

Writing

Definition

“Writing” refers to the act of inscribed communication or creating composed knowledge. According to the National Council of Teachers of English, “Writing is a process that takes place across a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes: to help writers develop and document their ideas for a range of purposes and audiences in a variety of contexts; to distribute ideas to other audiences so that they can be revised or recirculated; to help an individual or a community to define, clarify, or even reify its notation. Writing is not just the final, polished draft. Writing involves routines, skills, strategies, and practices for generating, revising, and editing different kinds of texts.” (From the NCTE Position Statements on the teaching of composition first stated in 1985 and revised November 14, 2018: <https://ncte.org/statement/teachingcomposition/>)

Rationale and Intent

Written communication involves the expression, development, revision, augmentation, and substantiation of ideas in writing. Attention to the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading) and its iterative nature underpins explicit written instruction. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles with thoughtful attention to the needs and interests of its respective audiences and includes attention to: appropriate rhetorical forms, writing and grammar conventions, relevant protocols in particular fields, and the substantiation of arguments and assertions with researched support. Effective writing develops themes and arguments for an audience. It can involve working with many different genres of writing, and with various texts, technologies, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through repeated exposure, practice, and reinforcement across the curriculum, including within a student’s major.

As a foundational objective, Writing is introduced in Writing I and Writing II. To ensure that students have the opportunity to further develop foundational learning goals throughout their general education curriculum, courses designated as a Critical and Creative Thinking across the Disciplines (CCTAD) course must include at least one of these goals as a secondary skill. Writing may therefore be selected as one of the secondary skills in the CCTAD.

Goal

Fitchburg State University students will draft original texts to develop and express ideas working with different media including words, data and images.

Potential Course Objectives

Courses seeking a Writing designation do not simply assign or contain written assignments. Rather, they must include explicit instruction and feedback concerning: the writing process, writing strategies, genres and conventions, writing style, and modes of effective communication. Writing instruction should be integral to the course such that it appears as a course goal or objective in the course syllabus.

Courses with a Writing designation should explicitly support process-based writing with dedicated class time set aside for such standard practices, such as: one-on-one conferences, peer review, class discussions of student writing samples, and developmental feedback on drafts with opportunities for students to revise work.

Courses with a Writing designation should also stress effective revision of work to support and develop ideas and strategies concerning different means to communicate with different audiences.

The objectives below are recommended as models for general education course syllabi. The list is not meant to be complete. Faculty should feel free to adopt these objectives, or they may develop their own.

Rhetoric:

- Understand the purposes of writing within specific and varied discursive communities
- Develop means of persuasion with an awareness of audience
- Recognize figures of speech and logical fallacies

Argumentation:

- Identify and construct an argumentative thesis
- Write essays that employ logical structures and transitions
- Synthesize critical thinking and close reading in analytical writing

Uses of Evidence:

- Locate, evaluate, and select sources
- Summarize and critique materials; paraphrase and integrate quotations

Process-Oriented Writing:

- Build an essay in stages (from pre-writing and invention to drafting)
- Practice the revision process
- Utilize the classroom as a workshop
- Recognize and apply written style conventions in a variety of rhetorical contexts

Academic Community:

- Make appropriate choice of tone, grammar, and format according to situation and convention
- Acknowledge the standards and modes of academic integrity

Research Skills

- Demonstrate in prose a knowledge of rhetoric, argumentation, uses of evidence, process-oriented writing, and academic community
- Employ a variety of research methods and genres (including, but not limited to, interview, annotated bibliography, fieldwork, archival work, multimedia, etc.)
- Adopt the relevant citation format appropriate to professional publication in the field of study.
- Understand how to incorporate information literacy effectively, thoughtfully and critically in a networked world.