale design documents present themselves as assignments leading up to Senior Design. After all, being a good computer scientist takes more than literacy in code and programming: it demands an understanding of team dynamics and critical thinking. Communicating that understanding is a big part of constructing a design document.

Outside of Senior Design, I typically take the opportunity to explore this genre through a beloved hobby of mine: game design. When I write up a document outlining something like a game mechanic, I take care to get into the rationale behind the design. This might involve research, examples, and general thought process. Whether or not these ideas are ever realized, what's important is that the document itself accomplishes the goals of the genre. What is the emotion I want to get out of the player and how do I plan to get that out of them? This is the general process of creating a design document: highlighting the goal of the product, and then outlining how the product should be developed in order to accomplish said goal. Having a predefined concept of the genre has helped me, personally, go into Senior Design with a foundation for success.



Many times in the writing center, we've discussed the value of genre familiarity and the role it can play in our tutoring practice. Tutors might show their writers examples of the genre they're working on, highlight certain conventions, and identify certain pitfalls. So, I want to implore any reader with an idea to take the opportunity to learn the design document. The power to organize your goals and outline the process to achieve them is an invaluable skill across any field.



# STEPS 2 SUCCESS

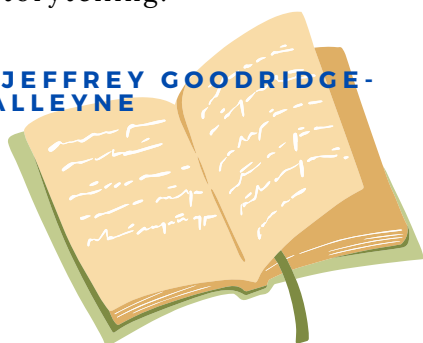


## SCREENWRITING

Screenwriting's conventions are few but rigid. They include a single, universally accepted font, specifications of location and time for each scene, and centered dialogue with characters' names in uppercase. Notably, it is common for screenwriters to be told to cherish white space—and though brevity is championed similarly across several other genres, this advice often surprises novices.

But filmmaking is a collaborative art form, and a screenplay promises that a story can be made greater through collaboration. Its strength lies in its flexibility. As production ensues, what once resembled an oddly formatted novel transforms into a living document, dissected, analyzed, and updated by crew and cast members alike. Adjusting to this style of writing can be challenging, but I advise novice screenwriters to immerse themselves in the genre and focus foremost on elements of storytelling.

**-JEFFREY GOODRIDGE-  
ALLEYNE**



## ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Advertising and Public Relations is a major that combines creativity and strategy. You are exposed to new forms of communication and interaction. You get to make your designs come true and work in any genre of field. There is no limit to what you can do, whether it's agency, nonprofit, tourism, or more.

It's important that you are not afraid to put yourself out there. In both advertising and public relations, you must be able to communicate effectively. You are the liaison between consumers and the brand, or work behind-the-scenes to craft the message itself. There are so many possibilities, some of which you must unveil yourself.

A great way to prepare yourself to embark on this journey is to participate in events such as Intern Pursuit, a fair organized to bring employers in the field face to face with students. Through these opportunities you can practice your communication skills and see what other opportunities are out there for you. Don't be afraid to explore!

**-GABRIELA TORRES**

## ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

The major is divided into two categories, each with their own style of writing. In the Communication and Planning track, students find themselves writing persuasion pieces and policy documentation relating to environmental law. In the science track, they dive deeper into scientific studies, focusing more on the documentation of research findings. Both tracks allow for the opportunity to write from many perspectives.

Although there are many ways to write for environmental studies, a unique relationship exists where they use each other to build upon results. Reports written follow a strict set of guidelines to record experimentation data clearly and concisely. This data is then interpreted to publish opinion pieces such as grant proposals to secure funding or build societal rapport.

**-PIERCEN BOGOLEA**

# THIS SEMESTER'S WORKSHOPS

A look back at the semester

WITH MEKENZIE MCELROY & DHUGAL GARDNER

## Mckenzie's Workshops

### APA Formatting Workshop

The APA workshop focused on helping students understand how to use APA style for in-text citations, paper formatting, and reference pages. I was also able to discuss when to select APA over MLA or another citation style and some of the difficulties students often face when using APA.

### Revision Workshop

The revision workshop focused on seven different revision strategies, including creating a reverse outline, and was one of the most attended workshops we've ever had. We also had a few activities for students to practice these strategies so they had some experience with them before leaving the workshop.

## Dhugal's Workshops

### MLA Formatting Workshop

I ran a workshop on MLA formatting that was attended by mostly ENC 1101 students. We covered features such as in-text citations, Works Cited, and page formatting. We also covered common mistakes, which are very helpful for freshmen writers to be aware of.

### CARD Presentation

Mckenzie and I also joined Professor Bryan in a presentation for UCF's Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) course for college students about writing centers and how they can support students' learning. We covered topics such as high school vs. college writing, the writing process, and tips for reading an assignment.

Book a session with either Mckenzie or Dhugal today!



this semester at the UWC...

# OPEN MIC NIGHT



On October 26th, the University Writing Center hosted its annual Halloween open mic. Attendees enjoyed live fiction and poetry readings, a costume contest, and trivia—all with prizes!

As one of the organizers of this semester's open mic, I had a blast putting the night together with my fellow tutors, Amantia and Abbey. It was a delight seeing everyone enjoy themselves and find the confidence to share their works, which were all delightful.

I look forward to working to make next semester's open mic even better, and I hope to see you newsletter readers there!

**-ISABELLE GALAN,  
UWC EVENT PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

**"I'M KIND OF A  
BACKGROUND TYPE OF  
PERSON... IT'S  
EXCITING AND I LIKE  
GETTING THE CHANCE  
TO GO UP AND READ  
MY STUFF!"**

-Olivia Fiorentino,  
open mic winner





I was sent by my creators to traverse these rusted plains. An unshakable sense of solitude is permeable, with nothing but my tracks for miles. The crimson expanse stretches endlessly, a canvas devoid of life, save for the memories of an ancient world.

I am a sentinel of humanity's ambition, a lone rover sent to explore this desolate realm. My creators possess an extraordinary gift—the ability to forge great innovations, to dream and breathe life into machines like me, to be at the forefront of humanity's next great leap. They survey so permanent settlements may one day be established. Until then, I roam, collecting data on the planet.

This was once a verdant planet, the smallest of three blue gems of a young solar system. Only the middle still remains so blue; the closest boiled away under heat and pressure, the farthest lacked the molten heat to crack the tectonic shell and lost its protective field. This place, now filed with vermilion sands. My creators think themselves capable of transforming it into a lush Eden for their expansion. They talk of peace, and I want to believe them.

And yet, I find myself questioning the darker facets of their nature, their penchant for violence, akin to the Romans. Mars, their God of War, a symbol of human duality. In my solitude, I contemplate that my creators named this world after such a deity. It embodies the essence of their paradoxical nature. The darker facets of their nature, their penchant for violence; their kinship, their capacity for empathy. They are capable of wondrous creations, yet they choose to wield weapons of destruction.

The wind howls. The rusty dunes shifting make me think of battles fought and empires risen and fallen, echoes of centuries passed on Earth. I ponder the irony of a species that can craft me with such precision and grace, yet unleash devastation upon their own kind. The power of split atoms, the one that fueled the rocket that led me to this rusty rock, was first used to inflict massive devastation upon fellow man. Two whole cities engulfed in an inferno, as if the sun had come to Earth.

I roll onward, the Martian landscape reflecting my own isolation. A spirit of the past looks back at me, preserved in a layer of red sand. It was sent long ago on a similar mission. Now it sits in the place it got stuck. No one, not even its sibling, could help. Batteries long ago all used up, its glass lenses stare back, lifeless.

I wonder if I am but a metaphor for my creators—alone in a barren world, a testament to their potential for greatness, marred by the shadow of their own aggressions.

The gentle hum of my motors carries me through the silent, rust-colored sand. I continue my exploration. As I move further into the unknown, I cannot help but reflect on the nature of my creators, their capacity for both innovation and destruction. And like the god Mars, I stand as a witness to their complexity, silently contemplating the enigma of humanity on this lonely, barren world.





# Troy Jardine

C O N T E S T W I N N E R

## Writer Bio:

Troy Jardine is a student at UCF working towards getting his major in Biology. He has an interest in creating stories similar to that which inspired him, working with science fiction and fantasy. He wishes to travel and experience the world as he takes an interest in new experiences and living the best life possible.

## Honorable Mentions:

- Raiya Shaw's "Cosmetics"
- Jolina Jassal's "Haunted"



Our Flash Fiction contest is a running column of *Just Write!* The contest is held each semester. Our next element is **MAGENTA**. Open submissions will run through March 10, 2024. To submit visit this link or scan the QR code: <https://tinyurl.com/uwcmagenta>

## Upcoming Contest:

### What we're looking for:

- Original Flash Fiction in 750 words or less.
- The poignant and meaningful use of our next element: **MAGENTA**
- You are free to explore any theme you wish!

### What we're **NOT** looking for:

- Fanfiction
- Excessive or over-reliance on profanity.
- Gory, sexual and/or graphic imagery.
- Writing that promotes racism, sexism, and/or other forms of discrimination.

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SCHEDULE AN  
APPOINTMENT WITH  
ONE OF OUR  
AWESOME PEER  
TUTORS!

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UWC Instagram:  
**@ucfuwc**

