

How Do I Teach Writing
When I Don't *Teach* Writing?:
Resources and Strategies
for Writing Intensive (WI) Courses

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Corboy Law Center, room 208
Water Tower Campus*



GUIDELINES FOR WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The Course Requirements for the College of Arts and Sciences state that “all CAS students must take two Writing Intensive courses which are designated sections of courses that are taught with a special emphasis on writing, courses that include a variety of writing assignments that will be integrated closely with the learning objectives of the course.” One Writing Intensive course is required in the core; the other is suggested in the student’s major. In some cases, a particular course is designated as Writing Intensive, but often, only certain sections of a course are so designated.

The Writing Intensive course has a cap of 18 students. Smaller class size allows professors to work with students on both the principles of good writing and course content.

Writing Intensive courses are coordinated by the Director of Writing Programs, who understands that the kinds of writing required of students vary widely across the curriculum. However, Writing Intensive courses differ from non-writing intensive courses because of classroom focus not only on course content but also on writing about course content, including the critical thinking necessary to write well in the discipline; the conventions of writing in the discipline, including format and documentation; and the acknowledgement of writing as a process.

The following guidelines are intended to standardize Writing Intensive courses so that students know what to expect in their classes.

- Students should write a minimum of fifteen pages of graded work
- The percentage of the course grade for written work should be at least 30%
- Graded assignments should include short (2-3 pages) medium (4-6 pages) and longer (7-12 pages) papers. Page length, of course, depends on the discipline, but students should not be expected to write one lengthy paper without having had prior feedback on shorter papers.
- The course syllabus should clearly state the requirements for graded writing assignments, the number of papers to be written, due dates, page requirements, and the weight of each paper.
- The sequence of assignments should move from tasks that are easier (such as summary) to more difficult (such as analysis, synthesis, argument, research).
- Some “low stakes” non-graded writing should be assigned for practice in writing strategies (in-class writing and journal responses meant to prepare students for writing papers).
- Some class time should be devoted to the conventions of writing in the discipline, such as structural requirements, documentation format, and document design.
- Class time should be devoted to the principles of good writing, such as organization, unity, development, clarity, directness, and correctness through

“learning to write” activities, such as generating tentative thesis statements, working on options to structure an essay, combining choppy sentences with logical links, and editing for excess.

- The process of writing should be addressed by moving through the stages of writing: prewriting, drafting (peer review, conferences) revising, and editing).
- Some class time should be devoted to discussions of student sample papers, perhaps as models of successful responses or as examples of papers that need further revision.
- Expectations for papers should be made clear on writing assignments (purpose, audience, documentation format, document design).
- Evaluative criteria for writing assignments should be clear.
- For current conventions regarding grammar and punctuation, instructors should consult a recent handbook.
- Students needing extra help with their writing should be directed to the Writing Center.

Please Note

To request that a class be newly designated as Writing Intensive, a syllabus reflecting the guidelines should be sent to the Director of Writing Programs (Victoria Anderson, vanders@luc.edu) for approval at the beginning of the semester prior to the semester for the new WI class

Instructors new to teaching Writing Intensive courses are invited to attend a Writing Workshop led by the Director of the Writing Programs. Memos will be sent to all those listed for WI courses.

New and veteran Writing Intensive Instructors should meet once or twice a semester to discuss syllabi, assignments, classroom practices, and teaching strategies in order to learn from each other.

5. Comment on the use of evidence the writer uses to support each reason they put forth ... is it relevant? Is it good? (Each reason/paragraph should have at least 1-2 pieces of evidence from your outside sources) Does the writer use a variety of evidence?

6. Discuss the way the writer addresses counterarguments or opposing viewpoints in their draft. Does he/she offer a response or rebuttal? Is it effective?

7. Does the conclusion seem to tie up the argument the writer is making in the essay and propose some kind of solution or perspective that leaves the reader engaged with the topic?

8. General revision suggestions:

UCWR 110 Essay #1 Grade Sheet (summary/response)

Introduction: 5 pts

- Clearly sets up context of essay/ fluidly links sources _____
- Adequately sets up context and sources _____
- Inadequately sets context/makes connections _____

Thesis: 5 pts.

- Clear and specific: _____
- Adequate: _____
- Confusing, unclear _____

Summary/paraphrase: 10 pts.

- Clearly and effectively summarizes/paraphrases articles' points in argument _____
- Adequately summarizes/paraphrases articles' points in argument _____
- Confusing, unclear/simplified summary/paraphrase of articles' points in arg. _____

Content Development/analysis: 25 pts

- Excellent discussion/detail & depth of insight/synthesis & analysis _____
- Adequate discussion/detail & depth of insight/ synthesis & analysis _____
- Inadequate discussion/detail & depth of insight/ synthesis & analysis _____

Organization: 10 pts

- Clear organization _____
- Adequate organization _____
- At times confusing organization _____

Transitions: 10 pts.

- Smooth transitions _____
- Adequate transitions _____
- Awkward transitions _____

Conclusion: 5 pts.

- Effective conclusion _____
- Adequate conclusion _____
- Poor conclusion _____

Grammar/Usage/Style 10

- Correct grammar/effective style/no spelling mistakes _____
- Few grammar errors/adequate style/few spelling mistakes _____
- Incorrect grammar/confusing style/spelling mistakes _____

MLA documentation/Works Cited page: 10 pts

- Excellent use of MLA documentation _____
- Adequate use of MLA documentation _____
- Incorrect use of MLA documentation & _____
(missing Works Cited page)

Process materials: 10

- Complete evidence (all drafts/peer reviews) _____
- Incomplete evidence (some draft/ peer reviews) _____
- No evidence (missing draft/peer reviews) _____

Total Score: _____/100

UCWR 110 Researched Argument Grade Sheet

Introduction: 5 pts

- Clearly sets up context of essay and argument _____
- Adequately sets up context and argument _____
- Inadequately sets context of argument _____

Thesis: 5 pts.

- Clear and specific iteration of stance _____
- Adequate iteration of stance: _____
- Confusing, unclear iteration of stance _____

Argument Development (Quality of Reasons/Evidence): 25 pts

- Excellent development & depth of insight, ample and pertinent sources _____
- Adequate development & depth of insight, sufficient sources _____
- Inadequate development & depth of insight, insufficient sources _____

Counterargument/Response/Rebuttal: 5 pts

- Clear and unbiased coverage of Op. view and effective response _____
- Adequate coverage of Op. view and clear response _____
- Inadequate coverage of Op. view and unclear response _____

Organization: 10 pts

- Clear organization _____
- Adequate organization _____
- At times confusing organization _____

Transitions/incorporation of sources: 15 pts.

- Smooth transitions/incorporation of source material _____
- Adequate transitions/ incorporation of source material _____
- Awkward transitions/ incorporation of source material _____

Conclusion: 5 pts.

- Effective conclusion/solution proposal _____
- Adequate conclusion/solution proposal _____
- Poor conclusion/solution proposal _____

Grammar/Usage/style 10 pts.

- Correct grammar/no spelling mistakes, effective style/voice _____
- Few grammar errors/few spelling mistakes, adequate style/voice _____
- Incorrect grammar/spelling mistakes, ineffective style/voice _____

MLA documentation/Works Cited page: 10 pts

- Excellent use of MLA documentation _____
- Adequate use of MLA documentation _____
- Incorrect use of MLA documentation & _____
(missing Works Cited page)

Process evidence 10 pts.

- All drafts, peer review sheets, Instructor comments _____
- Some drafts, peer review sheets, Instructor comments _____
- No drafts, peer review sheets, Instructor comments _____

Total Score: _____/100

Writing Instruction Resources:

WI/WAC Loyola Initiative:

Dr. Vicky Anderson,

Director, Writing Program, Loyola University

vanders@luc.edu

Loyola Writing Center:

Website: <http://www.luc.edu/writing/home/>

Amy Kessel, Director

akessel@luc.edu

Purdue University, Online Writing Lab:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>