We’re Moving!

Beginning in August, the Center for Writing Excellence (CWE) will be housed in Memorial Hall. The Writing Lab reception area will be located on the main floor, and the Writing Lab and CWE services will be on the second floor. Room numbers are to be announced.

Oodles of Moodle

The CWE is now fully integrated with Moodle.

OWL

Students, you can now use Moodle to upload your Online Writing Lab (OWL) submissions when you can’t make it to the Writing Lab to meet with a tutor.

Style Guide Tutorials Updated

Updated online are our APA, Chicago, and MLA style tutorials, complete with instructions and examples. Check them out at semo.edu/writing/quick_ref.html.

WP003

Students, the WP003 now takes place on Moodle, which makes the process more comfortable.

Free WP003 Seminars

We offer free WP003 seminars, which last approximately one hour each, to help you prepare for the exam. Keep an eye out for them during the few weeks before your test date.

TurnItIn

Instructors, you can now open a drop box to allow your students to submit their papers directly to TurnItIn, which checks for originality. The Grademark feature allows you to add comments directly to your students’ papers, and the ETS e-reader gives your students in-depth grammar assistance.

Integration Instructor User Manual Available

TurnItln.com has created an easy-to-follow manual that walks you through the process of incorporating TurnItln resources and tools into your classes on Moodle. Designed with a handy index and step-by-step instruction, this manual quickly answers integration questions. View it at pages.turnitin.com/rs.iparadigms/Moodle_Integration_Instructor_Manual.pdf.

Their/There/They’re

- Their is possessive. Her, which is also possessive, is in their. Think their.
- There is a place. Here, which is also a place, is in there. Think there.
- They’re is a contraction for they are. The apostrophe is standing in for the a in are.
Welcome to the Writers Bloc! I’m sure we’ve all experienced writer’s block at some point in our writing lives, that dreaded wall of nothingness staring back at you from the blank computer screen with the blinking cursor taunting you in its antsy, techno dance. The Writers Bloc is our answer. When you allow others into your writing process, this vacuous veil disintegrates and your options become limitless.

In this brand-new resurrection of our newsletter, you will find some of the classic columns, such as our Spotlights, but we’ve added some that we hope you will enjoy! Taken for Granite is our help column, and the title reflects that there are a lot of commonly misunderstood ideas in writing. Jeremy Says; Mickey Says is a writing controversy debate between two of our writing associates. This shows that while there are rules to writing, there are at least “two sides” to everything. Remember as an author, you have ultimate power of your paper.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Writers Bloc, and we look forward to seeing you in the Writing Lab!

- Jennifer Weiss

Jeremy Says; Mickey Says

How many spaces should go after a period?

Jeremy Says: One

Two spaces after a period is wrong, as it is an artifact of an antiquated system.

In the middle of the last century the typewriter became as common in households as computers are now. Typewriters use a monospace system, which mimics the typesetting of older printing presses. This means that every letter took up the exact same space on the page as every other letter—a lowercase L and an uppercase W, while obviously different in size, took up the same space on the page. This necessitated two spaces after a period in order to differentiate between two sentences.

Monospaced typewriters didn’t last long, but the habit remains. Even on computers, which default to a more dynamic font, this habit persists. This flies in the face of the standards set by many typographers and style manuals (for example, the Chicago Manual of Style), and while it may be the traditionally taught spacing, it’s irrevocably wrong.

Mickey Says: Two

I still own a record player. Yes, a record player. From the 80s.

A common argument in the debate about one or two spaces after a period is that the monospace system necessitated two spaces after a period simply because every character took up the same amount of space. This seems to be a justification (no pun intended) after the fact, a fallacy based on present-mindedness. The fact that a period in monotype space takes up the same space as every other character makes delineation between sentences more clear than a dynamic font. Whatever the reason two spaces began as the norm, monospaced necessity was doubtful. Maybe it just looked better. Maybe it still does.

But is it antiquated? Perhaps. So is my record player, which happens to sound infinitely better than my iPod. Or my CD player. Beautifully imperfect, with skip here and a pop there. An “antiquated” system is not an inferior system. It all comes down to preference. And beauty is in the eye of the beholder typist.
Writing is Important!

In all jobs, you encounter memos, reports, proposals, etc. It is unthinkable to send college graduates who are not competent writers into the work force.

“In an electronically connected world, other people may never meet you personally and know you only from your writing,” says Dr. Stephen Overmann, associate professor of biology. “If you write well in your communications with people, they will assume that they are dealing with an intelligent, capable person. If you write poorly, then the other persons will have reason to question your competence and abilities.”

This kind of writing cannot be learned in a course or two in college. In the “writing across the curriculum” model followed at Southeast, students get writing instruction at all levels and in all disciplines. All faculty are responsible for writing instruction.

“I push my students to work to their potential, especially with respect to writing,” says Dr. Erin Fluegge-Woolf, assistant professor of management and winner of the “Write Approach” Mrs. Missouri award. “The skills they use and practice will make them better leaders and employees now and in the future.”

In today’s career market, it is critical to have every advantage. Before students graduate, they must pass a writing proficiency exam. Employers consistently comment that this makes our graduates attractive.

Our CWE staff helps you analyze and improve your writing in terms of grammar, citations, and clarity. We will not write or correct for you but will work with what you have to improve your writing. Input is offered face-to-face for students, faculty, staff, and community members and via Moodle for students.

Alumna Spotlight: Lynne Dozier


The Writer’s Voice has lessons on the history of the English language, SAT and AP test-taking strategies, improving vocabulary, media literacy and the importance of reading, and evaluation in developing a writer’s style. She weaves students’ voices, presented by poetry and essays, into the book, as well.

Lynne developed the resource from materials and handouts she used with her students over her 30-year career. She has taught courses ranging from advanced placement to practical and creative writing courses. She says she loves planning lessons, building a curriculum, and “watching teenagers grow into confident, effective writers with distinctive ‘voices’ and style.”

“Staying in touch with them as they pursued careers in a variety of fields where they could use their communicative skills to make a difference in the world has brought me great joy,” she says.

In addition, Lynne provides staff development and training sessions for other teachers, therefore indirectly affecting the students they will teach. Current education statistics and the encouragement of her students inspired her to create the book in an effort to help students from other schools improve their writing skills.

For the full story on Lynne, visit news.semo.edu/17378.
Hatice Winners Announced

*Helix: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*

2013-2014 academic year winners have been announced. They are . . .

- **Graduate:** Marybeth Niederkorn, “Aristotelian Aspects of Wile E. Coyote’s Eternal Pursuit of the Road Runner”
- **Undergraduate:** Lindsey Rudolph, “The Fallacy of Eugenics”
- **Cover Design:** Sarah Holstein

This year’s edition is expected to be published this spring.

*Helix* publishes undergraduate and graduate research from across all disciplines at Southeast. It provides students with the opportunity to develop research and writing skills and gain experience in preparing and submitting manuscripts for publication. Students of all levels, including graduating seniors, are encouraged to submit their researched writing for consideration. *Helix* is published annually and is distributed to Southeast faculty, staff, and students.

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Graduate Assistant Spotlight: Shana Scott

**A Geek at Heart**

Shana Scott, a self-described geek at heart, loves stories. She reads and writes books, comics, manga, and fan fiction. She also plays video games, and each week she and her friends get together to eat dinner and watch their favorite television shows.

“I don’t care what medium it is; as long as it has a good story, I’ll love it,” she says. “I would be just as happy talking Star Trek as Shakespeare.”

Shana will receive her Master of Arts in English: Professional Writing this May. After graduation, she hopes to be an editor in a publishing house and eventually write for a living, her “dream job.”

“I’ve always liked telling stories,” she says, and “I enjoy putting together all the pieces that go into making books.”

Shana has already had her stories published in *Bewildering Stories* and *Journey* magazines, and she placed Honorable Mention in the 2012 Tuscany Prize for Catholic Fiction for her short story, “The Morning Star.”

She has helped publish several e-books for the University Press, and last year in the CWE she revamped *Helix: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Research.* She also came up with the idea of turning the cover design into a contest.

Shana created and maintains the CWE’s Facebook page, as well as updates the CWE website.
World News: Apostrophe Controversy

Across the United Kingdom apostrophes are disappearing from street signs. This is not a case of vandalism but a result of city and district implemented bans on the use of the beloved punctuation marks.

Such places as Birmingham city and the district of Devon have adopted apostrophe abolishment policies, according to BBC News. Businesses including Waterstones, a high-end bookstore chain, have followed suit. Formerly Waterstone’s, the apostrophe has been dropped, as stated by BBC News, due to technology’s influence.

Luisa Zissman, star of BBC’s The Apprentice, also decided to omit the apostrophe for her business, Bakers Toolkit, claiming that the look without the apostrophe appeals to her more, as well as digital reasons, BBC News said.

But not all are for the removal of apostrophes. Organizations such as Good Grammar Company and the Apostrophe Protection Society encourage the preservation of the punctuation mark on street signs.

Some members of government agree. According to The Telegraph, after Cambridge banned apostrophes from the city’s street signs, Cabinet Minister Eric Pickles publicly criticized the decision. Activists referred to as “guerrilla grammarians” began adding apostrophes to “incorrect” signs with markers, and shortly afterward, The Guardian reported that Cambridge City Council reversed its apostrophe ban.

What’s next? The period? The question mark? We predict the Oxford comma (the final comma before the conjunction in a series), as its use already varies depending on the style being used, or the second space after a period, which is already being phased out of most style guides. (See Jeremy Says; Mickey Says on page 2.)

Teaching Assistant Spotlight: Ally Holland

From Scotland to Southeast

Ally Holland, an international student from Scotland, says it was difficult initially to adjust to life in the United States when she moved here with her family in 2001.

“I stuck out like a sore thumb, especially with my accent,” she says. “Everything’s a lot bigger and faster in the United States, so that was an adjustment.”

With her international perspective, Ally says, “I feel I have more compassion and understanding for students, especially for those who are not from the area. I know first-hand how difficult it is to fit in and adjust to life in the United States, so I really try to be considerate of that. This comes into play in writing mostly. Not all countries teach writing and formatting the same way the United States does.”

Ally honed her writing and formatting skills at Southeast while receiving her Bachelor of Science in English Education. She is currently earning her Master of Arts in English: English Studies while teaching two EN140 classes. After graduation, she plans to teach high school English.

In her spare time, Ally spends time with her friends, family, and new husband, Trevor. She also reads and bakes, “but not at the same time,” she jokes, adding, “I’m crazy about dogs and organizing.”
Student Worker Spotlight: Ashley Bankston
Dedicated to Helping Women

Ashley Bankston, student worker in the Center for Writing Excellence, is a nursing major dedicated to improving women’s health. She became inspired after noticing a lot of fellow teenagers did not take proper care of themselves.

“At a young age, it’s common for girls to be unaware of their bodies due to a lack of education and informative teachings by parents or guardians,” she says. “As a women’s health nurse practitioner, I want to be able to help young women understand the importance of taking care of their bodies and to uplift those who may deal with tragic life events.”

Ashley is already making a difference in others’ lives. In her spare time, she volunteers with Junior Achievement and Big Brothers Big Sisters. After graduation, Ashley plans to work in a clinic or hospital in her hometown of St. Louis before returning to school to earn her master’s degree in nursing.

“The fact that I can further my education in an area that genuinely interests me is mind-blowing,” she says.
Center for Writing Excellence: Writing Lab

The Writing Lab offers free assistance for students, faculty, staff, and community members. We help with any part of the writing process, from brainstorming to development to citations. The Writing Lab is not for weak writers only. Good writers know the value of receiving feedback during the writing process. Appointments are not necessary but are recommended for papers more than 10 pages long.

Students may also submit their drafts for review via the Online Writing Lab (OWL). You can usually expect a reply within 48 hours.

Tutor News

Conferences

Jennifer Weiss, Marge Phillips, Mickey Heath, and Cynthia Kubik attended the Midwest Writing Centers Association’s Writing the “L” conference Oct. 17-19 in Skokie, Ill.


September Hinkle and Erin Miller will present “A Study of Social Media’s Effect on Student Collaboration” at the Midwest Graduate Students Conference on Writing April 11-12 at Southeast.

Marybeth Niederkorn will present a paper, entitled “Aristotelian Aspects of Wile E. Coyote’s Eternal Pursuit of the Road Runner,” at the Midwest Graduate Students Conference on Writing April 11-12 at Southeast. She presented creative work at the Ozark Creative Writers Conference Oct. 10-12 in Eureka Springs, Ark.


Addie Scoggin is presenting her paper, “Trickster vs. Carwin,” at the National Undergraduate Literature Conference (NULC) April 3-5 at Weber State University in Ogden, Utah.

Emily Vines presented a paper, titled “A Rhetoric of Meows: Comparing Kenneth Burke’s A Rhetoric of Motives to the Everyday Actions of Cats,” at the Midwest PCA/ACA in St. Louis.

Dan Wilkens will present his paper, “Composition vs. Canon,” at the Midwest Graduate Students Conference on Writing April 11-12 at Southeast.

Published


Clare Paniccia’s paper, “I Cannot Be a Man with Wishing, So I Will Die a Woman with Grieving: The Conflict of Feminine Free Will and Respect in Much Ado About Nothing,” is being published in Helix.

Shana Scott is presenting “Vampires, Werewolves, and Fae—Oh My! Teaching the Paranormal Novel” at the Midwest Graduate Students Conference on Writing April 11-12 at Southeast.

Torey Steven’s paper, “Doubling in King Henry IV Part One,” is being published in Literature Magazine.

Dan Wilkens’ paper, “Technology and the Evolving Classroom,” is being published in Helix.

Graduating

Marybeth Niederkorn, Shana Scott, and Emily Vines: Master of Arts in English

Addie Scoggin: Bachelor of Arts in English