

University Writing Competency Subcommittee

W COURSE REQUIREMENTS

W courses at CSU Fresno are designed to meet the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), a measure created to ensure that all CSU graduates are capable of communicating in writing at a level appropriate to their advanced education. Consequently, this upper division requirement measures more than basic competency in written English.

While W courses in different departments will have specific requirements that are unique to their disciplinary contexts, it is still possible to clarify what W courses should have in common. To ensure some uniformity of instruction in writing in university W courses, the University Writing Competency Subcommittee proposes the following general requirements to be met by all W courses offered at CSU Fresno.

To provide more curricular and pedagogical direction to departments and faculty offering W courses, the following W-course requirements are proposed and under consideration in the 2008/2009 academic year:

1. The W course should be grounded in writing pedagogy. Subject area content (i.e. Anthropology and Interpretation, or Business and Ethics) provides a framework for the class so students and instructors can engage in academic conversations as a means of performing academic literacy.
2. Students will write a minimum of 5000 words total in at least 5 different writing tasks. A minimum of two assignments will require multiple drafts in which the student participates in writing workshops.
3. The W course will require one writing textbook that features strategies for researching, planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing (e.g. *The Penguin Handbook*, by Lester Faigley: Pearson/Longman, ISBN 0 536 45587 2). The text should support student understanding of writing as a process of decision-making, with particular attention to genre conventions specific to the subject area.
4. Faculty will provide multiple forms of feedback to students about their writing. Research in writing indicates rubrics, teacher revision demonstrations, and student-teacher conferences are among the most successful methods of feedback. Student writing will be returned in a timely manner.
5. The instructor's criteria for evaluating student writing will be explicitly articulated. Assessment in the writing course should focus on both substance and form, validating students' use of substantive elements like coherence, argument, explanation, analysis, interpretation, complexity of thought, and effective use of information as well as conventions of grammar and usage.
6. A grade of "C" or better is required to earn W course credit.
7. Students must complete the lower division writing requirement before they enroll in a W course. Additionally, students should complete at least 56 units prior to enrolling in a W course.
8. Following C4 guidelines, enrollment in each W course will be limited to 25 students per section.