

Criteria for Writing Emphasis Courses

Writing-emphasis (WE) designated courses at West Chester University must meet the following criteria:

1. WE courses engage students in multiple and significant writing experiences. WE courses should provide at least three types of writing assignments including both formal writings (such as a paper or report) and informal writings (such as a critical thinking exercise or short writing leading up to a formal writing).
2. WE courses provide students with instruction in discipline-specific thinking and writing. WE courses should include lessons focusing on writing in a discipline (i.e. styles, genres, types of evidence, types of argument, and citation practices valued by a discipline), and the syllabus should make clear (for example, in the course calendar) that these lessons take place throughout the course.
3. WE courses encourage peer and instructor intercessions in student writing processes (planning, outlining, drafting). WE courses should help students understand and participate in the many steps (brainstorming, researching, pre-writing, drafting, revising) that lead toward a final writing product (papers, reports). The syllabus should make clear that intercessions in student writing processes are taking place in the course.
4. WE courses encourage the revision of student writing products (papers, reports) based on instructor feedback. WE courses should help students improve their writing abilities by requiring them to revise or re-write a work that has been scrutinized by their instructor (this can be a first draft or a graded draft), and the syllabus should make clear which assignments will be returned for revision with instructor feedback.
5. WE courses should adhere to the CAPC recommendation ("Class Size Policy," October 30, 2014) that WE courses limit student enrollment to 25.
6. WE course syllabi should designate at least one writing assignment as a candidate for upload to the ePortfolio.
7. WE course syllabi include a clear statement that the course is an approved GE course, and will focus on writing and thinking conventions in the discipline under study.
8. WE course syllabi should make clear the percentage of the final grade to be derived from writing assignments.
9. WE course syllabi should include a clear statement of at least two general education goals that the course is designed to meet, two of which must be Goal #1 (communicate effectively) and Goal #2 (think critically and analytically).
10. WE course syllabi should make clear how assessment of goal-associated student learning outcomes (SLOs) will take place. Faculty can choose among SLOs for Goal 1: Communicate effectively and Goal 2: Think critically and analytically are as follows:
 - Goal 1 SLOs (pick one or more):
 - Express oneself effectively in common college-level written forms
 - Revise and improve writing and/or presentations
 - Express oneself effectively in presentations
 - Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading
 - Goal 2 SLOs (pick one or more):
 - Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea
 - Construct and/or analyze arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments
 - Reach sound conclusions based on a logical analysis of evidence
 - Develop creative or innovative approaches to assignments or projects
11. WE course syllabi should include an instructor-generated learning objective for the course that emphasizes student learning about the specific writing conventions of the respective discipline, and, where appropriate, the general conventions of writing.