

English Department Writing Plan

Writing is fundamental to the literary arts and to the English and creative writing majors at Coe. This document is intended as a guide for students and faculty interested in learning more about the kinds of writing we value in our department, the varied skills students have the opportunity to develop in our classes, and the specific ways our courses approach writing instruction.

What does your department value in written communication?

English houses two majors that tend to emphasize different kinds of writing. In creative writing courses, we work with students to develop their awareness of how craft and form operate on the reader to shape the emotional impact of a work, while in English classes, we emphasize the development of various skills necessary to persuasive argumentation. Despite these divergent emphases, there are a number of common threads that define effective written communication in our department.

We believe strong writing:

- Demonstrates awareness of its audience and the conventions of genre and form, even if disrupting these conventions;
- Strives for originality and innovation;
- Is lively, nuanced, and precise while allowing for variance in style and voice;
- Is characterized by clarity and economy of language;
- Emerges from a process that includes thoughtful revision and editing;
- Demonstrates command of the conventions of written English.

What kinds of texts do students in your department create?

In creative writing, students create:

- Creative works in multiple areas (fiction, playwriting, screenwriting, poetry, and hybrid texts) that work in and out of received or traditional forms;
- Critique;
- In-class writing exercises;
- Writing about writing;
- Aesthetic statement;
- Synopses.

In English, students create:

- Explications of poems or short passages of longer literary works;
- Analytical essays on literary texts and other cultural objects;
- Annotated bibliographies;
- Research essays/works of literary scholarship;

- Essays that are simultaneously critical and creative;
- Short, informal responses;
- Analyses of published works of literary scholarship.

What kinds of skills or experiences help students learn to write in ways valued in your discipline?

- Close reading and explication;
- Classroom practice of critical reading in both large and small group settings;
- Assignments that emphasize writing as a process for learning and discovery;
- Discussion of writing practices;
- Writing workshops;
- Writing conferences (with instructor, Writing Center consultants, classmates);
- Peer review;
- Study of published works from a range of genres and forms, including literary scholarship;
- Development of topics or research questions, typically as a first step in a larger project;
- Stepped assignments with smaller building block exercises leading to larger-scale projects;
- Reflective pieces on a piece of student-authored writing or on the writing process;
- Sentence-level editing;
- Revision;
- Presentations or readings (at conferences or to classmates, senior readings).

What courses are best suited to giving students access to and practice in these skills and experiences?

Writing lies at the heart of our disciplinary practices in the English department. It is not just a means of expression, or even an object of study; it is, more crucially, inextricable from the generation or discovery of knowledge in our discipline. For this reason, most of the full-credit courses we offer give students extensive practice in creating works of imaginative literature or literary scholarship and are designated Writing Emphasis. The courses we offer to support interdisciplinary majors at Coe (e.g., African American Studies) are also designated Writing Emphasis to ensure students in those areas have access to rich writing experiences in the major.

Creative writing courses that are designated Writing Emphasis:

- CRW-115 Exploring Creative Writing
- CRW-350 Screenwriting
- Fiction Workshops (CRW-290, -390, -490)
- Playwriting Workshops (CRW-255, -355, -455)
- Poetry Workshops (CRW-280, -380, -480)
- CRW-484 Advanced Topics in Creative Writing
- CRW-492 Manuscript Workshop
- CRW-394 Directed Studies in Creative Writing

English courses that are designated Writing Emphasis:

Core courses in the English major that facilitate the development of writing skills:

- ENG-101 Introduction to Literary Studies: The Art of Reading and Writing
- ENG-281 Literatures in English to 1800
- ENG-291 Literatures in English after 1800
- ENG-301 The Art of Literary Research
- ENG-464, -7 Seminar in Literature

Upper-level courses that provide significant practice in disciplinary writing:

- Upper-level courses (ENG-327-ENG-394 and ENG-454)

Courses that support interdisciplinary majors:

- ENG-117 Asian American Literature
- ENG-137 African American Literature
- ENG-116 Human Rights and Literature
- ENG-146 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature
- ENG-156 Global Anglophone Literature
- ENG-206, -7, -8 Gender and Literature