

Welcome to the Class of 2024!

The Writing Program welcomes you to Haverford and looks forward to your arrival! In the meantime, we need your help as we plan for one of the foundational experiences of your first year: the Writing Seminar. Writing Seminars are integral to a Haverford education and every student (without exception) takes one in the fall or spring of the first year in order to fulfill the Writing Requirement. This page describes policies related to the Writing Seminar and explains what you must do before **Wednesday, July 15 at midnight** to ensure your placement in a course that matches your interests.

Writing Seminars: All writing seminars pair writing instruction with intellectual inquiry; all pay close attention to all stages of the composing processes. Different seminars may extend intellectual inquiry into visual studies; the interrogation of the literary canon; Quaker history; categories of difference (racial, sexual, religious, and national identity); popular culture; or engaged social practice. Consider not only those courses that play on your strengths but also those that will stretch your interests in new directions.

Seminars are limited to 12 students and meet twice weekly for 90 minutes; all engage in revision as essential to writing, either through additional small group tutorials, or peer review in the class and/or individual conferences to discuss student writing. All writing seminars agree that writing is not simply a reflection of what we have learned but a means by which we understand the materials we encounter, and that we are, in fact, "writing to learn." Only these seminars fulfill the Writing Requirement.

Writing Intensive (WSI) seminars also teach critical inquiry and writing, meet twice weekly, and explore a thematically interrelated set of readings similar to the other seminars. They differ from other seminars in a few ways: they meet only in the fall; they are limited to 10 instead of 12 students; they include more time for individual conferences; and they break down the writing of academic essays into even more manageable and explicit steps. WSI seminars do not by themselves satisfy the Writing Requirement but are intended to prepare students to continue their study of writing in a second writing seminar in the spring semester which will satisfy the requirement. If you have not had much experience composing academic essays or would like to develop more confidence in your ability to meet the rigors of college-level writing, these seminars will encourage, strengthen and develop those abilities.

How Placement Works: When assigning students to sections, the Writing Program will consider several factors: your own appraisal of your writing competence; your preferences for particular courses; SAT verbal and SAT II Writing scores; and a placement essay that you will soon submit.

What You Need to Do: To help us in the placement process, you need to 1) inform us of your preferences and 2) write a short essay.

- [Complete the preference form](#). Consider your options and let us know both which kind of seminar you think is best for you and which particular seminars you find most appealing. You will be asked to rank your top five seminar preferences. Complete descriptions of all seminars can be found on the [Courses page](#), and are also included in the online placement form. Courses which will be taught exclusively online are marked as such on the list of courses.
- Write and submit your placement essay. For your own benefit in being matched with an appropriate seminar, and in accord with the Haverford Honor Code, you must write this essay without assistance from anyone (and without consulting outside sources).

These materials are due by **Wednesday, July 15 at midnight**. Students will not be able to register for the fall semester until they complete the writing placement

If you have any questions regarding either the Writing Seminars or the placement process, please feel free to contact [Debora Sherman](mailto:dsherman@haverford.edu) (dsherman@haverford.edu).

Writing Seminar Placement Essay Instructions

Placement essays are one tool (among others) that the Writing Program uses to assign incoming students to appropriate Writing Seminars.

Guidelines

When writing the essay, please observe the following guidelines.

- Limit the length to approximately 750-1000 words

- Be sure to include an essay title and your name.
- Compose the essay without any assistance, either in the form of other people or outside commentary. You cannot use the web or the library for research. You are, however, permitted to use a dictionary (online or paper) for words which are unfamiliar to you. And you can use reference tools (online or otherwise) to identify names which you don't recognize. Your best interests will be served only if the Writing Program can make an honest appraisal of how you write on your own. This will be your first opportunity to put Haverford's Honor Code into practice.

Assignment:

Read Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" at: <https://www.haverford.edu/writing-program/placement/instructions> or as printed below.

Here's the assignment:

This now widely-celebrated piece was first published in 1963. Drawing upon evidence from the "Letter from Birmingham Jail", construct a response that answers the question: what does this mean now? Your essay should be well-structured, clear, and thoughtful in its approach to the subject.

CITATION: For this essay you can use parenthetical citation within your text where the page numbers for direct quotations or paraphrased material from the article appear in parentheses after the cited passage.

When evaluating your essay, Writing Program faculty will draw upon the following criteria:

- Engagement and reasoning: How well do you demonstrate an understanding of the argument while still establishing and supporting your own position?
- Structure and style: Does the organization help or hinder readers? Is there enough control of particular sentences to allow us to follow your reasoning?

HONOR CODE

I accept full responsibility under the Haverford Council Honor System for my conduct in preparing this essay.

(Signed) _____