

Guidance in Preparing the Application for the Writing in the Discipline Course

(working document May 2012)

1) Purpose:

This course will teach your students how to write and do research in their chosen discipline, continuing the work begun in English 5 and building upon the skills learned there. Like all courses in your major, this one will further develop your students' disciplinary thinking skills, in this case by using writing to improve the abilities to think and to communicate within the discipline. The writing assignments will introduce or give students practice with the language and writing conventions of your discipline. The course emphasizes that writing and critical inquiry are intertwined.

2) Expectations the CCC has for the WID Course:

a) The course could be new, revised or current one and, in general, will be required of the major.

b) Disciplinary content should be taught as well. Writing is best learned when students see a purpose for their writing; therefore, writing assignments should be vehicles for exploring ideas and content which the students realize they need to understand.

c) It will teach and expect proper disciplinary rhetoric—the particular style, format, disciplinary standard, citation, terminology, organization, tone, etc., that are characteristic of academic and professional writing within the discipline.

It is not the role of the Core Curriculum Committee to judge the quality of disciplinary delivery, but please include b) and c) in the syllabus.

The Core Curriculum Committee will evaluate how d) through h) appear in the syllabus.

To facilitate the application process, you could color-code these elements in your syllabus:

d) The course will teach the process of writing and rewriting—drafting, editing and revising—to help students mature as disciplinary thinker/writers and to continually improve the relationship between content and clarity. Students apply their learning when they rewrite and reconnect their ideas. At least one document should include a draft that receives peer and/or professor feedback. (For example, the syllabus might outline dates for the completion of steps in the writing process, with due dates for bibliography, outline, drafts, etc.)

e) The course will scaffold writing assignments, helping students evolve step-by-step. This can be done through assignments that are linked or that build on one other, as in a later piece that incorporates earlier writing. The course's particular structure of scaffolding needs to be explicit in the syllabus.

f) The course will involve significant writing, both in the sense of “substantial” and “important.” A substantive portion of the students' final grades will be determined by researching, drafting, and finishing writing assignments. (Departments/Programs are responsible for defining ‘significant’ as is proper for their discipline.)

g) To facilitate transfer of knowledge, this course will intentionally build upon skills learned in English 5, which must be pre-requisite, and use similar language for teaching writing across the college. When appropriate, the course will help students draw connections between specific disciplinary expertise and the writing and researching

process they have learned so far through the college-wide handbook, *Writing Research Papers Across the Curriculum*, Hubbuch (and *Keys for Writers*, Raimes, combined or paired). (Copies of this text are available from the Center for Writing Across the Curriculum.)

h) The syllabus should include the Core Learning Outcomes (see below). We welcome departments/programs to rephrase the outcomes as appropriate. (We are aware that particular outcomes might not fit the writing done in a particular discipline; if this is the case, please contact us.)

i) To offer students support, the syllabus will include information about free writing advising through the Center for Writing Across the Curriculum.

3) Overarching questions that do not need to be addressed in the WID course application but which might help you think about your course:

a) What type(s) of writing are expected of your graduating majors (e.g., laboratory reports, business proposals, literature reviews)? How and when do you currently teach this writing? How do student demonstrate their facility in these forms of communication?

b) How does the proposed course fit into your major, in terms of developing both writing and other disciplinary skills? If this is a capstone-type experience, what sorts of skills will the students be bringing into the course, and how will the writing in this course help the students 'polish' their undergraduate disciplinary expertise? If the course comes near the beginning of the upper division, will it be a pre-requisite to other courses, and, if so, how will those courses build upon the skills learned here? (Some of these points might profitably be addressed in the application.)

c) What types of writing assignments will be given in this course? Should the assignments be numerous and short (each containing relatively few 'techniques') or few and lengthy? What sorts of overlap will there be between assignments? Will the assignments build toward a larger concluding work? Which drafting/revising procedures would work best?

d) Keep in mind that Librarians are available to assist you with the Information Evaluation and Research Practices portion of your course.

e) Keep in mind, also, that the Center for Writing Across the Curriculum is available to help you develop your course, as well as to provide assistance for all students across the college. You could build in a CWAC visit for your students, or CWAC Advisers could come into your classroom to do a workshop on a writing skill tailored to your discipline.

Core Learning Outcomes:

Written and Oral Communication

1. Recognize and compose readable prose, as characterized by clear and careful organization, coherent paragraphs and well-constructed sentences that employ the conventions of Standard Written English and appropriate diction
2. Recognize and formulate effective written and oral communication, giving appropriate consideration to audience, context and format
3. Analyze arguments so as to construct ones that are well supported, are well reasoned, and are controlled by a thesis or exploratory question

4. Use the process of writing to enhance intellectual discovery and unravel complexities of thought.

Information Evaluation and Research Practices

1. Develop search strategies and use library catalogs and databases to find relevant material
2. Critically evaluate sources
3. Integrate and cite evidence appropriately
4. Understand the concept of intellectual property and practice academic honesty.

Here is the CWAC syllabus blurb. Please feel free to trim as needed:

Free Writing Advising at the Center for Writing Across the Curriculum:

Students of all levels and disciplines are welcome to drop in or make appointments for one-on-one sessions with CWAC Writing Advisers. Students may request weekly or biweekly sessions with the same peer student Adviser.

The Center, in Dante 202, is open 5-8 p.m. Sunday and 2-8 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The phone number is 925.631.4684.

Through collaborative engagement, Advisers guide their peers toward expressing ideas clearly and revising their own papers with an eye toward audience and purpose. Writers should bring their assignments, texts, and related material. Writers visit the Center to brainstorm ideas, revise drafts, or work on specific aspects of writing, such as grammar, citation, thesis development, organization, critical reading, or research methods. Discussions may involve any type of writing, including poetry, science lab reports, argument-driven research, or professional application letters.