

# Lisa Pfau

411-50 Gulliver Road, Toronto, ON M6M 2N2 

416-247-0702 

[lisa.pfau@pfau.ca](mailto:lisa.pfau@pfau.ca) 

<https://ca.linkedin.com/in/lisapfau> 

[www.pfau.ca](http://www.pfau.ca) 

I have over 20 years' experience coaching students, editing academic and professional documents, and facilitating research and writing projects. I also have over 10 years' experience as an entrepreneur and business owner, giving me an understanding of operations, accounting, marketing customer service, human resources, and problem solving within a professional setting that I transfer to teamwork and teaching communications.

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## SKILLS & KNOWLEDGE

- Passion for writing, coaching, communicating, and co-creating content to facilitate learning and personal/professional development.
- Over 20 years of experience working in academic and professional communication, including working with Canadian universities & government departments, as well as clients in the US, Asia, and Europe.
- Over 10 years experience running my own writing coaching business, including marketing, operations, customer service, human resources, grant writing, and everything else required of an entrepreneur.
- Extensive experience coaching writing clients and editing documents, including essays, theses, dissertations, reports, school applications, funding applications, resumes, cover letters, blog posts, article submissions, creative writing pieces, presentations, and interview prep.
- Co-created and published academic life comic series to help shed on light on young adult issues.
- Developed and facilitated over 15 communications, critical thinking, and writing courses/workshops.
- Co-created, organized and co-facilitated over 10 student life and academic development workshops.
- Wrote, recorded, and produced over 50 original podcast episodes over a two year period.
- Wrote and published almost 100 blog posts related to academic life or writing.
- Proficient in Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, WeChat, Canva, MeetUp, and other social media tools.
- Proficient in various online business software, sites, and applications, such as: Microsoft Office, Google Business, Zoom, Quickbooks, Slack, EventBrite, Trello, Doodle, Zoho, Indeed, Momence, etc.
- Created and managed own website using WordPress, Siteground, and Succuri
- Language Proficiency: English, Mandarin (intermediate), French (basic)

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**EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS**

JANUARY 2024 TO PRESENT

**Professional Development: Writing Instructor Workshops**  
**University of Toronto (Toronto, Canada)**

- Workshop on AI in Research
- Workshop on how to integrate AI into teaching academic writing
- Workshop on AI and Graduate/Advanced Academic Writing
- Workshop on how to build community and collaboration in writing centres

AUGUST 2012

**TESL Canada Certificate: Teaching English as a Second Language**  
**Canadian Centre for Language & Cultural Studies (Toronto, Canada)**

Completed summer course to become certified ESL teacher in Canada, including extensive grammar studies, teaching experiences, and a practicum with a LINC approved second language program.

AUGUST 2011

**Language & Cultural Certificate: Chinese Studies**  
**Liaoning Normal University (Dalian, China)**

Advanced for high intermediate to advanced Mandarin Chinese, served as classroom leader to improve course facilitation, lead class in sports competition, and co-created and sang/dance in class showcase.

*Hanyu Enrichment Scholarship, Taiwan (\$4000)* 2010-2011  
*China-Canada Scholar’s Exchange Scholarship (travel, tuition, and living stipend)* 2010-2011

AUGUST 2007

**Master of Arts: Political Science/Asian Studies**  
**University of Toronto (Toronto, Canada)**

**Thesis:** From Hutong to High Rise: An Investigation of China’s New Property Law

<i>Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada Post-Grad Research Fellowship (\$35,000)</i>	2008-2009
<i>Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Graduate Scholarship (\$17, 500)</i>	2006-2007
<i>Ontario Graduate Scholarship for Master’s Program (\$15, 000)</i>	2006-2007
<i>University of Toronto Teaching Fundamental Certificate</i>	2007
<i>Asian Institute Graduate Scholarship, University of Toronto (\$5,000)</i>	2005-2006

AUGUST 2005

**Language & Cultural Certificate: Chinese Studies**  
**Peking University (Beijing, China)**

Transitioned from beginner to high intermediate level Chinese over 1 year of study.

*China-Canada Scholar's Exchange Scholarship* (travel, tuition, and living stipend) 2004-2005

APRIL 2004

**Bachelor of Arts (Hons.): Political Science & History**  
**University of Alberta (Edmonton, Canada)**

**Thesis:** The One-Child Policy and Its Effects on Women

<i>Jason Lang Scholarship, University of Alberta (\$1,500 annually)</i>	2001-2003
<i>Academic Excellence Award, University of Alberta (\$1,000)</i>	1999-2000
<i>Alberta Government High School Rutherford Scholarship (\$2,500)</i>	1996-1999

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## **TEACHNG EXPERIENCE**

SEPT 2024 – PRESENT

**Academic Writing Instructor / Humber College: Toronto, Canada**

- Responsible for teaching two sections of WRIT 100 (Academic Writing), four sections of WRIT 108 (Professional Communication to Tradespeople), one section of WRIT 208 (Professional Communications for Personal Branding of Tradespeople), and one section of WRIT 200 (Professional Communication)

SEPT 2022 – PRESENT

**Professional Language Development Diagnostic Assessment, Engineering Communications / University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada**

- Evaluate Engineering Communications reports for grammar, spelling, vocabulary, style, structure, concision, and clarity of writing. Generate a report based on these findings to be shared with in-person writing coaching that helps students to improve their communication skills. Occasionally meet students over videoconferencing to provide feedback on oral presentations and slide content.

2018 – TO PRESENT

**Writing Coach & Editor, Indigenous Education Network / University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada**

- Work with the Indigenous Education Network and Ontario Institute of Education to provide one-on-one coaching and workshops to Masters and PhD students who are

working on major research papers, papers for publication, theses/dissertations, grant applications, conference submissions, and professional talks to enhance their research, organizational, critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills, as well as administer workshops on academic writing topics.

JANUARY 2012 – TO PRESENT

**Business Owner and Operator / PFAU Academic Writing (Toronto, Canada)**

- Created, established, and manage sole proprietorship that provides academic life coaching, professional communication, writing, and editing support to high school/post-secondary/grad students/recent grads/young professionals in primarily the Humanities and Social Sciences across Canada, the US, Europe, and Asia.
- Assist clients in all subjects in the social sciences and humanities with essay writing, scholarship and school applications, general research and writing skills, as well as, understanding the resources available in the academic environment and how to maximize their use.
- Design, organize, and facilitate communication and life-skills workshops, events, and courses in the areas of academic writing, creative writing, application writing, and career development.
- Develop, record, and produce regular podcast and blog posts on topics related to writing, career development, and student life.
- Conduct research, write scripts, interview guests, edit podcast audio/video, develop blog posts, and post announcements on social media related podcast.
- Hire, train, and supervisor administrative staff, teachers, and editors to work together as part of the team.
- Responsible for business bookkeeping, filing taxes, and managing overall finances.
- Develop and maintain client information and other business documents in confidential online and paper filing system.
- Market business and connect wit clients via Google, email, social media, phone, and in person connections.

2020 – 2021

**Grade 11 & 12 English Literature Teacher / Beijing Normal University No. 2 High School: Beijing, China**

- Prepared and taught English literature lessons twice a week for two terms based on the Ontario curriculum requirements and materials, including public speaking & presentation skills, research & critical thinking skills, research essay and literary essay writing, and poetic & creative expression.

- Provided supplemental academic materials to help students to improve their English language skills, such as weekly vocabulary and grammar quizzes, weekly writing exercises, and additional reading practice.

2012 -2017

**Creative & Essay Writing Instructor and Program Lead / Canadian Chinese Educational Centre: Toronto, Canada**

- Taught students from Grade 1 to high school creative writing and essay writing, including poetry, short stories, narrative essays, research essays, speech writing, and grammar/spelling/punctuation; building their confidence in creative expression and language skills.

2004 – 2005 & 2011 - 2012

**Freelance English & Cross-Cultural Teacher / Lisa Pfau: Beijing, China & Dalian, China**

- Prepared and taught personalized English/cultural lessons for students, professionals, English schools, and businesses wishing to expand into Western markets.

JANUARY 2006 – APRIL 2007

**Teaching Assistant, Department of Political Science / University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada**

**Political Theory** (January 2007 to April 2007) & **Comparative Politics** (January 2006 to April 2006)

- Prepared and presented simplified explanations of course material in lecture and discussion format.
- Evaluated and provided constructive feedback on student assignments and tutorial participation.
- Listened to and effectively addressed all student questions/concerns, including grade appeals.

JANUARY 2006 – APRIL 2007

**Tutor / PATHWAYS to Education: Toronto, Canada**

- Encouraged and tutored inner-city high school students struggling academically, focusing primarily on social sciences and humanities.

JULY & AUGUST 2004

**Oral English Teacher / KeQiao Middle School: Zhejiang Province, China**

- Taught my own grade 6 class of 30 plus students written and oral English six days a week.

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**LEADERSHIP & COMMUNITY SERVICE**

NOVEMBER 2022 – APRIL 2024

**Board Member / For Youth Initiative: Toronto, Canada**

- Attend regular meetings and provide feedback on and support for non-profit policy and programs.

SEPTEMBER 2018 – PRESENT

**Mentor, Hart House / University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada**

- Meet with graduate student to discuss academic or professional struggles and provide support, encouragement, and resources to help with their professional development.

SEPTEMBER 2020 – PRESENT

**Mentor, Political Science / University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada**

- Meet with undergraduate student to discuss academic struggles and provide support, encouragement, and resources to help with their professional development.

SEPTEMBER 2020 – TO PRESENT

**Mentor, Asian Institute / University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada**

- Meet with undergraduate student to discuss academic struggles and provide support, encouragement, and resources to help with their professional development.

JANUARY 2020 – TO PRESENT

**Toronto Chapter Volunteer / University of Alberta Alumni Association: Edmonton, Canada**

- Attend Chapter meetings, collaborate to generate and execute Alumni event ideas, assist during Alumni events, connect with and welcome new members.

JANUARY 2010

**Program Assistant, Asian Business & Management Program / York University: Toronto, Canada**

- Assisted in the program administration of three separate Chinese delegations attending York for professional development, including event logistics, administrative duties, and translation.

2006 - 2007

**Job Candidate Liaison, Political Science / University of Toronto: Toronto, Canada**

- Accompany job candidates throughout the day to ensure they reach all required destinations and appointments, while providing insights into work and study at UofT.

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**Research & Writing**

2020-2021

**Editor & Copywriter / Black Cat Publishing: Milan, Italy**

- Edited and developed copy for social media posts and educational materials aimed at helping English as a Second Language readers to understand English Literature from beginner to advanced levels.

FEBRUARY 2010 – MARCH 2010

**Research Consultant / Health Canada: Ottawa, Canada**

- Developed and implemented research strategy to collect up-to-date data on Canada-China Health relationships resulting in the creation of an over 200 contact point database, progress report, and power point presentation to heads of Health Canada divisions working with China.

MARCH 2009 – DECEMBER 2009

**Research & Program Support Intern /Sistering: Toronto, Canada**

- Took part in survey of 180 female clients, including administering 10 individual surveys and helping to facilitate a post-survey focus groups.
- Developed resource package for public transportation lobbying campaign.
- Created and led weekly cross-cultural educational seminars for Mandarin-speaking clients.

OCTOBER 2007 – MARCH 2009

**Project Manager, HIV Prevention/University of Toronto, Dalla Lana School of Public Health & Shanghai CDC: Toronto, Canada & Shanghai, China**

- Planned, coordinated, and tracked the progress of a bilateral research project investigating four diverse populations in Shanghai (migrant workers, female sex workers, men who have sex with men, and people infected with HIV/AIDS) and undertaking in-depth analysis of China's HIV-related policies.
- Prepared and translated annual project reports, questionnaires, focus group guides, interviewer training manuals/guidelines, ethics reports, intervention materials, and other field documents.
- Supervised two student project assistants and one database consultant.
- Helped to organize a four-day Symposium on HIV for Chinese medical professionals.

JANUARY 2008 – APRIL 2008

**Political Section Intern / Canadian Embassy: Beijing, China**

- Prepared background studies and briefing notes related to China-Canada policy issues.
- Helped organize an international health management conference between U of T and PKU.

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**Notable Courses, Events, Workshops**

*\*all courses, events, and workshops are created/co-created, organized, and co-facilitated by me*

**Academic Writing Workshop – UofT OISE & Indigenous Education Network: Toronto, Canada (March 2025)**

**Creating Writing & Stress Relief Workshop – UofT OISE & Indigenous Education Network: Toronto, Canada (April 2025)**

**Poetry in the Park – PFAU Academic Writing: High Park, Toronto (Spring & Summer 2024)**

This is a workshops held in High Park, Toronto every three weeks over the summer to allow anyone access to poetry and creative writing by providing accessible activities within a relaxing and safe setting facilitated by Lisa Pfau.

**Poetry Workshop – University of Alberta Alumni Association: Edmonton, Canada (April 2024)**

This workshop was created as an Alumni event geared towards participants becoming more comfortable with engaging in creative writing and sharing their work in a safe setting through a variety of activities to generate ideas and expose students to different forms of poetry.



**Grad School Applications Workshop – UofT Asian Institute: Toronto, Canada (Spring 2023)**  
Session with students interested in attending graduate school discussing the application process, how to market yourself, and most importantly how to write a strong personal statement

**Academic Publishing Workshop – UofT OISE & Indigenous Education Network: Toronto, Canada (May 2022)**

This workshop used original interview research, personal experience as an editor of clients for academic publication, and individual research to develop a research based on students' needs and anxieties around academic publishing. We de-mystified the publication process, outlined common reasons for rejection, and provided resources to help students to start submitting their work to journals and publishers.

**5 Common Errors of Essay Writing – UofT Political Science: Toronto, Canada (March 2022)**

This workshop was created by me to help undergraduate students understand the fundamentals of writing a research essay by identifying 5 common errors: poor evidence, weak thesis, lack of analysis, inconsistent argument, and improper citations.

**Research Essay Writing Workshop – UofT Asian Institute: Toronto, Canada (March 2021)**

This workshop was created by me to help undergraduate students understand the fundamentals of writing a research essay, with tips on how to find and evaluate research, how to write a solid thesis statement, and the importance of analysis over summary.

**Poetry Workshop – University of Alberta Alumni Association: Edmonton, Canada (March 2021)**

This workshop was created as an Alumni event on St. Patrick's Day to encourage Alumni to gather and learn a bit about Irish culture through composing a limerick together.

**Reflective Writing Workshop – University in the Community: Toronto, Canada (February 2021)**

This workshop was created to help members of the University in the Community classroom to pull from past memories and workshop those memories into a creative writing piece or poem through a number of creative and reflective exercises.

**Research Essay Writing Workshop – UofT Political Science: Toronto, Canada (Jan. 2021)**

This workshop was created by me to help undergraduate students understand the fundamentals of writing a research essay, with tips on how to find and evaluate research, how to write a solid thesis statement, and the importance of analysis over summary.

**Grad School Application Workshop – UofT Political Science: Toronto, Canada (Oct. 2020)**

This workshop was created by me to help undergraduate students understand the grad school and professional school application process, as well as what is required to write a successful personal statement.

**Grad School Writing Workshop – UofT, OISE, Indigenous Education Network: Toronto, Canada (Oct. 2019)**

This workshop was created by me by surveying the needs of graduate students in the Indigenous Education Network at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at UofT about their current struggles with transitioning from undergraduate to graduate school writing. We discussed the research process and how to critically analyze an article, as well as addressed a number of student questions.

**Halloween Mental Health Awareness Event: Toronto, Canada (October 2019)**

Organizer & Sponsor (partnered with Bloor Street United Church, Student Christian Movement, Annie ADHD, Jill Gilbert Psychotherapy)

**Optimal Nutrition for Academic Success: Toronto, Canada (August 2019)**

Organizer, Host & Sponsor (partnered with Sheryl Hu, Master of Social Work & Certified Nutritional Practitioner)

**How to Succeed in University: Toronto, Canada (August 2019)**

Organizer, Host & Sponsor

**The Ins & Outs of Moving Out – Housing Workshop: Toronto, Canada (July 2019)**

Organizer, Host & Sponsor (partnered with Bank of Montreal, Bay Street Group Inc., Luciano Law)

**Midday Mediation - Exam Stress Relief: Toronto, Canada (April 2019)**

Organizer, Host & Sponsor (partnered with Celine Cheung Meditation)

**Improve your Relationships – Healthy Communication: Toronto, Canada (February 2019)**

Organizer, Host & Sponsor (Partnered with Jill Gilbert, Psychotherapist)

**Maximize Academic Experience without Breaking the Bank: Toronto, Canada (February 2019)**

Organizer, Sponsor, Co-Facilitator, Speaker (partnered with Bank of Montreal)

**Living on a Budget: Toronto, Canada (January 2019)**

Organizer, Host & Sponsor (partnered with Boyan Lepoev, Financial Analyst & Investment Expert)

**Research Essay Writing Fundamentals – Post-secondary: Toronto, Canada (May 2018 to present)**

This is an 8-week course that I designed and have been running in-person and online since 2018. It covers the following topics: Research Fundamentals & Finding the Best Sources; Formulating a Research Question & Tracking your Research Process; Choosing your Evidence & Conducting a Thoughtful Analysis; Creating Essay Scaffolding & Developing a Strong Thesis Statement; Constructing a Well-Structured Paragraph & Avoiding Fluff; The Importance of an Appealing Introduction; Writing a Thoughtful Conclusion; The Art of Proofreading and Revision

**Essay Writing Fundamentals – High School: Toronto, Canada (2012 to present)**

This is an 8 to 12 week course that I designed and have been running in-person and online since 2012. It covers the following topics: Narrowing Down your Topic & Brainstorming Ideas; Gathering & Evaluating Information; Creating a Coherent Argument & Structure for your Essay; The Importance of a Strong Thesis Statement & Introduction; Constructing a Well-Structured Paragraph; Avoiding Fluff & Focusing on Analysis; Writing a Thoughtful Conclusion; The Art of Proofreading and Revision

**Creative Writing for Non-Writers – all levels: Toronto, Canada (2012 to present)**

This is a 6 to 8 week course that I designed and have been running in-person and online since 2012. It covers the following topics: Description – Creating an Image on the Page; Story Arch – Telling a Memorable Story; Understanding People & Developing Characters; Taking Different Perspectives; The role of Setting in Plot Development; Improving the Shitty First Draft - Editing/Revision; Writing with Meaning – Frequent Literary Themes; Engage the Audience – Final Class Presentation of Best Work

**Creative Writing & Storytelling – all levels: Toronto, Canada (2012 to present)**

This is a 6 to 8 week course that I designed and have been running in-person and online since 2012. It covers the following topics: Imagery – Painting a Picture with Words; Plot Structure – What we expect; Setting – Where are we?; Character Development – Go Beyond Appearance; Theme – Write with Purpose; Understand the Genre; Who is your Audience – Making Adjustments; Revision & Feedback – No one writes alone

**Poetry for All Abilities – all levels: Toronto, Canada (2019 to present)**

This is a 6 to 8 week course that was designed and facilitated in collaboration with creative writing staff, and has been running in-person and online since 2019. It covers the following topics: Creating Systems of Abstraction, Exploring Poetic Types, Metaphors & other Poetic Devices, Speaking your Truth, Sharpening your Poem, Language as Power & Sharing your Words

**Personal Statement Writing Workshop – Grad School: Toronto, Canada (2019 to present)**

This workshop was created by me to help undergraduate students and recent graduates understand the grad school and professional school application process, as well as what is required to write a successful personal statement.

**Personal Statement Writing Workshop – High School: Toronto, Canada (2022 to present)**

This workshop was created by me in order to help high school students understand the post-secondary school application process, as well as what is required to write a successful personal essay.

**Resume Writing Workshop: Toronto, Canada (2018 to present)**

This workshop was created to help recent graduates understand what employers are looking for, with specific tips on how to write a solid resume, especially when you have limited work experience.

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**Publications**

**Peer Reviewed Publications**

“Chapter 7: “Social Impacts of Loneliness in Higher Education”  
(Book Chapter) in *Loneliness in Education*, Springer Publications (August 2025)

**Non-refereed Academic/Government Publications**

“Canada-China Health Collaborations and Progress Report” for Health Canada (March 2010)

“Interim Report II: Prevention, Care and Support for Vulnerable Populations at Risk for HIV and STI in Shanghai, China” for the University of Toronto, Shanghai Centre for Disease Control, and International Development Research Council Canada (March 2009)

**Non-refereed Creative Publications**

“Cold War” (Short Story) in *Horizons Magazine* (February 2010)

“Shark Fin Soup” (magazine article) in *Praxis* (2013)

Whimsical poetry on Instagram account @lisa\_pfaufau (2021 to 2024)

Poetry Anthology on Grief– in progress (2025)

**Non-refereed Online Professional Publications**

Blog for PFAU Academic Writing (2018 to present) – [www.pfau.ca/news-grid](http://www.pfau.ca/news-grid)

Podcast for PFAU Academic Writing (2020 to present) – [www.pfau.ca/podcast](http://www.pfau.ca/podcast)

Writing Tips & Podcast Interviews on YouTube channel (2019 to 2022) - <https://www.youtube.com/user/LisaPfau>