

## WRITING CENTER TIP SHEET

### EVALUATING YOUR THESIS STATEMENT

Once you have a working thesis, you need to evaluate if it is as strong as it can be to express the points found in your paper. The following steps will help you determine what work you need to do on your thesis as you go through the paper writing process.

#### Getting Started:

- \_ What is my paper about?
- \_ Is there a specific body of work that I reference in the paper?
- \_ How many examples or points am I going to make?
- \_ Am I analyzing a concept, explaining a point, or arguing an opinion in this paper?

Answering these questions will help you to formulate a specific thesis statement.

#### Strong Theses Should:

- \_ Be specific enough so that your reader understands what points you're making (so using vague terms or ideas—"new ideas," "interesting comparisons" don't tell the reader anything).
- \_ Be narrow. If your paper is on a type of art, or a particular period of time, narrow the thesis down to a manageable amount of material to cover in the paper. For example, instead of "Women's art in modern society," focusing on "controversial works of art by women in the last two decades" leaves you plenty to discuss.
- \_ Reflect the order of topics discussed in the paper. This is so your reader knows what to look for. Go back and make sure your thesis lists your points in the order in which they're made when you finish a paper.
- \_ Specifically name the artists or works of art you're discussing if this is what your paper focuses on.

#### Using your Thesis as an Outline:

- \_ Underline or circle the different points your thesis is making (don't forget to mark the title of the piece or author, if that's in your thesis, too).
- \_ Number the order in which you mention each point in the thesis. Each of these numbered phrases or topics will turn into a section of your paper. Use these section headings to help you sort out and organize your research.

As always, come to the Writing Center for help in outlining, organizing, and developing thesis statements.