

Course Development and Teaching Guidelines for Writing Foundations

Course Overview

The Writing 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.

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.

Required Elements for the Writing Foundations Course

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

Teaching Guidelines

1. The expectation is that Writing 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 Writing 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. This may be achieved through tools similar to those currently used in the College Success course, or
 - b. it may be facilitated by the faculty member asking students to examine their problem-solving processes and learning strategies.
 - a. Example, instructors may assign a short written reflection asking students to identify different learning styles and strategies and their own preferences.

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.
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.