

Course Development and Teaching Guidelines for Learning Foundations and Learning Explorations

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Course Overview for Learning Foundations

The Learning Foundations course serves as an introduction to several key parts of the general education experience at CSB/SJU. It is writing intensive, but also introduces students to information literacy and begins the process of experiencing and reflecting on the interconnected nature of a liberal arts education.

This is the first in a series of two four-credit course focused on Writing and Learning and is taken by all first-year students in the fall semester. One common book is included, which will be chosen collectively by the faculty teaching the course. The course also introduces students to the Integrated Portfolio. Beyond the common book, individual faculty choose their own topic for the course. This course cannot count toward a major.

Course Overview for Learning Explorations

This 2-credit course will be taken by students (first year or transfer) who have already completed a writing composition course and will be capped at 18 students. It functions as both an introduction to their general education experience at a Catholic, Benedictine college, and as a writing-intensive course. Students will demonstrate reflection on their learning through an introduction to the Integrated Portfolio. The topics of these courses are diverse and intended to be taught by faculty from across all divisions.

Learning Outcomes

As you are designing your course, please keep in mind that students will need to produce work that will be used to assess their proficiency in the related learning outcomes.

Write 1

Students demonstrate awareness of the context and purpose of their writing, which is to make an evidence-based argument. They organize in a manner that is generally effective given the purpose. They use appropriate content to develop and support their ideas. There may be errors in syntax and mechanics, but not enough to pose a significant barrier to understanding.

Information Literacy 1

Students demonstrate the ability to access appropriate information through basic search strategies. They cite sources appropriately and articulate the value of accurate citations. Their papers are free of plagiarism.

Metacognition 1

Students begin to identify their intellectual abilities and dispositions. They recognize that there are different problem-solving processes and learning strategies.

Write 2 (Learning Explorations only)

Students demonstrate consideration of the context, audience, and purpose of their writing and use compelling content to clearly support ideas. They consistently organize their arguments using relevant evidence. The language is clear and straightforward, with few errors.

Click [here](#) for a full list of scaffolded learning outcome

Required Elements for the Learning Foundations Course

Learning Foundations courses also include several required Common Elements. While these are not learning goals, they are necessary to ensure a high-quality general education experience. The required elements include:

1. A common reading for all Learning Foundations courses
2. Embedding student attendance at 1 ARTE-approved event in the course (for a list of ARTE-approved events see: [ARTE-Approved events](#))
3. Introduction of the Integrated Portfolio
4. Instruction by a research librarian on information literacy
5. Students must attend at least one session with Writing Center tutors
6. Students will write three formal essays of increasing length and complexity during the course.
7. Use of peer and faculty feedback as part of the revision process for the three formal papers.

Curriculum Guidelines

- Students must complete the Learning Foundations course in their first year
- Learning Foundations courses will be capped at 18
- Learning Foundations courses must be 4-credits
- Learning Foundations courses cannot be designated as o A Way of Thinking, OR o Cultural and Social Difference: Identity or Cultural and Social Difference: Systems, OR o Theological Explorations (Theo 1) or Theological Integrations (Theo 2).
- Learning Foundations cannot carry an engagement designation (e.g., ARTE, EXP, GLO).

- Learning Foundations must embed 1 ARTE event into the course

Teaching Guidelines

1. The expectation is that Learning Foundations is a discussion-based class, with significant time devoted to thoughtful conversations about important ideas, as well as spending class time to help students improve their writing.
2. Students in Learning Foundations are expected to write at least three formal essays over the semester that make an evidence-based argument. These should be of increasing length and complexity. Each essay receives peer and faculty feedback, and revision must be part of the process.
3. The faculty member and a research librarian will work together to help students learn how to use basic searches to find appropriate information, and to cite them properly.
4. Students will learn what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and why doing so matters. We strongly recommend that students demonstrate their ability to search, cite, and avoid plagiarism as part of one of the later writing assignments in the course.
 - a. Example: Students may demonstrate their understanding of the importance of proper citation in class discussion, or through a brief written statement.
5. Faculty will help students begin to understand the role and benefit of metacognition. Since this is the first stage of the Metacognition requirement, the focus should be on helping students realize that individual approaches differ, and that reflecting on how they learn is beneficial.
 - a. Students will complete the Metacognition - Beginner DEAL reflection to demonstrate they have met this objective. This can be found on the [Course Proposals Page](#) under Faculty Resources on the IC website.

Required Common Elements Guidelines

1. The Common Reading will be selected in advance by a committee of faculty teaching Writing Foundations.
 - a. Students in all sections will read and discuss the same reading.
 - b. To maximize the out-of-class conversation (and the possibility of bringing in an author/relevant speaker), we encourage faculty to assign and discuss the Common Reading at the same point in the semester.
2. Faculty will introduce the purpose and mechanism of the Integrated Portfolio. The goal is to help students see the benefits of collecting and reflecting upon their work.

3. The requirement that each section must embed one Fine Arts event is met by assigning students to attend a Fine Arts event from a list of designated events.
 - a. We strongly encourage instructors to include a reflective element, such as an in class discussion or writing assignment, following the event attendance.
 - b. To overcome the barriers of scheduling conflicts and cost, we strongly encourage faculty to use live performances only if they can be recorded and made available to students.
4. Instruction by a research librarian on information literacy can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including in-class instruction.
 - a. We strongly encourage faculty to integrate students' work with a research librarian into an assignment in which they will demonstrate information literacy.
 - b. The research librarians have created a Canvas module that they would like all students to complete for this learning goal.
5. Students must attend one session with Writing Center tutors. This can be met inside or outside of class, so faculty can choose whether to bring tutors to class or send students for individual appointments.