Dissertation Boot Camp  
LA 380  
Unique No. 80595

Summer I 2015, June 4 – June 19  
Monday – Friday 9AM – 12:15 PM  
CLA 2.606

Instructor: Dr. Esther Raizen, Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Studies, College of Liberal Arts  
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Office Hours: Thursday, 1PM – 4 PM, and by appointment

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Office Hours: By appointment

I. Course Description:

The goal of this intensive writing course is to provide graduate students at the dissertation-writing phase with the logistic framework and tools they need for high productivity and successful completion of their dissertation projects. Course meetings will include structured writing time, editing and peer review, discussions of writing techniques, and presentations on time management, wellness, and work-life balance.

Prerequisite: Application required. Open to doctoral students in the College of Liberal Arts who have successfully defended a dissertation prospectus or completed their comprehensive exams. Students who have completed some or all of their dissertation research will benefit the most from the course. Dissertation supervisor approval is required.

Daily attendance is mandatory.

II. Objectives:

During this course, students will:

• Write roughly 2-3 pages per day, completing one 20-30 page dissertation chapter by the end of the Boot Camp.
• Assess strengths, weaknesses, and writing preferences in order to develop long-term writing strategies.
• Experiment with a variety of time management techniques for effectively handling a large writing project like the dissertation.
• Practice organizational tools and generative writing techniques.
• Provide constructive criticism on peers' writing and exercise self-evaluation.
• Consider aspects of effective communication with the dissertation supervisor and committee members.
• Develop strategies for balancing personal wellness—both physical and mental—with academic and professional demands.

III. Format and Procedures:

The course will begin with a writing workshop presented by writing specialists. Most of the remaining classes will include a 30-minuted to 1-hour presentation and discussion from faculty mentors, writing specialist, or wellness experts, concluding with 2 to 2.5 hour writing blocks. Other sessions will be devoted entirely to writing. Each class will begin with a light breakfast.

Students should prepare to write independently for all but the first day of the Dissertation Boot Camp and should bring to class all necessary resources including notes, outlines, and references. Students are required to bring a **personal laptop computer** with them each day of the class. We expect students to continue working outside of class, and will provide a dedicated on-campus writing space for interested students.

On Monday afternoon of weeks two and three, students will be required to email a weekly summary to Jason Leubner (jsn.leubner@austin.utexas.edu) reflecting on the week that passed. This email message should respond to three questions:

1) What did you learn last week?
2) What do you need to do/learn this week?
3) How are we doing?

We encourage you to talk to us! If you are running into difficulties, or when special needs arise, let us know right away, and we will try to accommodate you to the best of our abilities. Don’t wait for problems to get out of control.

The **Dissertation Boot Camp Blog**: [https://sites.utexas.edu/dissertationbootcamp](https://sites.utexas.edu/dissertationbootcamp) will be your source for information during the course including schedule updates, assignments, and resources. Please check the blog frequently. Students are invited to share resources they have found useful on the blog as well. Please email post suggestions to apter@austin.utexas.edu

IV. Course Schedule:

*This course schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced both in class and on the Dissertation Boot Camp Blog.*
Week 1

TH, 4-Jun  9-9:30  Introductions
         9:30-12:15  Writing Presentation and Guided Writing, UWC Mentors

F, 5-Jun  9-9:30  Faculty-led Discussion with Dr. Trish Roberts-Miller, Professor, Rhettoric and Writing and University Writing Center
         9:30-12:15  Writing Block
         HW 1  Prepare 2-3 pages for peer review;
         HW 2  Email Dr. Raizen, no later than June 6, an “elevator speech” version of your dissertation, and a paragraph-long version of the same.

Week 2

M, 8-Jun  9-12:15  Writing Block
         HW  Bring writing to exchange for peer review

T, 9-Jun  9-9:30  Presentation: Lindsay Wilson, Nutritionist with UT Housing and Food
         9:30-12:15  Writing Block
         HW  Prepare for peer review

W, 10-Jun  9-10  Coached Peer Review (UWC)
           10-12:15  Writing Block

TH, 11-Jun  9-10  Faculty-led discussion with Dr. Chris Kirk, Professor, Anthropology
               10-12:15  Writing Block

F, 12-Jun  9-9:30  Presentation: Tatem Oldham, Liberal Arts Career Services
         9:30-12:15  Writing Block

Week 3

M, 15-Jun  9-9:45  Graduate Coordinators Panel
           9:45-10  Esther Raizen: Dissertation Embargo
           10-12:15  Writing Block

T, 16-Jun  9-9:30  Dr. Kate Czar, Counseling and Mental Health Center
         9:30-12:15  Writing Block

W, 17-Jun  9-12:15  Writing Block

TH, 18-Jun  9-9:30  Faculty-led discussion with Dr. Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, Associate Professor, Comparative Literature
         9:30-12:15  Writing Block

F, 19-Jun  9-9:30  Life After Boot Camp: Setting up Writing Groups
         9:30-12:15  Writing Block
         **12:30- 2:00  Lunch (GEB 3.312)**
V. Course Requirements:

A. Class attendance and participation policy: Students accepted into the course have agreed to attend each day of the program from 9 AM to 12:15 PM, with the understanding that any unexcused tardiness or absence may result in no credit for the course. Excused absences should be discussed with the instructor in advance, and will be approved under special circumstances at the instructor's discretion.

B. Course Readings/Materials: This course has no textbooks or assigned reading. Materials for writing exercises will be distributed in class or posted on the course blog. A list of optional readings will also be posted on the course blog.

C. Grading Procedures: The course is offered on the Credit/No Credit basis. Credit will be awarded based on completion. Attendance, participation, and preparedness for class activities, will be considered in awarding course credit.

VI. Other University Notices and Policies

A. Academic Integrity: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, visit the Student Judicial Services website at www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs.

B. Religious Holy Days: By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of pending absences prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If students must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, students should complete missed work within a reasonable time after the absence approved by the instructor.

C. Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students: All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/utmail/1564.

D. Documented Disability Statement: Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD.

   a. Please notify the course instructor as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).
b. Please notify the course instructor as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for physical activities are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the relevant days.

c. Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD’s website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssl/for_cstudents.php

E. Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

F. Emergency Evacuation Policy: Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

a. Students should familiarize themselves with all exit doors of the classroom and the building.

b. Notify the instructor in writing during the first week of class if you require assistance to evacuate.

c. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instructions provided by class instructors.

d. Do not re-enter a building unless authorized to do so by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.