

# UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO WRITING PROGRAM

## JOB APPLICATION PACKET 2018-2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

**SPRING APPLICATION DEADLINE: MONDAY, MAY 7, 2018 AT 1PM**

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We hire graduate students from all divisions and programs,  
to teach students from all divisions and programs.

NB: We hire graduate students who are covered by the terms of GAI (the Graduate Aid Initiative) **and** those who are **not** covered by GAI. If you are covered by the terms of GAI, please check with your department to see if it has any employment policies specific to GAI students. Some departments have asked their students in GAI funding to follow departmental policies for using GAI points and for accepting jobs outside their departments. Please check with your department to see if it has developed such a policy.

**APPLICATIONS FOR 2018-19 ACADEMIC YEAR  
JOBS AVAILABLE TO GRADUATE STUDENTS - BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS**

**Spring Application Deadline: Monday, May 7, 2018 at 1PM**

We offer several teaching positions for graduate students:

1. **Writing Interns in the Humanities Core** are graduate students who assist faculty by providing writing instruction in first-year Humanities Common Core courses. Interns typically work for two or three quarters of an academic year, depending on scheduling and course demand. These appointments are ordinarily renewable. To work as an Intern you must complete a training course given in Spring 2018 or Summer 2018. The training course is available for credit if you wish (HUMA 50000).
2. **Lectors** are graduate students teaching in the Advanced Professional Writing course (a.k.a. Little Red Schoolhouse, ENGL 13000). Lectors typically work two quarters a year, depending on scheduling and course demand. Lectors may also have opportunities to work in summer quarter. To work as a Lector, you must complete a training course given in Autumn 2018. This course may be taken for course credit (ENGL 50300). After you have taught as a Lector, you are automatically eligible to teach as a Humanities Writing Intern, or as a Lector in other courses.
3. **Writing Tutors** are graduate students who work individually with students in the Common Core sequences. The Writing Tutor appointment is for one quarter and it is ordinarily renewable each quarter. Writing Tutors will participate in a training course in Spring or Summer of 2018. After completing their training, Writing Tutors may also be eligible to work as Humanities Writing Interns. Tutors do not accrue GAI teaching points.

**You may obtain more information about the Lector, Writing Intern and Writing Tutor positions on-line at:**

<http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs>

**General Qualifications.**

- A. To teach as a Lector or a Writing Intern, you must in most cases be enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago. Students in the fifth year of Ph.D. study or beyond may be eligible for tuition grants. You need not be in advanced residency to apply and to work in these jobs.
- B. To teach as a Writing Tutor, you must be enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Chicago.

***Note for MAPH, MAPSS, MACSS, and CIR Applicants:** In 2018-19, we will continue a pilot initiative for hiring recent MAPH/MAPSS/MACSS/CIR graduates to work for our program. Please rest assured that you are an exception to our General Qualifications about current enrollment in a degree program. We welcome your application!*

- C. **We welcome applicants from throughout the University.** You do not need prior experience teaching writing; you do not need to be in a literature department; you do not need to have been an undergraduate major in rhetoric, composition, or literary studies.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

### We require

- **One Letter of Recommendation**

- The letter of recommendation should be from someone familiar with your teaching or your potential as a teacher. We read letters of recommendation carefully as we assess each applicant's potential for a position with our program. It's less important to get a letter from someone who can speak to the quality of your scholarly work than it is to get a letter evaluating the way you interact in a classroom.

If you have no previous teaching experience, we suggest you ask someone who has seen you participate in a class, seminar, or workshop. The letter does not have to be from a member of the University of Chicago faculty, so if you have teaching experience at another institution, a letter from a faculty member there may be best.

*Please ask your recommendation writer to send the letter by email to [writing-program@uchicago.edu](mailto:writing-program@uchicago.edu) by the application deadline.*

**You will submit all your other materials to us on the Writing Program web site by the application deadline. On the site, you will fill out an on-line Application Information form and submit the following:**

- **Personal Statement**
- **Personal Statement Cover Sheet** (included in this packet)
- **Writing Sample (up to 10 pages, double-spaced)**
- **Writing Sample Cover Sheet** (included in this packet)
- **Sample Student Paper Comment**
  - The sample student paper is included in this application packet. You may take up to an hour to comment on the paper, using any combination of end comments and marginal comments that you think appropriate.

**To ensure the anonymity of your Writing Sample, its Cover Sheet, and your student paper comment, please do not put your name on them.** (To anonymize bubble comments in Microsoft Word, go to Review>Protect Document>Privacy, and check “Remove Personal Information from this file on save”)

**Please prepare all the materials BEFORE you start submitting them on the web site. All your materials must be submitted at the same time. When you have these materials assembled and you are ready to fill out our application form, you may do so at our web site here:**

**<https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/content/writing-program-application-submission>**

## FORMS FOR APPLICATION MATERIALS

### Cover Sheet One: Cover Sheet for Personal Statement

*Please create a copy of this cover sheet as a separate Word file and submit it with your other application materials.*

Your first name:	Your last name:	Your email:

Recommender's name and email:

### Personal statement

*Please tell us about your teaching, editing and writing experience, your approach to writing, and anything else you think relevant to a position teaching for the Writing Program. You may paste your statement below or include it in a separate document. Your statement may exceed the length of this page; let us know what you think we need to know, using as many words as you need.*

## Cover Sheet Two: Cover Sheet for Writing Sample

Office Use Only: Application number \_\_\_\_\_

*Please paste this cover sheet to the beginning of your writing sample. To allow us to judge this portion of your application blind, **please do not include your name on this cover sheet or the writing sample itself***

1. Is your submission (part of) a:

dissertation chapter  journal article  conference paper

seminar paper for coursework

other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please provide a brief synopsis of the piece you have submitted: what is your overall argument, and/or what are the main points that you're trying to communicate to your readers?

3. Is this an excerpt of a larger project? If so, how does it fit into the larger project?

4. Who are your intended readers? What disciplines are you writing for, and what might your imagined audiences care about? [For example: perhaps you're writing for a Sociology audience, but also for a more interdisciplinary audience of scholars interested in urban studies.]

5. What about the piece are you most happy with?

7. Few writers believe their writing is perfect. You may feel that a central concept eluded description, or that a key paragraph escaped all bounds of rational structure, or that a sensitive issue might not have been framed in the best possible way. In a paragraph or less, please tell us what about this piece gave you the most difficulty as a writer.

## Sample Student Paper for Commenting

*To submit your comments, you'll need to copy this document into a separate Word file and submit it with the rest of your application on our web site. Please make sure all of your comments are included.*

Put yourself in this situation:

You told this student (“Jamie”) that you would read, grade, and comment on their paper and mail it back to them.

As you respond, limit yourself to 60 minutes. We ask that you offer feedback that stands on its own (as opposed to deferring your remarks to a hypothetical meeting by saying “let’s talk about this”).

Please don’t feel that you need to demonstrate to us everything you know about writing; likewise, this is not a copyediting test. We’re more interested in what you would do to help this student grow as a writer.

Respond as fully as you wish, but remember, you have only 60 minutes.

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### “Oidipos the Reality-Shaper”

Writing about fate and free will in Sophokles’ *Oidipos Tyrannos* has a long tradition. Ever since there has been literary criticism, scholars have argued about the question of whether Oidipos’ life is basically a sequence of actions and events preordained by fate, or if he is a free-willed person capable of making his own self-conscious decisions. The fact that agreement on this question has never been attained shows that this is essentially an issue of interpretation, speculation, and personal preference. Therefore, in order to enhance our understanding of the text and its implications, we must look at it from a different perspective.

Past means something different than history. The word “past” points to *everything that is over*, actions, events, thoughts—some well-documented, some to be forgotten forever. “History,” on the other hand, means, in its original herodotean sense, *inquiry into the past*. In putting together a historical narrative, the historian shapes the view we have of the past, choosing from an accumulation of information about the past certain pieces and discarding others.

If these concepts are applied to the sophoclean *Oidipos*, it is recognizable that Oidipos is a historian on his own case. Oidipos is probably able to recall the most important events in his life and thus has at least a vague understanding of his past. Since, however, he is unable to answer crucial questions—Who are his parents? Who was the man he killed at the crossing?—his comprehension of his past remains incomplete, his history is false and fragmentary. Therefore, when he starts asking—researching—about the murderer of Laios in the order to purge Thebes, at the same time he does inquiry into his personal past. As he says: “[...] when I drive pollution from the land, I [...] act in my own interest”(137-9).

In the course of his inquiries, Oidipos’ picture of his own past gradually becomes clearer. Fairly early in the play, Teiresias—the blind knower of the past and future—tells Oidipos his history. Even though Oidipos vigorously dissents to being called kiler of his father and husband of his mother, from now on he has at least a tentative idea of his past. His petulant antagonism—not exactly the reaction one would expect from a completely innocent man—reflects that he subconsciously knows that Teiresias’ allegations might as well be true.

In fact, Oidipos and Tieresias are brother figures. Not only will Oidipos blind himself later in the play and become a seer; he and Tieresias share an analogous way of acquiring knowledge, of doing research. Teirdisas is divinely inspired, which means he knows the past (as well as the future and the present). However, this knowledge is necessarily *passive* knowledge, for Tieresias is called a ‘disciple of Loxias’(##find page), a human oracle; and like the oracles, he will never pass out information without being asked. Therefore, Tieresias knows Oidopos’ past, but he will only be able to spell it out if Oidipos inquires.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, Oidipos’ knowledge about his past is represented by his interlocutors—Tieresias, the Messenger, the Herdsman. But he will not acquire knowledge unless he asks questions. Thus, the only difference between Oidipos’ and Tieresias’ way of acquiring knowledge is that Teiresias’ source of knowledge lies in himself, whereas Oidipos’ source are the people surrounding him.

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<sup>1</sup> This might also explain another crucial question—a question that Oidipos poses in order to undermine Tieresias’ authority of knowledge: “When[...] the sphinx was in your country, did you speak word of deliverance to its citizens?”(391-3) I would conjecture that it simply didn’t occur to the Theban people to ask Teirisas for advice, and since no one asked him, he could not answer the sphinx’s riddle on his own.

Right after Tiresias leaves the scene, the past is attempted to be blurred by Oidipos. Talking to Kreon, he asks: “How long ago is it since Laios...[...] Vanished—died—was murdered?[...] You never made a search for the dead man?”(588-66) It turns out that the dead body was never found. Suddenly, it seems uncertain if Laios was murdered at all. If Laios was not murdered, Oidipos could not be the killer, and must be freed from accusations. But Oidipos knows perfectly that he killed a man, and that man was, in all probability, Laios. Thus, we see him exercising *negative history*, history that aspires to disguise and distort the past, instead of unveiling it. This happens similarly when Oidipos works to prove the oracle partially wrong by blurring his maternal heritage.

Having examined Oidipos’ occasional tendency toward negative history, it must be conceded that most of the time he practices *positive history*, critical inquiry to find out about his past, to create a true history. Confronted with interlocutors that are often stubborn in not telling him what they know, he remains an obstinate questioner, one that does not shy away from physical coercion in the task of shaping and creating his history. While even his wife—and mother—Iocaste seems to be willing to live on with him, even after most has been revealed, and leave him in a state of semi-ignorance, Oidipos now realizes that, being a positive historian, he must ask questions until the end.

We must see clearly that Oidipos, the historian, has free choice in his research. It is a matter of his free will to ask those questions that will lead to the disclosure of his true history. While his *past* was predestinated by the oracles, the horrifying events that are contained in his past will only become his *history* as a result of his inquiry. Oidipos appears as the shaper of his history. Here we have a new way of looking at Oidipos. In *Oidipos Tyrannos*, it is the gods that determine the past, but it is man who shapes and creates history and thus reality, since history is real while the past is mere illusion.



## DEADLINES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

The Spring 2018 application **deadline** is **Monday, May 7, 2018 at 1PM.**

Once we receive your application, it will be assigned a number, and will be identified to the application readers only by that number. The writing sample and paper comment will be rated without any knowledge of who you are. Each application will be read by two people within the Writing Program.

**For more information about our open positions and the application process, see:**

<http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs>

**or contact us:**

Deputy Director Kathy Cochran (702-1936)  
Associate Directors Tracy Weiner (834-4691) and Linda Smith-Brecheisen (702-2658)  
Assistant Directors Margaret Fink (mlfink@uchicago.edu) and Ashley Lyons (834-0850).  
Program Coordinator Carissa Ábrego-Collier (writing-program@uchicago.edu)

## DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF WRITING PROGRAM JOBS

### Lector: Academic & Professional Writing

(A.K.A. THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE OR "LRS")

#### Job Description.

The Little Red Schoolhouse is a course in advanced writing for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students. At the undergraduate level, it addresses the needs of third and fourth-year students who are preparing for advanced writing challenges, including writing a B.A. thesis, applying to graduate school, and applying to professional school. The course meets twice weekly (TTh, 2:00-3:20). Each week students attend one lecture given by the LRS faculty, and one Lector-run writing seminar with no more than **7 students**. The seminar discussions focus on students' weekly writing assignments. Lector's responsibilities include preparing for and leading the seminar discussions, reading and commenting on all weekly papers, and recommending both paper and course grades. Lectors may also hold occasional office hours and meet with students to discuss individual problems.

#### Commitment:

1. Attending one seminar each week
2. Preparing for and leading one writing seminar each week
3. Submitting written comments for 7 papers each week

**Training.** Lectors are required to attend a quarter-long training course in **Autumn Quarter**. In the past, this course has met on Monday afternoons from 3 to 5:50 PM. This course may be taken for credit (English 50300). In addition, during their first quarters of work, Lectors are required to attend the weekly lectures with their students.

**Compensation** In 2017-18, Lectors earned a base salary of \$3,000 per quarter. Lectors in the fifth year of Ph.D. study and beyond may be eligible for tuition remission in the quarters they work (check with your Division). For each section of LRS a Lector teaches, that Lector accrues one GAI point.

**Further Opportunities.** Once you have worked as a Lector and received satisfactory evaluations from the Writing Program and from your students, you may continue working as a Lector at either the undergraduate or graduate level. You may also work as a Writing Intern in the Humanities Common Core. You will not need to reapply to the Writing Program to obtain these positions.

**Special Qualifications.** The least important qualification is prior experience or an extensive background in teaching English. We have found that the most important qualifications are an analytical mind and the ability to work with undergraduates in a friendly and courteous way. About two-thirds of the Lectors selected regularly come from outside the Humanities Graduate Division.

**Term of Appointment:** Winter and/or Spring 2019; possible positions for Summer 2019. Lectors are hired quarter by quarter, and reappointment is contingent on satisfactory performance.

## Writing Intern: Common Core Humanities

**Job Description.** The chief responsibility of the Humanities Writing Intern is to provide a writing component in a Humanities Common Core section of approximately **17-19 students**. Graduate students from all divisions and programs are eligible to apply. The Writing Intern assists the University faculty member who teaches the section. The duties of Writing Interns will vary, but generally they read the course texts and attend class, read and comment on student papers, and teach writing in small seminar groups. Writing Interns will often have the opportunity to lead one or two discussions of texts in the main class.

Interns divide their class into seminar groups of no more than 7 students, and meet with each of these seminar groups at least three times. Each seminar meeting lasts an hour and twenty minutes.

### Commitment:

1. Attending and preparing for two classes per week
2. Preparing for and leading nine small group seminars over the quarter
3. Writing paper comments on half of the student papers (split with instructor).

**Training.** Interns must complete a quarter-long training seminar in **Spring or Summer Quarter of 2018**. The seminar will require approximately three hours per week of class time and two hours per week of preparation. The seminar may be taken for course credit (Humanities 50000).

**Compensation.** In AY 2017-18, Writing Interns received a base salary of \$3,000 per section per quarter. Interns in the fifth year of Ph.D. study and beyond may be eligible for tuition remission in the quarters they work (check with your division). For each section of the Common Core an Intern works, that Intern accrues one GAI point.

**Further Opportunities.** Once you have worked as an Intern and received satisfactory evaluations from the Writing Program and from your students, you are eligible for re-appointment as an Intern in future quarters. You need not reapply to the Writing Program to be re-appointed as a Writing Intern, and you may take quarters off and return as your availability dictates.

**Special Qualifications.** You do not necessarily need specialized knowledge of the scholarly work done on the texts in a particular Humanities Core Course. Such knowledge helps, of course, but we have found that the most important qualifications are an analytical mind, the ability to read challenging texts carefully, and the ability to work with undergraduates in a friendly and courteous way.

**Term of Appointment.** Typically Fall-Spring, 2018-19. Interns are hired quarter by quarter, and reappointment is contingent on satisfactory performance.

## Common Core Writing Tutors

**Job Description.** Writing Tutors work individually with students in the Common Core sequences. Graduate students from all areas are eligible to apply. Tutors work in Reading Room North of Harper Library.

Writing Tutors neither copyedit student's work nor advise them on the content of their papers. Instead, they teach writing in the context of a one-on-one session. Writing Tutors work with students on partial or completed drafts, advising students on how to make their writing more persuasive, organized, and significant to their academic readers.

Tutors work at least one four-hour shift per week. Depending on Tutor schedules and student demand, Tutors can work up to three four-hour shifts per week. Shifts are typically in the evenings, Sundays through Thursdays from Week 2 through Week 11.

### Commitment:

1. Teach writing on a one-on-one basis to College Core students during a four-hour shift each week for 10 weeks.

**Training.** In Spring or Summer 2018, Writing Tutors attend the training course provided for Writing Interns (Humanities 50000). Writing Tutors also attend brief staff meetings one or two times each quarter.

**Compensation.** In AY 17-18, the beginning salary for Tutors was \$14.25 per hour. The Writing Tutor position is not eligible for tuition remission, and it does not accrue GAI points.

**Term of Appointment.** Fall Quarter, ordinarily renewable Winter and Spring. Writing Tutors are hired quarter by quarter, and reappointment is contingent on satisfactory performance.