**General Education Lower-Division Written Communication Requirement**

Course Content Evaluation Form

Department/Program and Course Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This form is designed to assess whether the subject matter of the course satisfies the General Education Lower-Division Written Communication requirement. Please answer all of the questions below, providing as much information as you can to help the evaluating committee to review the course fairly and accurately.

**Note:** You are encouraged to consult with the Program for Writing and Rhetoric (pwr@colorado.edu) before submitting a course nomination for a Lower Division writing course to ensure that the course meets the requirements listed below.

***Information on this form will be cross-checked for consistency with the provided syllabus, so please refer directly to the syllabus where appropriate***. Note that the expectation is that the syllabus will contain explicit descriptions of course activities, materials, and assignments that link directly to the Gen Ed requirements. It is also expected that the same Gen Ed requirement(s) will be satisfied by the course regardless of the instructor or term.

If this is a cross-listed course, please coordinate with the other department/program(s) and submit only one form.

The content of courses accepted for Gen Ed Lower-Division Written Communication credit must be consistent with the Written Communication requirement described in Appendix C of the Proposed New Arts & Sciences Core Curriculum (submitted for vote 4 May 2016; approved by faculty September 2016), which states:

*In fulfilling this requirement, students hone their communication skills by writing for various purposes (informing, instructing, persuading) and audiences (academic, civic, professional). They learn to design their message ethically and effectively using appropriate evidence and technologies.*

Specifically, courses that satisfy the Lower-Division Written Communication requirement focus on the central rhetorical elements of **purpose, audience,** and **context** to help students craft effective writing in a variety of situations. Lower-division writing courses emphasize the relationships among these elements, including a writer’s choices of content, structure, style and use of language conventions. In addition, courses in this area develop students’ analytical reading skills and introduce them to principles and practices of information literacy.

By the end of the course, students will:

* demonstrate their **rhetorical knowledge** through their writing choices
* construct effective and ethical **arguments**
* **analyze texts** in a variety of genres
* refine and reflect on their **writing process**
* practice **information literacy**
* apply appropriate **language conventions,** including grammar, spelling, punctuation and format.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The following questions request information that will help the evaluation committee assess the fit between the curriculum of the nominated course and the Writing Requirement described above. If one or more questions below are irrelevant for the course in question, please write "not applicable." Please refer directly to the provided syllabus, where appropriate, to indicate how the Writing Requirement goals will be achieved. ***The expectation is that*** ***nearly every response below will refer to the syllabus.***

1. **Rhetorical Knowledge.** The committee defines rhetorical knowledge as attendance to questions of purpose, audience, and context in writing, reflected in the choice of content, structure, style, and language conventions across a variety of writing situations.

1.1 How does your course teach students to understand and then apply the categories of purpose, audience and context in their writing?

1.2 In what genres are students expected to write and how do these genres contribute to students achieving the course learning goals?

1. **Argumentation.** This category focuses on the use of appropriate reasons and evidence to support a position on an issue and respond to multiple points of view.

2.1 Which assignments require persuasive writing?

2.2 What components of/approaches to argumentation will be taught?

2.3 What activities/assignments will require that students explore and respond to multiple points of view on an issue?

1. **Textual Analysis.** The committee defines this category as the ability to read critically, understanding how and why content, style, structure and language conventions vary across a range of texts.

3.1 What types of reading does this course include? How are students asked to respond to the reading?

3.2 How are the readings integrated into class time?

1. **Writing Process and Revision**. The committee defines process and revision as the variety of resources and practices (e.g., peer reviews, reverse outlines, drafts, proofreading, instructor feedback, etc.) used to generate ideas, draft, hone, and edit a piece of writing holistically (the entire piece) as well as at the paragraph and sentence levels. In **Lower-Division** writing, students should use multiple revision strategies throughout the semester as well as reflect on the effectiveness of these strategies.

4.1 Discuss briefly some of the revision strategies (e.g., peer-reviews, rough and first drafts, proof-reading, etc.) students are required to use in this course. Give a few examples of how these strategies will help students improve their writing and achieve course objectives.

4.2 How are students asked to reflect on their writing practices? What activities and assignments ask students to explain how and why they make particular choices when they write?

1. **Information Literacy.** The committee defines information literacy as the set of integrated abilities involved in finding, evaluating, and citing information; thinking critically about how information is produced and circulated; and then using that information to create new knowledge and engage in critical inquiry.

5.1 Which assignments require that students find and use outside information in their writing?

5.2 How are students introduced to research principles, practices, and resources?

**Note:** The Curriculum Committee recommends that faculty consult with UCB Libraries Teaching Learning Unit to develop and teach information literacy. Some of the resources that library faculty can provide are: tailored library seminars for students to introduce resources, assignment and activity design consultations for faculty, individual research consultations for students, and online guides for learning and documentation. For more information, see <http://www.colorado.edu/libraries/research/information-literacy> .

1. **Language Conventions.** The committee defines this category as crafting clear writing though the appropriate use of syntax, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and format.

6.1 What activities and assignments focus specifically on language conventions?

6.2 What resources support the teaching of sentence-level writing? (For example, in-class mini lessons, instructor feedback, grammar handbooks, online resources/tutorials, etc.)

**ASSESSMENT**

The **Lower-Division Writing** requirement must also include effective assessment. This category pertains to how the faculty member will assess progress throughout the duration of the semester.

1. The Curriculum committee strongly recommends that enrollment in writing courses be restricted to fewer than 20 students.  If you are proposing to offer a writing course with 20 or more students, please describe how you will provide meaningful feedback and individualized responses to the students' writing. Otherwise, write “not applicable.”
2. Effective writing assessment includes timely feedback offered at various stages of the writing process.

2.1 What kinds of **formative** feedback will be offered? (Formative feedback is ongoing feedback offered to students at various stages of the writing process to assist them with revising and improving their writing. For example, the use of grading rubrics, instructor comments on full and/or partial drafts, assignment-specific learning goals, peer review/comments, etc.)

2.2 What kinds of **summative** feedback will be offered? (Summative feedback is feedback offered on the final writing product that assesses the student’s level of success in relation to the course and assignment goals. For example, instructor comments, grading rubrics, etc.)

1. Exams and in-class quizzes **might** supplement the primary modes of assessment. If your course includes tests and quizzes as assessment tools, please explain how and why these are used in the process of teaching writing to your students.
2. The committee expects students in a first-year writing course to complete 20 – 25 pages of graded writing. Such work might include, for example, completed essays, in-class writing, abstracts, letters, bibliographies, written commentary on peer writing, and exams. Describe how the course will meet this requirement; include brief descriptions of how assignments/activities included in Writing Process and Revision questions 4.1 and 4.2 in the previous section fit into the 20 – 25 pages of graded writing.
1. These learning outcomes reflect best practices as endorsed by the nationally recognized Council of Writing Program Administrators. See <http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html> . [↑](#footnote-ref-1)