



Strategies for the Struggle: Conversations about Thesis Writing

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Monday, May 1 (ECHA L1-490)	
8:30	<p>Losing Our Way: Five Common Mistakes in Thesis Writing</p> <p>We manage our time like undergraduates. We wait until we feel “ready” to start writing. We ask our supervisors the wrong kinds of questions at the wrong times. And we expect perfection. This session will explore the causes and consequences of these errors for people who are struggling to begin, or to continue, a thesis project.</p> <p><i>Presenter: Dr. Rob Desjardins, Graduate Writing Advisor, Student Success Centre</i></p>
10:00	<p>Break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee and tea available
10:30	<p>Less is More: A Contemplative Approach to Writing and Reading</p> <p>Slowing down the writing and reading process may sound counter-productive. However, in the end it can save time and improve the quality of your work. In this experiential session we will explore ways for you to mindfully slow down, take a breath, and hopefully find renewed inspiration.</p> <p><i>Presenter: Norbert Krumins, Chair, Department of Theological Studies, St. Stephen's College</i></p>
12:00	<p>Break for Lunch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to eat on their own
12:30	<p>Topic Mapping Your Thesis Project: From Ideas and Connections to Evidence Types, Searchable Concepts, and Citation</p> <p>Stepping back and visualizing your thesis project can shed new perspectives on connections, gaps, and focal points you might not have noticed. Bump up the value by using your map to identify types of evidence, collect precise terminology for library searching, and track citations. The focus of this workshop will be on creating the start of your own project map. Come prepared to sketch out and share your ideas. No artistic ability required.</p> <p><i>Presenter: David Sulz, Public Services Librarian</i></p>
2:00	<p>Break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee and tea available

2:30 **Brainstorming and Outlining: Generating Spaces for Ideas to Land**

Brainstorming is essential to beginning all serious work and remains intermittently helpful throughout the scholarly writing process. Brainstorming is where it all starts and where the ideas incubate, develop, and gel. We will discuss different ways to cultivate productive brainstorming, as well as ways to move into outlining to capture the ideas before they slip away.

Presenter: Dr. Michael Lahey, Graduate Advisor/Editor, Student Success Centre

Tuesday, May 2 (ECHA L1-490)

8:30 **Dealing with Distractions**

Whether you struggle to get started or stay focused, this session will teach you practical strategies for successfully managing writing-related procrastination, distractions, and stress, as well as how to procrastinate "productively."

Presenter: Dr. Mebbie Bell, Director, Student Success Centre

10:00 **Break**

- Coffee and tea available

10:30 **Framed!: Building Communicative Structures in Graduate Writing**

The graduate writer regularly needs to signal to readers exactly why the project is unfolding as it does and why decisions have been made. The introduction, topic sentences, and transition paragraphs build this sturdy frame that contains the content, but other "metadiscursive markers" can also help review, remind, point forward, and account for unexpected shifts in material and direction. This session will look at the frame of writing that not only holds the subject matter in good order but creates its shape, directing both content and audience.

Presenter: Dr. Michael Lahey, Graduate Advisor/Editor, Student Success Centre

12:00 **Break for Lunch**

- Participants to eat on their own

12:30 **Erasing Bogus Barriers**

This session will consider frequently identified barriers to writing more and/or writing better and how to get over them.

Presenter: Sharon Stearns, Senior Learning Advisor, Student Success Centre

2:00 **Break**

- Coffee and tea available

2:30 **Communication Strategies to Mitigate Conflict with Your Supervisor**

Relationships between graduate students and their supervisors are always fraught with the potential for conflict. This is never truer – and good communication is never more essential – than when students write their theses. Revisions and critiques may prompt anxiety and defensiveness, leading to tensions between writers and their mentors. This session will consider strategies for avoiding conflict with your supervisor – and, when it does occur, for getting the mentoring relationship back on track.

Presenter: Brent Epperson, Graduate Ombudsperson, Student OmbudService

Wednesday, May 3 (ECHA L1-490)

8:30 **All Clear!: Seven Strategies for Clarity in Thesis-Writing**

You know that your sentences make sense, and you know that they contain the right information. Why, then, do they seem so...foggy? So abstract and imprecise? This session will offer a few tools for thesis-writers looking to enhance the clarity and vividness of their academic prose.

Presenter: Dr. Rob Desjardins, Graduate Writing Advisor, Student Success Centre

10:00 **Break**

- Coffee and tea available

10:30 **Keeping the Conversation Going: Panel and Participant Discussion**

Facilitators: Dr. Rob Desjardins & Stephen Kuntz, Writing Resources, Student Success Centre