

The IHU Writing Center: We help get the writer's creative and critical energies flowing

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MERVE AKTAR *



"Hard writing makes easy reading." Wallace Stegner,
Crossing to Safety

What makes writing strong? A logical train of thought and proper use of grammar undoubtedly constitute the foundations of good writing, but there are more structural elements and rhetorical devices that together work to produce a text that not only conveys information clearly but that creates an impact on the reader, regardless of the discipline or subject. Such texts are usually easy to read, and seem as though they were completed effortlessly.

Serious effort is involved, however, including the writer's grasp of the nuances in his or her topic, awareness of the intended audience, and knowledge of which rhetorical and argumentative strategies will produce the desired narrative effect. Strong writing does not come easily to anybody, and getting to that point involves an intense process of working through multiple drafts. This is the case for experienced academics and professionals as much as it is for students new to academia. Ibn Haldun University is keen on providing support to writers of all levels, and I am excited to share the news of the IHU Writing Center, a service that aims to assist students, faculty, and staff from all disciplines with developing their critical thinking and drafting skills, in the form of individual consultations. Workshops are also planned, and will be provided on topics ranging from sentence structure to annotated bibliographies.

Details regarding how consultations work, who the consultants are, and how to book appointments can be found in the email sent to all IHU users in November, and a Writing Center booklet is forthcoming. In brief, whatever stage of (*not*) writing you are at, you may book a twenty-five minute or fifty-minute appointment to share your draft-related concerns with the consultant, bearing in mind that your draft will not be edited or proofread. Consultations are constructive conversations wherein you are encouraged to speak about which parts of the writing process you are spending the most time on and why, and about what your goals are as the author. The consultant will help you explore your ideas, and, when necessary, will challenge you to articulate them in a style and structure that address your goals more effectively. This is because consultations are not product-oriented but writer-oriented, and aim to help you come into your own as a writer.

* Coordinator of the Ibn Haldun University Writing Center.