

QUICK GUIDE to Teaching Writing Intensive Classes

Writing Intensive (W) courses are part of the overall goals for student writing at Queens College. As part of students' curriculum during their undergraduate careers, they will:

- Become fluent with the elements of academic writing, including thesis, motive, evidence, analysis, and style
- Practice the processes and methods commonly used by effective writers
- Take ownership of the language and rhetorical strategies they employ
- Develop a working knowledge of the grammar and mechanics of standard English
- Gain experience with the conventions of various genres, disciplines, and professions

For specific goals and for strategies with which faculty can help students meet these overall goals, please refer to: <http://writingatqueens.org/goals>

W Course Characteristics and Requirements

Writing Intensive classes at Queens College are designated with a W after the course number. If, for example, you are teaching an ENGL 170W, SOC 210W, or a PSYCH 211W, that means you are teaching a writing intensive course. Queens College students must complete two W courses in order to graduate.

The Academic Senate has determined that W classes must meet the following criteria:

- Syllabi must include this statement: "This course is a Writing Intensive (W) course and fulfills one Writing Intensive requirement. W classes include a significant portion of time devoted to writing instruction. This may include things such as revision workshops, discussions of rhetorical strategies, or reflective writing about writing assignments."
- At least 5000 words (15 pages) of evaluated writing in three or more assignments (either separate papers or one term paper done in stages) so that the students have the opportunity to develop and improve. At least one assignment (graded or ungraded) must require student revision in response to instructor feedback.
- At least three separate class hours (either one hour in three class sessions or shorter time periods over multiple sessions) be devoted to explicit writing instruction, including such things as peer review, revision strategies, disciplinary concerns, proper attribution, the writing process, research, rhetorical strategies, or writing in online environments.
- If exams are given, they must include essay questions.
- Class size limit of 25

Preparation for W courses

W courses have a prerequisite of 110, which means all students in your class have passed English 110 at Queens or completed an equivalent course at another school. English 110 is the College Writing 1 requirement at CUNY. The college encourages students to take their College Writing 2 course in the following semester but it is not a prerequisite for W courses. Also, many of the students at Queens are transfer students so instructors cannot assume they have taken their first composition course here.

English 110 is designed to give students a basic understanding of the principles and methods of college writing that they will continue to practice and master in their other classes. Ultimately the purpose of English 110 is to facilitate the entry of students into the cross-curricular dialogue of the college. It is not a grammar course. College Writing I will help students understand the recursive practices of reading, writing, thinking, and revision, which are central to the making and representation of knowledge.

In English 110, students will have engaged in many of the following practices: reading and analyzing scholarly essays with an eye toward its content and organization, participating in discussion-based classes, workshopping pieces of writing with peers, using and understanding the library's resources, discussing disciplinary differences, working with digital texts and environments, and helping to build a community of learners in their first year.

The learning goals for English 110 can also give you some idea about how students' prior experience with academic writing. While instructors may choose to represent a smaller number of these goals on a syllabus, or adapt them to suit their courses, instructors understand these goals as a fundamental component of the first-year writing program at Queens College.

Students who complete English 110 will have had instruction on how to:

1. Produce writing that **responds** appropriately to a **variety of rhetorical situations** with a particular focus on the academic argumentation.
2. Learn reading strategies to **summarize, synthesize, analyze, and critique other people's arguments and ideas fairly**.
3. Learn **research practices** that will help strengthen their writing and thinking.
4. **Produce writing that shows how writers may navigate the diverse processes of composing** including revision and collaboration.
5. Produce writing that strategically employs appropriate language conventions in different writing situations.
6. **Take ownership of their work and gain an understanding of** their own voice, style, and strengths.

Resources for Instructors Teaching W Classes

Writing at Queens page on W courses: <http://writingatqueens.qc.cuny.edu/portfolio/writing-intensive-w-courses/>

On this page, you can find Guides to Writing-Intensive Courses for Students and for Faculty

Queens College Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/>

Students may be referred here for additional help from undergraduate tutors. Spaces are in high demand so refer students early in the semester if you feel they might need additional help.

Learning Through Writing: A Handbook for Students of College Writing 1 & 2 (pink book):

<http://writingatqueens.org/pink-book>

These handbooks are distributed to all students in College Writing 1 & 2 and thus may offer useful models for you to build on.