

Developing Ideas: Writing the Seminar Paper

LUNCH AND LEARN WORKSHOP TWO
Presented by the Center of Academic Literacy



Agenda

INTRODCUCTIONS

WRITING THE SEMINAR PAPER

PROGRESSION
AND DEVELOPMENT

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

FINAL INSIGHTS, QUESTIONS
AND SURVEY

workshop one recap: writing begins with reading

READING

- RECAP: WHAT IS AN ARGUMENT? HOW TO IDENTIFY AN ARGUMENT?
- READING WITH COURSE TOPICS IN MIND, AS WELL AS YOUR OWN AREAS OF INTEREST/CURIOSITY/QUESTIONS/CONTESTATIONS.
- WHAT DON'T YOU AGREE WITH?
- WHAT IS MISSING?
- WHOSE VOICES ARE MISSING?

WRITING LOGISTICS

- TIME NEEDED
- BRAINSTORMING PARTNER (MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH CAL!)
- OUTLINE, ROUGH DRAFT, REVISION (EDITING IS A PART OF THE WRITING PROCESS)

Writing the Seminar Paper



What is the Seminar paper?

The seminar paper is a genre specific to academic institutions. The seminar paper is a genre that is research intensive—meaning that it poses a new idea, no matter how larger or insignificant to a field of research or disciplinary study. Distinct from genres such as the review and the report, the seminar paper **does not summarize**. Instead, the seminar paper mostly uses inductive reasoning to present a new and inventive idea to a specific discipline such as Ethics, Literature, History, Theology, and Philosophy.

Moreover, it is important to note that each discipline has its own style of writing and its own expectations for the seminar paper. Thus, it is important to communicate with faculty members about their disciplinary expectations.

Writing the Seminar Paper

1. Introductions
 - Thesis statements
2. Paragraph Structure
 - Topic sentences
 - Introducing quotes
 - Explanation
3. Progression and Development
 - Cohesion and transition sentences
4. Conclusion
 - Summarize essay and further questions



Introductions



The introduction must leave the reader with a clear understanding of the specific subject area that your essay will investigate. Defining your essay’s scope in this way often requires distinguishing your specific focus from the larger discourse on your topic.



It is important to note that while the introduction defines the scope of your paper and begins to sketch your ideas and concerns, it also houses your argument: the thesis statement.

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Philosophy 789

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On the Thicket: Foucault and the Repressive Transformation of Sexual Irregularities

Published in 1978, *The History of Sexuality Volume One* by Michel Foucault operates as a philosophical investigation of sexual discourses, for which repression and power work co-constitutively to produce a play of silences: Repression, “the sentence to disappear,”¹ functions also as the “affirmation of nonexistence.”² For Foucault, the play between negation and affirmation as a logical form performs itself in history. There exists, evident within the history of sexual discourse, a dichotomy that enacts power through the guise of prohibition. It is through a structure of repression that the phenomena of sex and sexuality is not only relegated to an *open* secrecy but also earnestly *spoken* as a form of resistance against “the powers that be”³—illustrating that a link eternally grows between the approval of the law and the transgression of the law, a *root system* operating as the ground of relation between power and sex.

For Foucault, the sector of repression that attempts to transgress the law presents the most difficulty for philosophical analysis; for it is through a structure of repression that the liberatory *speaking* of prohibited sexual discourse performs a trick—making an appearance (or argument for itself) as transgression by way of “revolutionary”⁴ confession while maintaining the normative structure of power. The traditional confession and affirmative repression are rhizomatic: *They have traces of one another in them.* The traditional iteration of repression functions as a “disquieting enigma”

¹ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume One: An Introduction* (New York: Random House, 1978), 4.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.,7.
⁴ Ibid., 8.

Thesis Statements

Word Count:1499 2

of the Christian pastoral⁵ while the sexual discourse of liberation practices has presented itself in the form of preaching—“[a] great sexual sermon.”⁶ Foucault fortifies this formulation of repression through an analysis of sexual categorization or the “whole thicket of disparate sexualities.”⁷ His claim is marked by the notion that the age of repression was not gilded by interdiction and prohibition but by the incorporation of “perversions” that punctuate and intensify pleasures that are utilized by the spreading “persistence of power.”⁸ This spread of power over “sexual irregularities,”⁹ illustrated in Foucault’s use of the term “thicket” (translated from the French *la végétation*), suggesting that these “disparate sexualities”¹⁰ were tamed through categorization. It is in this thicket that Foucault’s account of repression becomes almost Edenic with the most terrifying implications, a myth of human dominion over nature and over sex and sexuality. Foucault knows this to be true: A cut is required for irregular sexualities to emerge discursively, for the homosexual to become a species.¹¹ **For this close reading, I will trace the “thicket” or the transformation of the homosexual, from a “disparate” sexual phenomenon, into a “personage” punctuating the violence that categorization, discursivity, and *speaking* enacts. Further, I will follow, in the chapter titled “The Perverse Implantation,” Foucault’s second major point of development: “an *incorporation of perversions* and a new *specification of individuals*.”¹²**

Attempting to disentangle the spread of repressive power over peripheral sexualities, Foucault mirrors the complex work of repression as it incorporates, through the ancient epoch and through the modern era, various forms of taboos and perversions into its discourse of prohibitions by incorporating a similar cyclical movement into the fabric of his own argument. For Foucault,

⁵ Ibid., 35.
⁶ Ibid., 7.
⁷ Ibid., 41.
⁸ Ibid., 49.
⁹ Ibid., 36.
¹⁰ Ibid., 41.
¹¹ Ibid., 43.
¹² Ibid., 42.

The thesis statement is the central claim your essay will make about your chosen topic. Since the topic area must first be described and motivated, the thesis statement is usually placed near the end of the introduction.

It is also important to note the following: Every piece of writing that you write as a student—beyond even the seminar paper—should have a clear and evidence-based thesis statement.

Body Paragraphs

Unlike your introduction, body paragraphs are sequences of writing that support your thesis statement. Each body paragraph is its own sub-idea related to the premise (thesis) that you put forth in the introduction. **These paragraphs develop your thesis and are the building blocks for your essay.** It is important to note that unlike the introduction which is general and broad, **these paragraphs are detailed oriented and should be separate points that build upon each other.**



Paragraph Structure

1. Each paragraph should have the following elements:
2. A Topic Sentence
3. Context
4. Introduction Tag
5. Explanation of the Quote

Topic Sentence:

- The first or second sentence of the paragraph that introduces the idea of the paragraph
 - EX: "Further, the thicket operates as an extended metaphor for the unknowable."
- **Context:**
 - The background information that allows readers to understand the point you are attempting to make
- **Introduction Tag:**
 - Ex: "According to Foucault" or "Foucault writes" or "Foucault insists"
- **Explanation of Quote:**
 - This explanation makes and solidifies your point explicitly
 - EX: " In this sentence, Foucault signals, through the usage of the word "root," the thicket of the unknowable. Root, here, operates as the movement of homosexuality as simply an action to be forbidden and toward the emergence of the homosexual—the secrecy of the act as the foundation and site of an individual's being."

Progression and Development



Cohesion and Transition Sentences

1. Transition Sentences:

- Transition sentences bring out the logical relation between ideas, sentences, paragraphs, and sections of a paper. They can help readers understand how sentences and paragraphs work together to lead to a larger idea.
- EX: Attempting to disentangle the spread of repressive power over peripheral sexualities, Foucault mirrors the complex work of repression as it incorporates, through the ancient epoch and through the modern era, various forms of taboos and perversions into its discourse of prohibitions by incorporating a similar cyclical movement into the fabric of his own argument"



In writing, cohesions—sometimes called flow—is the manner in which your writing works together to not only present an idea but also to ground it as evidence based and rational.



It is important to note that the manner in which paragraphs are organized speaks to cohesion. Further, the development of cohesion is its own argument.



Paragraph sequencing and transition sentences work together to create flow,

Transition Words

Certain words and phrases signal the transition from one idea to the other such as the following:

- Adverbs
- Adverbial phrases
- Participle phrases
- Adjectives
- Adjectival phrases

Example Transition Words

To Add:

- and, again, and then, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, nor, too, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, in addition, first (second, etc.)

To Compare:

- whereas, but, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, where, compared to, up against, balanced against, vis a vis, but, although, conversely, meanwhile, after all, in contrast, although this may be true

To Prove:

- because, for, since, for the same reason, obviously, evidently, furthermore, moreover, besides, indeed, in fact, in addition, in any case, that is.

To Show Emphasis:

- definitely, extremely, obviously, in fact, indeed, in any case, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, perennially, eternally, never, emphatically, unquestionably, without a doubt, certainly, undeniably, without reservation

Organizing Body Paragraphs



In addition to having good topic sentences, paragraphs must have a clear and logical organization. There are many ways to organize paragraphs. The most common patterns are the following: classification, chronological sequence, evidence and illustration, contrast and comparison, and cause and effect.



As the writer, you should ensure that the structure or organization of the paragraph is clear to the reader and appropriate for the type of document you are working on. Sometimes, knowing how a paragraph is organized can serve this purpose.

For Example

power, especially regarding the modern work of psychiatry, shows itself as something other than unassuming prohibition and ushers a “[*thicket*]of disparate sexualities” into discourse through a taxonomy or deliberately as an “implantation of perversions”¹³—an activity or event of dominion over the nonexistent. In this case, it is a dominion over the development of homosexuality (“a category of forbidden acts”¹⁴) toward the personage of the homosexual. Foucault demonstrates, by establishing an extended metaphor that can be traced along historical reality, the ways that discursive inclusion retraces the limit of exclusion, which is another transformation of *terrifying* inclusion.

Further, the thicket operates as an extended metaphor for the unknowable. In this section of Foucault’s argument, he uses words and phrases that gesture both toward nature and toward the historical development of the act of sodomy into an account of the soul. Considering modernity’s influence in the rephrasing of homosexuality, Foucault writes the following: “Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present to him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away.”¹⁵ In this sentence, Foucault signals, through the usage of the word “root,” the thicket of the unknowable. Root, here, operates as the movement of homosexuality as simply an action to be forbidden and toward the emergence of the homosexual—the secrecy of the act as the foundation and site of an individual’s being. Still, it was the inscription of the principle of repression that provided the secret of the homosexual’s being (homosexual actions being “everywhere present in him”). Through inscription, the taming (or a naming) of the thicket of nonexistence, the homosexual and the actions of homosexuality emerge as knowable within a category of persons—while still operating from a position of exclusion—through the work of repressive power.

¹³ Ibid.,48.

¹⁴ Ibid.,43.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Further

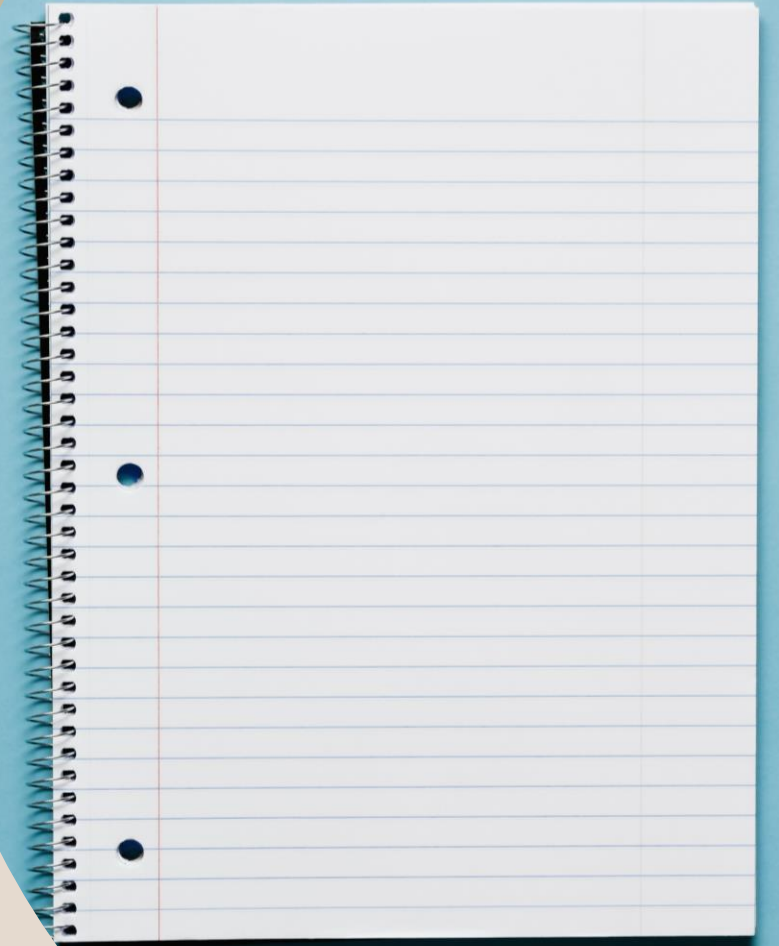
Moreover, in this section, the metaphorical significance of the taming of the thicket of disparate sexualities through the doubling feature of repressive power deepens, gesturing toward an ongoing structure of the Christian metanarrative in the scientism of modern psychiatry. Foucault continues: "It was consubstantial with him, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature."¹⁶ In this quotation, Foucault traces the transformation of the action (sin) of homosexuality toward the category (nature). This sentence demonstrates Foucault's commitment to mirroring in his argument the doubling mechanism of repression. It can be read in two (though not limited to the readings espoused here) prominent ways: 1) In modernity, the homosexual simply becomes readable one with his action. 2) Through the lens of psychiatry, homosexual actions become constitutive of his spirit or "nature"; no longer sinful for there is a scientific *raison d'être* for his being: "a natural order of disorder."¹⁷ Still, Foucault's polysemic use the term "consubstantial" toward a critique of modern psychiatry is purposeful: "consubstantial" contains within it a theological connotation meaning "of the Son as being 'one in substance' with the Father. Sometimes also said of Christ's humanity in relation to man."¹⁸ What Foucault is attempting to draw out, with this use of the term, is the transformation of bodies, through the *ajuster* and *violece* of discursive unity. There is a fundamental cut, the plant (now a corpse) severed from the root, necessitated by the work categorization and inclusive exclusivity. This, perhaps, is Foucault's primary critique of modern psychiatry: It remains within the performance of a Christian mythos, performing a symmetrical dominion over "nature," charged with the treaties and machete to name it. Psychiatry has not rid itself of that *a priori* or given divine call to exercise its process of generating knowledge through violence.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁸ OED. It is important to note that I am trusting that the English translation of "consubstantial" is a direct translation for this argument, as I do not have access to the original French.

By Way of Conclusion



Conclusion Paragraphs

While the conclusion paragraph is often framed as a restatement of the thesis and the other substantial arguments of the paper, the conclusion is also placed to push the research further, to re-emphasize conundrums or paradoxes and to ask further questions.

It is important that you do not in your conclusion become comfortable with summary—instead lead your readers to the edge of your analysis or the edge of your thought.





Understanding Assignments



What Is the Assignment Asking of Me? Who is my Audience?

- WHAT ARE THE MAIN QUESTIONS BEING POSED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT?
- WHAT ARE THE VERBS AND NOUNS? (i.e., “design,” “explore,” “describe,” etc.)
- WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSIGNMENT?
- WHAT ARE THE SUB-QUESTIONS?
- WHO ARE YOU WRITING FOR?
- ARE THERE MULTIPLE AUDIENCES?
- HOW SHOULD YOU COMPLETE THE TASK? (WHAT DOES YOUR AUDIENCE WANT?)

The Pre-Writing Process



OUTLINE WITH THE SPECIFIC CRITERIA OF THE ASSIGNMENT IN MIND



HOW DO YOUR IDEAS CONNECT TO
CREATE UNITY, COHESION, AND
COHERENCE?

THIS IS VITAL FOR YOUR PAPER'S ORGANIZATION
AND FLOW.



DEVELOPING THE FIRST BRAINSTORM



START WRITING WITHOUT EDITING OR CENSORING YOURSELF; JUST GET IT
DOWN ON THE PAGE. YOU ARE CRAFTING A PAPER, AND THIS IS A PROCESS.



THINK OUT LOUD/READ OUT LOUD AND ASK, "DOES THIS MAKE SENSE?"

You Try!

Think-Pair-Share

For five minutes, write a thesis statement for an upcoming assignments. After five minutes, talk with a partner about how you could develop this idea into a seminar paper. Afterward, we will share with the group our findings



CAL SURVEY

[HTTPS://CTSNET.MYWCONLINE.COM/SURVEY.PHP](https://ctsnet.mywconline.com/survey.php)



Thank you from CAL !

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