

Writing Workshop GRK Hamburg

July 8-9, 2024

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Welcome to our Writing Workshop. A special thanks to Prof. Dr. Gerd Muehlheusser, Prof. Dr. Anke Gerber, and the GRK “Collective Decision Making” for making this possible.

Why? Our PhD training is designed to prepare us to participate in and contribute to professional conversation. Learning how to write and how to communicate our research is as important in that process as how to conduct research. This is where this workshop comes in. Each session focusses on different aspects of writing and introduces different writing techniques. These techniques help you develop writing as a “professional tool” that is as necessary to participate in professional conversations as it is useful to develop your thinking. This year, we will particularly focus on writing techniques that are useful at the beginning of research projects.

How? We use pen & paper and a laptop (with keyboard) in all sessions. You are welcome to work with either Word or Latex. I will introduce you to the Hemingway Editor (a free online tool), and we will explore AI-assisted writing with ChatGPT-4o (or ChatGPT 5 if it comes out before the workshop).

What? The techniques in this workshop series are especially applicable to the early stages of your writing. Each session will include time to apply and practice each technique. You do not need to have a specific writing project to work on.

Who am I? I have been teaching economics for fifteen, and writing in various forms for ten years. I hold an MSc in Physics from UNM, an MSc in Mathematics from MIT, an MBA and a PhD in Business Economics from the University of Chicago. I am currently an assistant professor (teaching stream) in economics at York University. Feel free to reach out with any questions at bkaren@yorku.ca.

Overview

	8:30-10:00		10:30-noon		13:00-15:00	15:00-16:30
Mo Jul 8th	Session 1 A315	Coffee break	Session 2 A315	Lunch break	Q&A Faculty Lounge VWL	Conversations Faculty Lounge VWL
Tu Jul 9th	Session 3 A315		Session 4 A315			

Detailed Schedule

Session 1 – How do I know what I think before I read what I wrote?

Learn to overcome the "blank page freeze" systematically, to clarify one's thinking, and to write as means of deepening your understanding.

Technique: No more starrng at the white page: Get started with unconstrained writing

Session 2 – Why and how do we write?

Understand the difference between writing as a student (to demonstrate understanding) and writing professionally (to contribute to a conversation). Distinguish creation from selection processes in writing.

Techniques: Efficient writing without frequent task-switching. Using strong connectors.

Q & A Session

Do you have questions about the profession? About the job market? About research? About life? Not quite sure how to ask your PhD advisor? This session is an open friendly round where I am happy to listen to you, to share my experience, and to answer your questions. Not sure what to ask? That's ok. In the past, some Q&A participants came with prepared questions, others found their questions in the session. They all found the Q&A session helpful.

Conversations

Would you like feedback on something you wrote? Do you have a personal question that was not answered in the Q&A session? Do you have doubts about becoming an economist? I am available for one-on-one conversations.

Session 3 – It is new! But is it relevant?

You follow the professional conversations, but how do you contribute to it? Three approaches to developing feasible and relevant research questions.

Techniques: Ask the genie. What sets you off? What can the data answer? Creating options through semi-random connections.

Session 4 – Will anyone care?

Everyone likes a good story! Understand papers through the lens of a story arch. Develop you research ideas through prototyping and narrative outlines.

Technique: Find the conflict of your story and develop a narrative outline.