

## **Proposed Structure of Writing Across the Curriculum Program (Recommendations of UCF Ad Hoc Committee, May 2002)**

- 1. The Administration agrees to continuously support the Writing Across the Curriculum Program with financial resources sufficient to ensure that the program continues to meet national mainstream standards. The Program agrees to maintain awareness of those standards and to communicate them to the University.**
  
- 2. Oversight of the Writing Across the Curriculum Program shall be the responsibility of a Writing Across the Curriculum Committee (WACC) of the UCF.**
  - a. The Committee shall devise means to support all faculty who wish to give attention to writing in their courses, and to support students enrolled in such courses.
  - b. The Committee shall have particular responsibility to support faculty and students engaged in designated Writing-Intensive courses.
  - c. The Committee shall submit proposals for major changes in definitions or procedures for approval by the UCF before taking effect.
  - d. The Committee shall make recommendations for Writing-Intensive Course proposals to the UCF for approval.
  
- 3. The Guidelines for Teaching a Writing-Intensive course shall be those described below.**

W-courses use writing as a vehicle for learning, requiring students to express, reformulate, or apply the concepts of an academic discipline. Current research has shown that revision is a necessary part of writing. Therefore, the emphasis on writing in W-courses is not intended primarily to give students additional practice in basic composition skills, but to encourage students to think more clearly and express their thoughts more precisely. W-courses take a two-pronged approach to learning, with the students addressing subject matter via written assignments and the instructor aiming to improve the quality of written performance by giving feedback and requiring revision.

The Writing Across the Curriculum Program should include courses and instructors in all disciplines; we particularly want to foster W-courses in such previously under-represented fields as applied arts and social sciences, and the technical and quantitative sciences.

The following guidelines describe the sort of course envisaged, though alternative means to the same end will always be considered.

**a. A significant portion of the writing for the course should be critical (analytical) writing.**

- Critical (analytical) writing addresses a question for which there is more than one plausible interpretation, explanation, analysis, or evaluation, and thus requires original thought from the student. This original thought both demonstrates and

assists the student's mastery of course material. In other words, in W-courses students practice solving discipline-based problems through writing.

- Instructors communicate their knowledge of writing in their disciplines to their students through a variety of means, such as paper comments, conferences, handouts, and in-class presentations on writing.
- In addition to formal papers, the critical (analytical) component may include short, unrevised papers, essay exams, and in-class writings.
- In some fields, students in lower-level classes are not in a position to challenge the maxims of the discipline or to take a stand on unsettled questions. In such fields, students may be required to do critical (analytical) writing in a number of ways: to create a traditional research paper in which a thesis statement summarizes the writer's use and interpretation of studies by experts, to explain the reasoning one could use in solving problems or applying a concept, to write dialogues that represent distinct perspectives on an issue, to articulate the distinction between elegant and inelegant approaches to a project (e.g., designs for an experiment to prove a given hypothesis), or to explain a technical concept for a real or imagined audience of non-experts.
- Courses that are writing-intensive by their nature (e.g., journalism, technical writing, creative writing) may be approved as W-courses. However, writing in these courses must include a critical component: students must write about writing (for example, by explaining how they have applied concepts or by evaluating published professional pieces), in addition to practicing the genres of the subject.

**b. The critical (analytical) writing component should emphasize revision.**

- "Revision" implies making substantive changes to writing: rethinking the thesis, organization, support, or content, rather than simply correcting surface errors.
- Instructors may encourage revision in a variety of ways, e.g., written comments on drafts, one-on-one conferences, and in-class peer workshops.
- To encourage revision, instructors' comments should suggest changes and explain reasons for the suggestions.
- Ordinarily, instructors should require substantial revision of students' work (preferably at least two assignments totaling 1500-2500 words) be turned in for additional response (comments and grade).

**c. W-courses should, in general, require students to write 5000 words over the course of the semester.**

- Given the nature of revision, which necessitates rethinking the content of a piece of writing (see point b above), revised versions of earlier papers may be part of the total word count. When the final draft will merely be a corrected version of the preliminary draft, the pages in the preliminary draft should not be considered as part of the total word count.
- The writing should be spread throughout the semester, in a minimum of three (3) assignments, which may be separate or related to one another. Because extensive

revisions are encouraged, students need time to revise, and instructors need time to comment.

- To help assess students' writing skills, one assignment of at least 250 words might profitably be assigned and evaluated in the first week of the semester. In addition, because writing is a tool for learning, further writing assignments should be incorporated into the class as early in the term as possible.
- Written assignments should be a major part of the course grade. It is suggested that out-of-class papers count for 50% or more of the semester grade, though in certain fields, other percentages may appropriately be applied.

**4. The Procedures for Proposing a Writing-Intensive course shall be those described below.**

**a. A W-course proposal originates from the faculty member who will be teaching the course.**

Because the success of a W-course depends on the teacher's professional commitment to incorporating critical (analytical) writing and revision into classes, the WAC Committee shall consider courses proposed by individual faculty members, rather than courses merely assigned to instructors.

*NOTE: This represents the usual procedure. However, it is understood that unforeseen scheduling difficulties may occur occasionally, and the Committee will cooperate with Departments to ensure both that courses can be taught when scheduled and that they will meet regular W-course Guidelines.*

**b. W-course faculty attend a semi-annual workshop before they teach a W-course for the first time.**

Attendance at this workshop is voluntary and highly recommended, because it introduces faculty to WAC staff, to colleagues who share a commitment to using writing to enhance students' learning, and to multiple ways to incorporate writing into their courses. In every case, discussions center on how to leverage faculty time and effort most efficiently to increase student learning.

**c. W-course proposals should be sent to the UCF, where they will be logged in and routed to the WAC Committee for consideration.**

In order to be included in the University's printed Schedule of Classes, proposals must be received no later than April 1 for classes that begin the next January, and no later than November 1 for classes that begin the next September.

**d. Each proposal includes the following items, either as part of the syllabus or in a separate attachment:**

- The completed proposal cover sheet (available from the Writing Across the Curriculum Program web site: [www.southernct.edu/committees/writingprogram](http://www.southernct.edu/committees/writingprogram)).
- A copy of the course outline or syllabus
- An explanation of how the writing assignments for this course fulfill the expectation that "A significant portion of the writing for the course should be critical (analytical)" (see Guidelines for Designing and Teaching W-courses, point a.)
- An explanation of how this course's "critical (analytical) writing component [will] emphasize revision" (see Guidelines for Designing and Teaching W-courses, point b.)
- An explanation of how this course will "require students to write 5000 words over the course of the semester" (see Guidelines for Designing and Teaching W-courses, point c.)
- An explanation of what percentage of the final grade will come from writing assignments
- An explanation of how grades on revised papers will be weighted

NOTE: Sample proposals will be available as models.

**e. W-course faculty members are encouraged to attend one or more mini-workshops during the semester in which they are teaching a W-course.**

These workshops, usually one or two hours in length, will be held at various times during each semester and will include presentations and discussions with WAC staff and faculty colleagues on suggested topics of shared interest.

**f. Faculty members submit the WAC Committee's Update Form before teaching the W-course for a fifth time or before the third year (whichever is sooner). Multiple sections during the same semester count as a single time.**

The one-page form collects basic demographic information and asks for a very brief update of plans for the course. The WAC staff will provide assistance in completing the form.

## Writing Across the Curriculum Program

### W-course Update Form

**Please use this form to inform the WAC Committee of your recent experience before teaching a W-course for a fifth time or before the third year (whichever is sooner). Multiple sections during the same semester count as a single time.**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Course Information

Department \_\_\_\_\_  
Course Code & Number \_\_\_\_\_  
If cross-listed, please indicate Department and Course Code & Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Course Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Semester course will be taught next \_\_\_\_\_  
Prerequisites \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous Enrollment \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Enrollment \_\_\_\_\_

This course fulfills:

General Ed Requirement \_\_\_\_\_ Major Requirement \_\_\_\_\_  
Minor Requirement \_\_\_\_\_ Free Elective \_\_\_\_\_

#### Instructor Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Campus Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Please describe successful aspects of the course that you plan to incorporate the next time you teach it (assignments; in-class activities; strategies for encouraging revision; etc.):

*(continued on other side)*

2. Please describe any changes you plan to make for the next time you teach this course (new assignments, course policies, personal strategies, etc.):

I am interested in attending a mini-workshop on:

General Issues \_\_\_\_\_  
Creating Assignments \_\_\_\_\_  
Encouraging Revision \_\_\_\_\_  
Responding to Papers \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

[NOTE: You are encouraged to attend at least one mini-workshop during each semester you are teaching a W-course.]

PLEASE USE THIS VERSION OF THE SIGNATURE SHEET TO DESIGNATE AN  
EXISTING COURSE AS A W-COURSE.

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM FORUM  
W-COURSE PROPOSAL

Signature Sheet

Please complete the appropriate sections, and include a signature sheet with each W-course proposal.  
Submit 10 copies of the completed proposal to the UCF.

Department _____
Course Code & Number _____ Credits _____
Course Title _____
_____

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Chairperson                      Date

The following section will be completed when the proposal is approved by the WAC Committee and  
recorded by UCF

_____ Chairperson, WACC                      Date	_____ Chairperson, UCF                      Date
_____ Other Signature (if needed)                      Date	_____ Other Signature (if needed)                      Date

Date of 1<sup>st</sup> revised proposal \_\_\_\_\_

Date of 2<sup>nd</sup> revised proposal \_\_\_\_\_



**PLEASE USE THIS VERSION OF THE SIGNATURE SHEET TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS  
TO CREATE A NEW COURSE THAT IS ALSO BEING SUBMITTED FOR  
DESIGNATION AS A W-COURSE.**

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM FORUM

**PROPOSAL FOR A NEW COURSE AS A W-COURSE**

**Signature Sheet**

*Please complete the appropriate section and submit 15 copies of the completed proposal to the UCF.*

Department _____ Course Code & Number _____ Credits _____ Course Title _____
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Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Department \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the following *before* submitting the proposal to UCF

Department votes:	For _____	Against _____	Abstain _____
_____ Chairperson, Dept. Curriculum Comm.	_____ Date	_____ Chairperson, Department	_____ Date

List the other departments affected by this proposal                      None \_\_\_\_\_

If any other departments are listed, please include a letter from the Chair of each affected department acknowledging awareness of this proposal.

The following section will be completed as the proposal is reviewed by the UCF process

_____ Chairperson, School Curriculum Comm.      Date	
_____ Chairperson, WAC Committee                      Date	_____ Chairperson, UCF                      Date
_____ Academic Vice President                      Date	

DATE OF REVISED PROPOSAL

Date of 1<sup>st</sup> revised proposal \_\_\_\_\_ Date of 2<sup>nd</sup> revised proposal \_\_\_\_\_



*PLEASE USE THIS FORM, ALONG WITH THE APPROPRIATE SIGNATURE SHEET,  
TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO DESIGNATE A COURSE AS A W-COURSE.*

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM FORUM

**W-course Proposal Form**

**Directions:** Please fill out this form and submit 10 copies of the proposal (15 COPIES IF THE PROPOSAL IS FOR A NEW COURSE) to the UCF.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Semester you intend to teach this course \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ This is a proposal to create a new course      \_\_\_\_\_ This course was previously approved as a W-course      \_\_\_\_\_ This course has not previously been a W-course

DEPARTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE CODE & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ CREDITS \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PREREQUISITES \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL CONDITIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please be sure that your proposal includes the following, either in the syllabus or in a separate attachment:

- A copy of your course outline or syllabus
- Copies of 2 possible assignments for the course, showing that they fulfill the expectation that "A significant portion of the writing for the course should be critical (analytical)" (see Guidelines for Designing and Teaching Writing-Intensive Courses, point a.)
- An explanation of how this course's "critical (analytical) writing component [will] emphasize revision" (see Guidelines for Designing and Teaching Writing-Intensive Courses, point b.)
- An explanation of how this course will "require students to write 5000 words over the course of the semester" (see Guidelines for Designing and Teaching Writing-Intensive Courses, point c.)
- A description of what percentage of the final grade will come from writing assignments.
- A description of how grades on revised papers will be weighted.

5. **Student enrollment in Writing-Intensive courses shall be capped at no more than 23 (20 for courses approved by the WACC and UCF); WACC will continue to make every effort to further reduce these caps. However, if departments and instructors wish to offer Writing-Intensive courses with higher enrollments, means will be devised to support faculty and students while ensuring academic quality.**
6. **The Policies and Procedures for Independent Study Writing-Intensive courses shall be those described below.**

#### W-COURSES AND INDEPENDENT STUDY

In the best of all possible worlds, the interests of students as developing writers and scholars would best be served if independent studies were not used to meet W-course requirements for the following reasons:

- a. Independent study courses often require written work. However, they are not designed to provide the same level of support of writing skill development as regular W-courses. Logically they are meant to serve well-prepared students, who are capable and mature enough to carry out extended independent work in consultation with a professor.
- b. It would be most advantageous to student learning if independent studies were not undertaken until they had completed the university W-course requirement. That would enable students to enter independent studies with stronger writing skills, ready to focus on the critical aspects of research and analysis at an advanced level.
- c. Fairness to faculty suggests they should not be burdened with the task of developing independent study proposals with students who have to meet the extra guidelines for W-courses, especially at the last minute. Faculty should not be in the awkward position of trying to meet students' needs for W-courses and offering independent study as a convenience to the students, rather than as a legitimate learning opportunity.

That being said, some students may want to take an independent study and need a W-course opportunity, and some faculty members want to offer an opportunity to do independent study for W-credit to students in their departments.

**Therefore the following policy shall govern approving Independent Study Proposals for W-course credit:**

- A student may take one independent study as a W-course if the student has already taken at least one W-course at Southern. (Preferably the student would have taken two W-courses prior to an independent study as a W-course.)
- Oversight of this policy shall be the responsibility of the Dean.

## Agreement Form for Independent Study as a W-course

**This form of agreement is to be attached to the student's independent study proposal before the Dean signs off on the proposal.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am aware of the critical writing component (minimum 20 pages) of the requirements.\* I have described how critical writing will be part of my independent study in the independent study proposal.

I understand that substantial revision (not simply correction of mechanical errors) is a requirement in W-courses. I agree to undertake substantial revision of my work in the course of this independent study. If the basic product that I am responsible for submitting to fulfill the writing requirements for this independent study is one long paper, I agree to submit it in stages to my professor so that feedback and revision can take place.

I have demonstrated to my sponsoring faculty member that I have already taken and passed at least one W-course at Southern Connecticut State University.

Signature of the independent study student:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the sponsoring faculty member:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note: Critical (analytical) writing addresses a question for which there is more than one plausible interpretation, explanation, analysis, or evaluation, and thus requires original thought from the student.

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- 7. WACC shall seek and use faculty and student feedback to monitor and improve its performance and the culture of writing at Southern. The Committee shall report at least annually to the UCF on its activities.**
- 8. At the discretion of individual departments and programs, WACC shall collaborate with each department or program in designing a Writing-Intensive Course template that addresses specific program needs and disciplinary expectations. These templates will be the benchmark with which Writing-Intensive Course proposals within that program will be evaluated.**
- 9. The nomenclature for Writing-Intensive courses shall be changed from “L” (“Literacy”) to “W” (“Writing-Intensive”) according to a system and schedule agreed to by WACC and UCF.**
- 10. The prerequisite for all Writing-Intensive courses shall be satisfactory completion of ENG 101.**