

Style Errors on Professional Doctoral Papers

Grammar:

- 1.) Be careful about passive statements. “As it was realized that change was needed in the community of...” Change to “As the director realized that the community needed change...” Changing passive statements to active makes the material more academic in nature and easier to read.
- 2.) Avoid using forms of the phrases “There is” or “It is.” Those phrases are wordy and take up space. Also avoid using the vague wording “this is.” One example of a way to change this form is: “There must be an outside influence that brings peace in life” to “An outside influence must bring peace in life.”
- 3.) Main comma usage: A comma is used with a coordinating conjunction (and, for, but, so, nor, or, yet) that combines two complete sentences. It is also used in a series following every element of that series. “I like dogs, cats, and turtles.” It also follows an introductory clause. “As the hurricane approached, the students went surfing.” Following these three rules will assist in the catching the majority of the comma errors that I see.
- 4.) Review the rules for numbers 2.29-.37. Numbers under 100 must be spelled out.
- 5.) Do not use first person “I” or “we” or “our” and do not use “you.”

Mechanics (according to the library committee):

- 1.) Margins. Top, bottom and right margins should be one inch and the left margin should be 1 and ½ inches. Supplemental materials found in the appendices are not exempt from the margin rule. Documents, e-mails, photos, certificates, and PowerPoint slides (with or without notes) should be inside the correct margins, but these should also be readable.
- 2.) Date. The date on the title page should be the month and year only. **Ex.** May 2009 For project proposals, the date should be listed as the month of submission to ProDoc committee; reports should be the date of expected graduation.
- 3.) Vita. Students do not need to include any vita other than your own (that I know of) and you are supposed to include their own (some don't).
- 4.) Page numbering. Numbers should be in a consistent font and all appendices should be numbered. The first page of a chapter should be at the bottom of the page with the other pages at the top.
- 5.) Your paper must include chapter headings and numbers.