

Core Curriculum Subcommittee on Writing in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Role of Writing in the Curriculum:

While writing plays an integral part in the courses offered in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, there are eight courses where writing requirements will perform a rigorous role. In the Foundational Courses (ACS, Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies, and Ethics), students should write from 20-30 pages of polished prose with a carefully monitored composing process which includes an evaluation of rough drafts and the opportunity to revise. In the other courses where writing will play a rigorous role (Literature and Writing Sophomore Seminar, Sophomore/Junior Research Requirement, and the Senior Capstone Course), students should write from 10-20 pages (frequently many more) of polished prose with a carefully monitored composing process which includes an evaluation of rough drafts and the opportunity to revise.

- Two Augustine and Culture Seminars: “Ancients” and “Moderns”
- Philosophy: “Knowledge, Reality, Self”
- Theology and Religious Studies: “Christian Faith and Life”
- Ethics: “The Good Life: Ethics and Contemporary Moral Questions”
- Literature and Writing Sophomore Seminar
- Sophomore/Junior Research Requirement
- Senior Capstone Course

Individual departments will determine which of their courses will focus on writing.

Rationale:

Writing is woven throughout the curriculum in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences because writing is crucial not only in communicating with others, but also in developing our own thinking. Writing enables us to reflect on things, organize our ideas, and think them through; it is a vital means both of exploring issues and of constructing arguments and lines of reasoning. The Core Curriculum emphasizes writing—notably in the sophomore Literature and Writing Seminar and in the Augustine and Culture Seminars, where small classes promote a particularly close attention to writing—its importance extends throughout courses in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, including each department’s junior research requirement courses and senior capstone courses

Courses:

The subcommittee on writing will request chair appointed (or volunteer) Writing Liaisons from each department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to determine writing requirement needs for each department.

Foundational Courses:

- *Who am I?* The Augustine and Culture Seminar (ACS) focuses on a question that is often on the minds of our students as they seek to find their own identity in the transition to young adulthood. Augustine's account of his own restless search is at the heart of the ACS experience, where students study some of the texts that were foundational for Augustine, engage with his own answers in *Confessions*, and explore the dialogue about his vision in the modern world.
- *What can I know?* The philosophy course, "Knowledge, Reality, Self" explores philosophical responses to the questions of how we can know, what is real, and what is the nature of human existence. Through the study of foundational texts, the philosophy course also explores the dialogue between Catholic, Christian, secular and skeptical perspectives on these questions.
- *How do I relate faith and reason?* The theology courses explore the restless human search to understand ourselves and our world that can open to us to the transcendent mystery we call God. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and understanding faith as personal response to a relationship offered from beyond the boundaries of human existence, theology courses also consider the central ideas and historical development of Christian, and particularly Roman Catholic, belief and practice. Some of the courses that fulfill the upper division elective also study other world religions.
- *How should I live?* The study of ethics helps students reflect on human flourishing, both in their own lives and for the communities around them, by studying the vision that emerges from both Christian, Catholic, and Augustinian sources and from alternative accounts of the moral life that emerge from other traditions. Students learn to apply these concepts to a variety of contemporary moral questions, concerning their relationship to themselves, to others, and to the natural environment.

Knowledge, Skills, and Values:

- Writing demonstrates the ability to structure arguments, to think critically and creatively, and to showcase rhetorical awareness. The practice and process of writing, preparing and repeatedly revising, editing, and proofreading drafts, including careful attention to substance and style, enables students to achieve clarity and coherence of argument and voice.
- Writing is a lifelong activity and an engagement with society, and allows the individual to successfully navigate personal, professional, and civic worlds.
- Writing allows the student to not only *participate* in a community of scholars, but also helps *create* that community. "For, if our writing back and forth does not edify us, how will our spoken words to each other be edifying, when,

once our words have sounded, we will not find anything we can reexamine by reading?" –St. Augustine, Letter 241

- Writing about global issues to international audiences helps students develop the cultural sensitivity and global cultural literacy required to be effective communicators in the world community.
- Writing takes place in a “transmedia” environment with technological tools enabling students to communicate through electronic text, image, sound, and video to an ever-widening audience in print or on the World Wide Web.
- Writing courses which include pedagogical emphasis on writing in the Core Curriculum and in each Major will help students develop skills for using sources appropriately and effectively. They will gain appreciation for the need to acknowledge indebtedness to sources and the means for doing so.