

## **L-Course Waiver Form**

Indicate, by checking off the appropriate box, your reason for requesting an L-course waiver. Based on your selection, please submit the required materials in a single folder. Please be sure to check off each item as you include it in the folder. Submit the completed folder to the mailbox of Dr. Mark Heidmann in EN D265-C. Be sure to include your Student ID number and an email address or a phone number.

**Please note that ONLY ONE WAIVER may be granted to each student.**



**A specific non-L course actually fulfilled the L-course requirements. [See the L-course Guidelines attached to this form.] All decisions about granting a waiver on this ground will be based on a supporting folder containing ALL of the following:**

- \_\_\_ 1. A one-page letter from the student, explaining the extenuating circumstances behind the request.
- \_\_\_ 2. A syllabus from the course claimed to be equivalent to an L-course.
- \_\_\_ 3. Copies of the formal writing assignments from the course.
- \_\_\_ 4. The work produced in response to those assignments, including evidence of attention to revision.
- \_\_\_ 5. Examples of other writing done in the course (e.g. short, unrevised papers, essay exams, quizzes).
- \_\_\_ 6. Official evidence of grade in the course.
- \_\_\_ 7. A signed letter from the instructor of the course in question, agreeing that the course assignments and the student's performance meet the L-course guidelines.
- \_\_\_ 8. A signed statement from the student's academic advisor, agreeing that the student's work in the course fulfills the purposes of an L-course in the student's program and justifies the request for a waiver.



**The student already writes exceptionally well. To demonstrate such competence, a folder must contain ALL of the following:**

- \_\_\_ 1. A one-page letter from the student, explaining the extenuating circumstances behind the request.
- \_\_\_ 2. A signed statement from the student's academic advisor, agreeing that the student's writing skills fulfill the purposes of an L-course in the student's program and justify the request for a waiver.
- \_\_\_ 3. At least three appropriate papers (selected from at least two academic courses) or at least two different professional writing products, totaling at least 30 pages. These papers must constitute persuasive evidence that the student's performance as a writer meets the same standards as expected in an L-course.



**A writing-intensive course has been taken successfully at another university.**

- \_\_\_ 1. Official evidence that the requirements of such a course meet SCSU's L-course guidelines. Such evidence will usually consist of a copy of the school's policy from its Academic catalog and a copy of the syllabus from the course in question.
- \_\_\_ 2. An official transcript showing that the student earned a "C" or higher.

# Southern Writing Program

## Guidelines for Designing and Teaching L-Courses

Revised May 1999; Updated September 2001

L-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 L-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. L-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 Board wants the L-course program to include courses and instructors in all disciplines; we particularly want to foster L-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 THE BOARD ENVISAGES, THOUGH ALTERNATIVE MEANS TO THE SAME END WILL ALWAYS BE CONSIDERED.***

**1. 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 L-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.
- The Writing Board recognizes that in some fields, students in lower-level classes are in no 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 to 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 L-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.

**2. 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 again for additional response (comments and grade).

- 3. L-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 #2 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. The Writing Board suggests that out-of-class papers count for 50% or more of the semester grade, though in certain fields, other percentages may appropriately be applied.