

## PROPOSAL *for a* QUEENS COLLEGE WRITING CURRICULUM

### English Composition I

*An introduction to evaluation and production of academic argument through writing, taught through the study of a particular topic in the liberal arts.*

A revised version of our topics-based ENG 110 taught by the English department. Contributes to the Common Core. 3 credits/4 hours, enrollment of 20 students.

### Hallmarks:

*introduces* a vocabulary of college writing,  
*emphasizes* practice with clear and coherent writing,  
*results in* fluency with elements of academic writing

### English Composition II

*An introduction to evaluation and analysis of evidence in a particular discipline through analysis of that discipline's written production of knowledge.*

A disciplinary writing class taught by volunteering departments and divisions. Contributes to the Common Core. 3 credits/4 hours, enrollment of 20 students.

### Hallmarks:

*introduces* conventions of disciplinary writing,  
*emphasizes* identifying and articulating argument,  
*results in* ability to critically engage sources

### Sophomore Writing Course

*A content-driven General Education course with an advanced, writing-intensive exploration of disciplinary assessment, evaluation, and production of argument.*

A disciplinary writing seminar bridging composition and a major. Contributes to the Flexible Core. 3 credits/3 hours, enrollment of 20 students.

### Hallmarks:

*introduces* advanced critical reading skills,  
*emphasizes* student-faculty interaction,  
*results in* ability to identify and write about genuine intellectual problems

### Junior Writing Course

*An upper-level, content-driven Major or Divisional course where students use a range of writing techniques to master course content.*

A course in a student's Major (if available) or a trans-major Divisional course with daily informal writing. 3 credits/3 hours, enrollment of 25 students.

### Hallmarks:

*introduces* habits of learning through writing,  
*emphasizes* regular informal writing assignments,  
*results in* self-reflective strategies for learning through writing

### Culminating Writing Course

*An upper-level writing-intensive seminar that offers a culminating experience for graduates in either a major Capstone course or a divisional Synthesis course.*

A major Capstone or Synthesis course resulting in a final project with strong digital writing component. 3 credits/3 hours, enrollment of 20 students.

### Hallmarks:

*introduces* a staged research project,  
*emphasizes* information and research literacy,  
*results in* a multi-stage cumulative writing project and reflective evaluation

## IMPLEMENTATION

### ***Transfer Students***

Because this writing curriculum is structured cumulatively, it poses a problem to the large number of transfer students who will enter mid-stream. There are a number of variables affecting transfer students: whether they have an Associates degree, are transferring from a CUNY school or not, and at what rank they transfer in.

We recommend that all efforts be made to incorporate these students into the writing curriculum as quickly as possible, rather than to create a second set of standards for them. Thus, they should be advised to sign up for a writing class dependent on their entering rank. If they enter at the Junior or Senior rank, they should be advised to take writing-intensive courses in subsequent semesters so as to meet the requirement of 3 such courses.

We also recommend the creation of a Transfer Year Initiative program, perhaps housed along with Freshman Year Initiative. Indeed, fostering more interaction between freshmen and transfer students may be mutually beneficial.

### ***Digital Writing Project***

We recommend that all Queens College students be required to complete a student-centered, trans-curricular digital writing project that reflects their competency with the goals of the writing curriculum. This digital writing project serves three purposes: 1) to incorporate technology literacy in the curriculum; 2) to offer students opportunities to preserve, revise, and reflect on their writing; and 3) to allow us to assess and revise the writing curriculum.

During their Freshman Year, students will maintain a weekly blog about their academic experience, overseen by students in an appropriate upper-level writing class. At the end of each Spring semester, students will select two pieces of academic writing completed for class work in the past academic year and post these to their blog. At the same time, students will write a reflective review describing the strengths and weaknesses gained in producing these pieces of writing. During their culminating writing course, this writing blog and annual reflective reviews will serve as the basis for a longer writing piece reflecting on how their development as a writer contributes to their academic major or professional goals. This reflective reviews should be incorporated into the final assignment and assessment for each writing class.

### ***Oral Component***

If we are committed, we can use the writing curriculum to also strengthen our students' competencies in oral communication. If at least four of the five writing classes (i.e., excluding the Junior Year) are seminar-like, with a small class size of 20, we could create an appropriate set of Oral Learning Objectives that would be required in those classes. So, as with writing, rather than have one isolated class where students practice oral competencies, those skills can be learned and reinforced through a sequence of classes.

### ***Other***

Students should not be allowed to take more than one writing course per semester.

## SAMPLE STUDENT PATHS *through the* WRITING CURRICULUM

### ***BA in Geology***

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0-15 credits	<b>First Semester</b>	EC I: “The Planet” (English) in FYI with MNS 113: “Contemporary Issues in the Sciences”
15-30 credits	<b>Second Semester</b>	EC II: “Science Writing” taught by MNSCI Division
30-60 credits	<b>Sophomore Year</b>	GEOL 16: “Earthquakes, Volcanoes, & Moving Continents” (fulfills College Option Science)
60-90 credits	<b>Junior Year</b>	GEOL 370: “Biogeochemistry” (fulfills major requirement)
90-120 credits	<b>Senior Year</b>	GEOL 361: “Geology in the Field” Capstone course

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### ***BA in Anthropology***

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0-15 credits	<b>First Semester</b>	EC I: “Cultural Identity” (English) in FYI with ANTH 101: “Cultural Anthropology”
15-30 credits	<b>Second Semester</b>	EC II: “Writing for Social Sciences” taught by Social Sciences Division
30-60 credits	<b>Sophomore Year</b>	ANTH 102: “Intro to Evolution” (fulfills College Option Science)
60-90 credits	<b>Junior Year</b>	ANTH 240: “Essentials of Archaeology” (fulfills major requirement)
90-120 credits	<b>Senior Year</b>	ANTH 375: “The Human-Primate Interface” Capstone course

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### ***BA in Psychology***

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0-15 credits	<b>First Semester</b>	EC I: “Literature and Language” (English) in FYI with LCD 100: “Intro to Language”
15-30 credits	<b>Second Semester</b>	EC II: “Science Writing” taught by MNSCI Division
30-60 credits	<b>Sophomore Year</b>	PSCYH 103: “Pleasure and Pain” (fulfills College Option Science)
60-90 credits	<b>Junior Year</b>	PSYCH 334: “The Development of Perception and Cognition” (fulfills major requirement)
90-120 credits	<b>Senior Year</b>	PSYCH 311: “Advanced Experimental Psychology: Learning” Capstone course

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### ***Inter-CUNY Transfer Student***

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0-15 credits	<b>First Semester</b>	English Composition I at Queensborough CC
15-30 credits	<b>Second Semester</b>	English Composition II at Queensborough CC
30-60 credits	<b>Sophomore Year</b>	Student completes CUNY Common Core and receives AA in Liberal Arts & Sciences
60-75 credits	<b>Junior Year</b>	ENG 334: “Milton” (fulfills English major requirement)
75-90 credits		ENG 384: “Aspects of Fiction” (fulfills English major requirement)
90-120 credits	<b>Senior Year</b>	ENG 391W: “Senior Seminar: Topics in Literature” major Capstone course

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## SAMPLE STUDENT EXPERIENCES *through the* WRITING CURRICULUM

### ***Walt who wants to be a geologist***

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*During his first semester*, Walt joins the Freshman Year Community “How Scientists See the World.” In MNS 113: “Great Ideas in Science,” he learns how biologists chart climate change and how physicists hope to slow global warming. In EC I: “The Planet,” he learns to identify structure, thesis, motive, and other elements important to college writing. He keeps up with his weekly blog writing, and bases his final paper on a post on broken classroom ACs in Kiely.

*During his second semester*, Walt signs up for “Science Writing,” where he continues to practice the aspects of college writing he started last semester, but where also learns why a scientist has a particular way of thinking about and writing arguments. Walt realizes that while he is expected to express some opinion in his papers, science writing requires him first to show that he can accurately describe current debates on a topic. The challenge of “summarizing” information without just “copying it” is the main thing Walt discusses in his final blog reflection.

*During his sophomore year*, Walt takes a seminar with one of the junior faculty in Geology. Along with 19 other students, Walt is excited to find his professor does not just lecture from a textbook, but also shows students excerpts from scholarly books and articles where these ideas are discussed. Walt meets with his professor three times, and after each time he summarizes their conversation on his blog. This makes writing his final reflection easy for Walt.

*During his junior year*, on the advice of his sophomore seminar teacher, Walt picks a writing-intensive section of Biogeochemistry to satisfy one of his major requirements. In this course, Walt struggles to learn difficult concepts central to his chosen major. But his professor continually emphasizes short informal writing assignments during class that help Walt to record and process the information he is learning. As part of this class, he reads and comments on the blogs of freshman enrolled in a learning community like the one he was in.

*During his senior year*, Walt enrolls in a capstone course “Geology in the Field.” For the first time, he finds that he must complete all of the stages of an advanced writing project which he has only before done in parts, from conceiving of a genuine intellectual question to doing advanced research to drafting and revising a disciplinary appropriate piece of writing. His final project is an environmental impact statement, for which he creates a multimedia website.

### ***Wendy who wants to be a teacher***

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*Wendy transfers to Queens College* from Queensborough, having earned her Associates degree.

*During her junior year*, Wendy takes two writing classes, “Aspects of Fiction” in the Fall and “Milton” in the Spring. In both classes she learns how to use writing not just as a way to record her class notes, but as a way to actually help her reflect on and master the content. She is especially interested in relating the aspects of narrative she learns in “Aspects of Fiction” to the blogs she reads. Her final reflection discusses the challenge of transitioning between schools.

*During her senior year*, Wendy takes a seminar with a Visiting Professor on Film Adaptation. Her final project is a website that analyzes how the text of Melville’s “Billy Budd” is transformed in screenplays by Peter Ustinov and Claire Denis. To complete this interdisciplinary project, Wendy is forced to consider new ways to organize and present research for a digital audience.