

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING INTENSIVE COURSES

Loyola University Chicago

The University requires that students take two Writing Intensive courses. These designated sections of courses, identified by a “W” in the section number, are taught with a special emphasis on writing as a recursive process. Instructors are asked to assign a variety of writing assignments, integrated closely with the learning objectives of the course. The Writing Intensive requirement may be satisfied with classes that also satisfy Core or major/minor requirements, or that serve as general electives in the student’s record. In some cases, a particular course is designated as Writing Intensive, but often, only certain sections of a course are so designated.

New Course Creation and Recommendations: To request that a class be newly designated as Writing Intensive, a syllabus reflecting the guidelines should be sent to the Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator (Melissa Bradshaw, mbradshaw@luc.edu) for approval at the beginning of the semester prior to the semester for the new WI class.

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 Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator, 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 the classroom focus is 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 clearly stated 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.