# MA498 – Senior Thesis I: Research & Proposal

# Research Proposal

Date of Submission: ***11*** ***September*** 20***20***

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Research Title (Draft): Measuring the Effects of Writing Center Visits Using Statistical Methods

Background:

This is my first background paragraph.

The general mission of most university writing centers is to provide a space for tutors and students to collaborate through open dialogue in order to discover effective writing strategies that are useful to the individual student. The goal is to help students become better, more confident writers over time. Currently, writing center studies are lacking in terms of rigorous scientific research regarding the effect of visiting a writing center. The most recent studies use simple probabilistic models to draw conclusions based on correlational evidence. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a more in-depth statistical analysis of the effect of writing center visits on student performance.

This is my second background paragraph.

The Mounger Writing Center (MWC) at the United States Military Academy was first established in 2013. It is considered a subcomponent of the larger West Point Writing Program, an Academy-level initiative that was first approved in concept in 2014 as a key component of West Point’s new curriculum. The MWC is staffed by cadet and postgraduate writing fellows, whose mission is to engage clients in productive conversations about their ideas and how to express them more effectively. This mission is achieved through one-on-one consulting sessions, group workshops, and special events. The purpose of this report is to provide a quantitative assessment of the effect of these consulting sessions.

Statement of the Problem:

An earlier study by Cunningham et al (2020) found evidence of a beneficial effect of writing center attendance on signature writing events after adjusting for potential confounding variables using methods rooted in causal inference literature. In our study, we aim to refine this evidence by investigating whether there is a dose-response relationship. In other words, do more writing center visits for an individual result in larger effects on signature writing events? In addition, we will also investigate whether the effect of writing center visits changes for different groups of students. For example, we will investigate whether students who struggle academically benefit more from the visits than other students.