

Faculty Handbook (“Yellow Pages”), Appendix B

Requirements and Criteria for Courses Satisfying the Writing Requirement (WRITI and WRITD), adopted by the Faculty in December 2015.

The Writing Across the Curriculum Program affirms that students can best learn the conventions of academic writing by taking writing intensive courses in multiple disciplines. In the process, they use writing to discover and construct new knowledge and to communicate their ideas to others. Courses that fulfill the writing requirement focus on developing students’ rhetorical knowledge, meaning their ability to analyze and act on understandings of audience, purpose, and context. Such courses also should contribute to students’ growth in critical thinking, that is, their ability to analyze a situation or text and respond by making thoughtful decisions grounded in reading, research, and writing.

Writing Across the Curriculum courses help students attain interdisciplinary competence. Also, by teaching students to write for audiences with a variety of cultural and disciplinary values, these courses prepare Gustavus students to participate fully as citizens. They contribute to the College’s central purpose: “. . . to help its students attain their full potential as persons, to develop in them a capacity and passion for lifelong learning, and to prepare them for fulfilling lives of leadership and service in society.”

Gustavus requires students to complete THREE designated writing requirement courses from at least two different departments in order to graduate. Generally, one of these courses should be taken in the first year (typically in the First Term Seminar or the Three Crowns Curriculum equivalent). Students then complete the writing requirement by taking two additional courses (WRITI, WRITD). At least one designated writing course must be taken as part of a student’s major and one must be a WRITD course.

Writing Across the Curriculum: Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Writing Across the Curriculum courses demonstrate that writing is always an act of negotiation, in which readers and writers from different cultural or disciplinary contexts must help one another understand their beliefs, values, and choices. As they learn to negotiate meaning with diverse audiences, students are equipped to become members of diverse communities and to participate fully within them. To achieve this larger purpose, Writing Across the Curriculum courses should address the following goals.

Goal 1: Develop rhetorical competency. Writing Across the Curriculum courses enable students to make effective choices of form, style, and content suited to the purpose, audience, and circumstances for a given writing task. Such rhetorical competency enables full civic participation.

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students choose effective rhetorical strategies shaped by their appreciation for the purpose, audience, and context for the writing task.

Goal 2: Foster creativity and self-expression. Writing Across the Curriculum courses encourage students to use writing as a means of creative self-expression and intellectual exploration, by providing opportunities for students to write both formally and informally. Such creativity and self-expression helps Gustavus students develop their full potential as persons.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students use writing as a tool to explore ideas, assimilate new knowledge, and reflect on the purpose of their learning.

Goal 3: Promote critical thinking through the effective use of argumentation. Writing Across the Curriculum courses promote critical thinking – thoroughly exploring issues, ideas, and values before accepting or formulating a judgment or conclusion – by requiring students to analyze how written works explain, persuade, and communicate with diverse audiences. In their course work, students will evaluate their own use of evidence, assumptions, and argumentative strategies when writing to explain, persuade, and communicate with diverse audiences.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Students use writing to evaluate texts critically, and to create arguments that communicate effectively with varied audiences, while acknowledging the limits of their own judgments.

Goal 4: Develop the writing process. All Writing Across the Curriculum courses provide multiple opportunities for students to draft, revise, and edit their work. They require students to examine their own writing practices, identify the processes that work best for them as they move from one writing situation to another, and practice these processes.

Student Learning Outcome 4: Students develop a flexible process for writing that includes self-reflection and strategies for responding to feedback, enabling them to draft, revise and polish written work effectively.

Goal 5: Promote fluency in disciplinary conventions. WRITI courses introduce students to scholarly conversations and writing conventions, which may be pertinent to the course's disciplinary "home." In WRITD courses, students examine the rhetorical and formal conventions that distinguish the scholarly discourse of the discipline represented by the course. They will complete assignments that exemplify the discipline's structures, genres, and conventions. Active use of disciplinary conventions enables students to recognize the "ways of knowing," and communicating, distinctive to their fields.

Student Learning Outcome 5: Students create written works that exemplify the structures, genres, and conventions of the discipline.

Writing in First Year Courses (FTS and Three Crowns Curriculum)

The First Year writing component promotes writing as a creative and critical process in which writers engage with the ideas of others. In First Year writing courses, students write to express their own ideas and to inform and communicate with others. Good writers make both stylistic and content-based choices to address different purposes, contexts, and audiences. These rhetorical choices help writers make their cases in the most effective ways possible.

Goals: In First Year courses, students will

1. Learn to make effective choices as writers, considering purpose, audience, context, and style whenever they write, based on models introduced in the course;
2. Use writing as a means of creative expression and intellectual growth;
3. Cultivate an awareness of the values that inform choices made by writers, themselves, and others;
4. Develop flexible strategies for generating ideas, then drafting, revising, and polishing their writing.

Criteria: In First Year courses, students will

1. Have frequent opportunities to write informally as a way to master unfamiliar concepts, explore ideas, and practice techniques for communicating effectively;
2. Engage in a process-based (iterative) approach to writing by having multiple opportunities for planning, drafting and revising their work with instructor and peer feedback;
3. Be guided through at least two formal assignments focused on building skills in critical inquiry, argumentation, and communication to a public audience, using a process-based approach.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students choose effective rhetorical strategies shaped by their appreciation for the purpose, audience, and context for the writing task.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students use writing as a tool to explore ideas, assimilate new knowledge, and reflect on the purpose of their learning.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Students use writing to evaluate texts critically and to create arguments that communicate effectively with varied audiences, while acknowledging the limits of their own judgments.

Student Learning Outcome 4: Students develop a flexible process for writing that includes self-reflection and strategies for responding to feedback, enabling them to draft, revise and polish written work

effectively.

WRITING INTENSIVE (WRITI) COURSES: Writing Intensive (WRITI) courses build on and expand the goals set for writing in First Term Seminars or the Three Crowns Curriculum equivalent. They require students to use writing as a tool for learning and as a way to enter scholarly conversations about topics presented in a course. As a general guideline, writing in various forms should account for at least 40 percent of the student's final grade. Because WRITI courses require substantive writing projects and intensive revision cycles, enrollments should be limited to 20 or fewer students.

Goals: In WRITI courses, students will

1. Complete assignments that build on writing skills they have practiced in other courses;
2. Use writing-to-learn exercises to increase their understanding of material, writing informally and often as a way to master unfamiliar concepts and content. This writing can be ungraded, or selectively graded with the goal of evaluating a student's curiosity, creativity, persistence, engagement, and capacity for metacognition;¹
3. Enter course-related scholarly conversations via writing-to-communicate exercises, in which they supply accurate evidence, support an argument logically, and provide adequate documentation of their sources;
4. Engage in multi-stage writing projects. WRITI courses should require students to engage in substantive revision that reflects new knowledge and results in changes or additions to the content and organization of their texts. While it is important for students to fix errors in spelling and grammar, correcting surface features is not the same as substantive revision of content or structure. Also, assignments and due dates should be spread out over the semester, so that students can develop skills they learn in earlier assignments.

Criteria: In WRITI courses, students will

1. Complete at least one major writing assignment (in stages, with revision cycles), or a series of smaller writing projects (3-5), at least some of which may be revised before final grading.
2. Engage, during class time, in aspects of the writing process, which may culminate in the development of a scholarly work. That is, the final "product" of the course need not be a written work, but extensive and frequent writing supports its development.²
3. Have frequent opportunities to practice making effective rhetorical choices, in which they successfully suit the form of communication to a situation and audience typical of the discipline represented by the course.
4. Receive feedback from instructors at multiple stages of writing projects.

Student Learning Outcomes, WRITI courses:

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students choose effective rhetorical strategies shaped by their appreciation for the purpose, audience, and context for the writing task.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students use writing as a tool to explore ideas, assimilate new knowledge, and reflect on the purpose of their learning.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Students use writing to evaluate texts critically, and to create arguments

¹ For a discussion of these terms, see the "Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing" (2011), issued jointly by the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the National Writing Project (NWP), <http://wpacouncil.org/framework>

² Students might respond to, evaluate, and revise their own and others' writing, or discuss formal and informal writing assignments and ways to approach them. These courses do not require instruction in grammar, punctuation, or the mechanics of writing, although that is an option.

that communicate effectively with varied audiences, while acknowledging the limits of their own judgments.

Student Learning Outcome 4: Students develop a flexible process for writing that includes self-reflection and strategies for responding to feedback, enabling them to draft, revise and polish written work effectively.

Writing in the Disciplines (WRITD) courses build on students' existing writing skills but focus their attention on particular disciplinary conventions and research methods, as well as the forms and genres valued most within a given discipline. Since each discipline has its own conventions of form, style, language use, methods, evidence, and citation, each department is required to offer at least one WRITD course, annually if possible. WRITD courses ideally should be at level three but may be offered at level 2.

Taken together, all of the writing assignments in the course must count substantially toward the students' final grades in the course. Because WRITD courses require substantive writing projects and intensive revision cycles, enrollments should be limited to 20 or fewer students.

Goals: In WRITD courses, students will:

1. Develop and use a range of writing strategies typically used in the discipline to explore and develop new ideas and/or research questions.
2. Use discipline-specific genres to communicate information, based on models introduced and discussed in the class.

Criteria: In WRITD courses, students will

1. Be required to search for at least some of the texts, data, artifacts, artworks, etc., that they will be writing about (in some courses, students may generate some or all of their own data through interviews, experiments, observations, artwork, composition, etc.);
2. Engage in writing assignments that develop students' ability to find, evaluate, and incorporate outside source material into their writing, as appropriate to the discipline;
3. Complete one or more major writing assignments (in stages, with revision cycles), or a series of smaller writing projects (3-5), at least some of which may be revised before final grading.
4. Spend some class time engaged in activities involved in the writing process.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Student Learning Outcome 1: Students choose effective rhetorical strategies shaped by their appreciation for the purpose, audience, and context for the writing task.

Student Learning Outcome 2: Students use writing as a tool to explore ideas, assimilate new knowledge, and reflect on the purpose of their learning.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Students use writing to evaluate texts critically, and to create arguments that communicate effectively with varied audiences, while acknowledging the limits of their own judgments.

Student Learning Outcome 4: Students develop a flexible process for writing that includes self-reflection and strategies for responding to feedback, enabling them to draft, revise and polish written work effectively.

Student Learning Outcome 5: Students create written works that exemplify the structures, genres, and conventions of the discipline.