Standard Program Policies

Some of the best features about WRT 105 & 105E courses are the rich diversity of topics and the variety of disciplines that are represented by our instructors. However, to ensure consistency across all sections of WRT 105/E, the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program has developed standard policies that govern key areas such as grading, revision, and the criteria that students must meet to satisfy the Primary Writing Requirement. Some of these standard policies must be clearly stated in the course syllabus for students, while others might help you develop course objectives and grading criteria.

Standard Syllabus Policies

The syllabus begins an important conversation between you and your students: it introduces you as an instructor and communicates your course goals and activities. Ultimately, it functions as a contract between you and your students about what to expect from the course. As such, the syllabus should be as clear as possible about basic information and course policies.

When designing your syllabus, it is important to understand that there are some statements and policies you must have, and others you may choose to have. Mandatory statements and policies support the educational goals and standards set by the College and Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program and ensure consistency across all sections of WRT 105/E. This document identifies standard statements and WSA Program policies, but your syllabus would, of course, include other elements, such as a course description, a list of required texts, etc.

As you develop your syllabus, feel free to adopt any of the language in this document.

For the checklist version of these required policies, click here.

Information that Must Be Included on All Syllabi

Note: If you decide to introduce a new policy, please make sure that it aligns with College and WSA Program policies, and that it is communicated clearly and accompanied by a brief statement on its relevance to your course’s instructional goals.

Basic Information: Office hours

You are required to hold at least 2 office hours per week and to be available by appointment. Your syllabus should clearly state days, times, and locations of your regular office hours.

When scheduling your office hours, please keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. All instructors are required to keep regular office hours. "By appointment" hours should not replace regular office hours; they should be scheduled in addition to regular hours.

2. Schedule your office hours for maximum accessibility: for example, avoid scheduling your hours at the same time on Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday because this might create difficulties for students taking Monday/ Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday classes; scheduling your hours on these days, but at different times, might make it easier for students to see you.

3. You are required to be in your office during your office hours. This allows not only your current students, but also past and possible future students, as well as program staff, to find you should they have questions.
If you occasionally meet with students in locations other than your office—in addition to your office hours, that is—you might want to think about the following issues before scheduling such meetings:

1. Meeting in public places (such as campus coffee shops) might make it difficult for students to feel comfortable about disclosing any problems or concerns. It's always wise to avoid meeting in public places when you discuss students' grades, their progress, and any other confidential issues that have to do with evaluation of their work.
2. Meeting in informal places also creates different dynamics between you and your students. Think carefully about whether you want to set a tone that suggests informality or a lack of professional demeanor.

**Policy Statements: Academic Honesty Statement (Required)**

Please explain why honesty is important in our academic research community so that the students see honesty as something more than just another rule. You can do this by framing the standard College honesty policy with your own text about the larger purpose and importance of the policy to the community. You may also want to explain that part of the purpose of EAPP and WRT 105/E/A&B courses is to help students understand documentation conventions in academic discourse and the fact that conventions vary across disciplines.

**I. Communicate the Value of Honesty.** Here is some language describing why we, as members of the WSAP and College, feel that honesty matters:

*It is through our own honesty and our trust in others’ honesty that we can learn from each other and work together to create new knowledge. For this reason, when dishonesty enters our community, we put in question all of the work we do and undermine our ability to bring new knowledge and good to the world.*

Feel free to use this text, build on it, or create your own.

**II. Define Plagiarism.** For consistency across sections, please also include in your syllabus the following statement from the College’s Academic Honesty Policy, as well as the WSAP penalties appropriate to the course you are teaching (below).

[Plagiarism involves] the representation of another person’s work as one’s own, or the attempt “to blur the line between one’s own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source.” (Council of Writing Program Administrators, January 2003, http://wpcouncil.org/node/9). More specifically, [it is] the use of an idea, phrase, or other material from a written or spoken source without signaling the source at the place of use in a work for which the student claims authorship.

Examples include: the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship; the improper use of course materials in a work for which the student claims authorship; the use of papers that are purchased and turned in as one’s own work; submission of written work such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent.

Students can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating the source of any idea or wording that they did not produce, either in footnotes or in the paper or presentation itself, and in a list of references (e.g., bibliography or works cited page). Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student—writer’s own words. Direct quotes must always be placed in quotation marks in addition to the other citation information that is required.
**Your syllabus should also state:** In all cases of suspected plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, the College's procedures and policies governing academic honesty will be followed. This pertains to all work in writing courses, including (but not limited to) rough drafts, final drafts, presentations, and informal writing assignments. As required by College policy, all instances of academic dishonesty are reported to the College Board of Academic Honesty. For the complete College honesty policy, see [http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/index).

### III. Consequences of academic dishonesty

In cases where academic dishonesty has been established, the typical penalties for a first event in a WSAP course are as follows. In cases of particularly egregious dishonest behavior, the penalty may be more severe.

**Special Note to WRT 103, 104, and 105/E/A&B instructors regarding formal papers and presentations:**

A 0 for a formal composition will likely leave a student near or below a course grade of C; those below a C will need to retake the first-year writing course to fulfill the primary writing requirement. This is particularly true when the research paper is involved. In other courses, in addition to earning a 0 for the work, a student would be given a penalty, typically a full-grade reduction in final course grade. In these cases, the student might earn, for example, a C, end up with a D because of the grade reduction associated with the penalty, but not have to retake the course. Because C is a critical threshold for first-year writing, adding an additional penalty would have a disproportionate impact on the first-year writing student. For this reason, with approval from the Chair of the Board on Academic Honesty, when formal work is involved we assign a 0 for the work, but do not reduce the final course grade.

### WSAP Penalties for Academic Dishonesty in WRT 103, WRT 104, WRT 105, WRT 105E, WRT 105 A&B, WRT 108, and the Extension

**NOTE:** In undergraduate courses in which dishonesty results from “inexperience,” a Warning Letter may be issued in lieu of a penalty. Please consult with a director and refer to the College’s Academic Honesty site for information and instructions: [https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/instructors.html#warning](https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/instructors.html#warning).

**For Incidents of Dishonesty in Courses that Use Standard Grading Procedures (i.e., assigning individual grades to formal work):**

- **For informal assignments:** the work fails to meet assignment criteria and earns no credit (which, according to the syllabus, may or may not affect course grade); the penalty is a 1/3-letter-grade reduction in the final course grade.

- For rough drafts of formal papers: the student may write a new draft for a final paper grade; the penalty is a 1/3-letter-grade reduction in the final course grade.

- **For a final draft of a formal paper or presentation other than the 8-10-page argumentative research paper:** the work fails to meet assignment criteria and earns a 0.

- **For the 8-10-page argumentative research paper:** the paper earns a 0, and the course grade may not be higher than C-.

**For Incidents of Dishonesty in Courses that Use Contract-Portfolio Grading:**

- Any incident of dishonesty in informal assignments or rough drafts results in a 1/3-letter grade reduction in the final course grade.

- **For final portfolio:** the work fails to meet assignment criteria and should be graded with this in mind and in accordance with the syllabus policies, and the course grade may not be higher than C-.

### WSAP Penalties for Academic Dishonesty in all undergraduate writing courses beyond WRT 105/E/A&B

- **For any incident of dishonesty, the work fails to meet assignment criteria and earns no credit. The penalty is a full letter-grade reduction in the final course grade.**
WSAP Penalties for Academic Dishonesty in WRT 108 (a P/F course)

⚠️ For any incident of dishonesty, the work fails to meet assignment criteria and earns no credit. The penalty is a grade of F in the course.

WSAP Penalties for Academic Dishonesty in WRT 571 & 572 (P/F courses)

⚠️ For any incident of dishonesty, the work fails to meet assignment criteria and earns no credit. The penalty is a grade of F in the course.

Addressing Cases of Suspected Academic Dishonesty

If you suspect plagiarism or some other form of academic dishonesty, speak with a Program Director before addressing the issue with your student. Regardless of where the plagiarism occurs (informal or formal writing; first, second, or final draft), it should be addressed and considered seriously.

For more information about handling cases of suspected plagiarism (including how to determine if it is an instance of patch writing or an educational issue), please see the Guidelines for Dealing with Suspected Cases of Academic Dishonesty.

Policy Statements: Primary Writing Requirement Statement

The Primary Writing Requirement is the College’s first step in drawing students into our community of researchers and writers. All students at the University of Rochester will satisfy the Primary Writing Requirement. To be prepared for the Upper-Level Writing Requirement in the majors, students should satisfy the Primary Writing Requirement by the end of the first year of study. The majority of entering students fulfill the Primary Writing Requirement by earning a C or better in WRT 105, Reasoning and Writing in the College, or WRT 105E, an extended version of 105 chosen by students who need more support to meet the demands of college-level writing.

You must let students know what grade they need to earn in your class to fulfill the requirement. Please use the following statement (or an equivalent statement): A student must earn at least a grade of C in WRT 105/E to satisfy the Primary Writing Requirement.

Policy Statements: Grading Policies

Please be sure that your grading procedures are transparent and explained in your syllabus. Your grading policy should communicate the following information to students:

⚠️ the major assignments and/or categories of assignments to be graded,
⚠️ how each type of assignment will be graded (e.g., A – E; check minus, check, check plus; ungraded, etc.), and
⚠️ how the overall course grade will be calculated.

There are several grading models that support the goals of the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program including portfolio grading, contract grading, and traditional grading. Here is how a traditional model, frequently used in WRT courses, might be represented on a syllabus:
Your final grade in this class will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Participation:</th>
<th>X%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal Assignments:</td>
<td>X%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework:</td>
<td>X%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment/Peer Feedback:</td>
<td>X%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Assignments:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>X%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>X%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #3 (Proposal and Bibliography)</td>
<td>X%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #4 (Research Paper)</td>
<td>X%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You must earn at least a grade of C in WRT 105/E to satisfy the Primary Writing Requirement.

When breaking down the course grade into percentages for assignments (e.g., research paper) or a group of assignments (e.g., informal writing), consider how well the percentages reflect the relative importance of the assignment given the overall goals of the writing course. The research paper, for example, is the most important assignment of WRT 105/E and should therefore carry the most weight.

**Things to keep in mind about grading....**
Your syllabus should briefly explain how each category of assignment will be graded.

It is useful to provide information about each major type of graded assignment, its purpose within your course, and how it will be evaluated (homework assignments, formal papers, participation, etc.). We strongly encourage you to grade formal papers using letters, as numbers suggest a degree of objectivity that is generally not reliable.

Remember to assign ungraded informal writings so that students can use writing to discover and develop ideas without fear of “getting it wrong.” If you are assigning informal writing specifically for skill building—as opposed to exploration, discovery, experimentation, you may (or may not) decide to grade it in a way that communicates degree of success to the student. In this case, consider a check/check minus or three-point scale approach, perhaps with the opportunity to redo the work until the skill has been mastered.

The Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program created a grading scale for those who calculate final grades using a 1 – 100 scale:

95 - 100 = A  
90 - 94 = A-  
87 - 89 = B+  
83 - 86 = B  
80 - 82 = B-  
77 - 79 = C+  
73 - 76 = C  
70 - 72 = C-  
67 - 69 = D+  
63 - 66 = D  
60 - 62 = D-  
Below 60 = E

**Grading Criteria versus Grading Rubrics:** On the one hand, both instructors and students benefit from grading criteria that clearly establish the rhetorical context and expectations for an assignment. On the other hand, when these expectations are reduced to a large number of parts that are assessed in isolation, when they are represented in grading rubrics, we all lose sight of the essay as a whole, which undermines our ability to teach writing as a complex rhetorical act. For this reason, we encourage you to develop grading
criteria, but ask that you not use grading rubrics. Rather, WRT 105/E papers should be graded holistically; they should be evaluated as a whole, rather than a series of parts with particular point values.

Policy Statements: Revision Policies

Because feedback and revision are central to effective writing, all WRT courses must include at least one cycle of feedback and revision for each formal paper. Whether you select one of the revision models below or develop a different model, that model must be grounded in two principles: 1) students may revise as much as they would like before the paper is submitted for a grade; 2) once the paper has been graded, students may not revise the paper for a higher grade.

Instructors currently use a number of acceptable models that meet these requirements. Most instructors assign a final grade after the last revision. Still others avoid grades as much as possible, relying instead on the portfolio system. In addition, instructors choose different end points for the revision process, with some instructors asking for a final revision at the end of a unit and others asking for them at the end of a course. **All these approaches are consistent with the program's philosophy, provided that your syllabus and assignments articulate your revision requirements and options.**

In all courses (without exception), once you assign a final grade to an essay or turn in a final course grade, a student may not revise for a higher grade.

In your syllabus calendar, clearly identify dates for the various stages that lead to revisions: first drafts, peer reviews, personal conferences, second drafts, etc. Please allow enough time in the course calendar for you to return drafts to students (within a week) AND enough time for students to revise (at least a week).

Instructors vary not only in their approach to revision and feedback, but in their beliefs about the role of instructor feedback in short argumentative essays that occur late in the semester. Some instructors consider their feedback essential to the revision process at all times. Others, however, view it as an optional complement to the feedback from peer reviews and self assessment—a perspective which is based on the belief that students' final experiences in WRT 105 should reflect expectations in upper-level writing courses, where students take greater responsibility for completing revisions and seeking out instructor feedback. If you hold the latter view and choose to make your input optional for one short formal assignment late in the semester (not to include the research essay), then please articulate your approach and its purpose on your syllabus. Please also be very clear that any student still has the option to come to you for your input during this process.

Please explain clearly in your syllabus that students will be given an opportunity to develop and revise their work. To reflect our teaching philosophy, link the rationale for revisions to the principle of communication: you don't fully know what meaning you've created in your writing until you hear how it is interpreted by readers. To put this principle into practice, do not expect drafts to be a final product. When commenting on a draft, don’t evaluate it as a final paper, but instead view the draft as an important step in the process of discovering and developing ideas through writing.

Policy Statements: Late Work/Missed Work

You should consider carefully what you will do with late work: Will late work be accepted? Will late homework be treated differently than late papers? Here is how the policy might sound for late informal assignments:

*Because homework assignments are designed to prepare you for class discussions, as well as the larger task of writing formal papers, I encourage you to stay on top of things. For this reason, no late homework assignments will be accepted.*
This policy might be different in the case of illness or emergency. Ideally, the learning value is not completely lost if done after-the-fact.

Your rationale for late submissions of formal assignments might be different:

**Please turn in formal papers on time.** Because all formal assignments go through peer-reviews and self-assessments – and that involves your working with your classmates – you have to be on time with your work. As a result, late papers will be accepted, but at a cost to your grade. For each day your paper is late its grade will be lowered 1/3 of a grade. (For example, if you turn in a B paper one day late, it will receive a grade of B-, two days late and it will get a C+.) Weekends and holidays are included in this policy; if a paper due Friday is submitted on Monday, it is 3 days late. If you are having trouble completing your assignments, please see me!

Instructors handle late first drafts in different ways; some include late first drafts in the late policy and others do not. Your late policy should be clear about whether it applies to all scheduled drafts of a paper, or just the final draft.

For some instructors, papers are considered late if they are incomplete, that is, if they do not include particular elements (such as peer-reviewed drafts and self-assessments). In this case, you should specify what students should turn in with final drafts (e.g. all preliminary drafts, peer reviews, self-assessment). Here is an example of how this policy might be worded:

**Please Note:** If a paper is turned in without peer feedback and/or a self-assessment, it will be considered incomplete and will be subject to the late paper policy, outlined above, until all requirements are met.

It helps to restate this policy on each formal assignment prompt.

In addition to providing clear policies about late work, consider including an invitation to students to come and talk to you if and when they need an extension. As with all course policies, be sure any policies around extensions are fair and equitable for each student in your course. If you grant an extension to one or a few students for a test or sporting event, offer extensions to the entire class. The exception would be an extension for a student who has had extenuating health or personal circumstances which have prevented him/her from working on and completing the paper on time; in this case the extension provides the student an equitable amount of time to complete the work. Occasionally, you may have a student with a documented disability whose accommodations include extensions. In these cases, instructors would be notified by CETL (Center for Learning and Excellence) and often work with CETL to develop a plan which is reasonable for both student and instructor.

Finally, it is also useful to be clear about your obligations to the students. Plan to return formal papers within one week of receiving them or before students have to turn in another draft, whichever comes first.

**Policy Statements: Participation**

**Note:** A syllabus statement is required if participation is graded; if not graded, a statement about active/meaningful participation is still recommended.

This statement should describe the basic expectations for student involvement in the class. You do not have to grade participation, but it still might be a good idea to describe your expectations for student engagement and class atmosphere. If you do grade attendance/participation, your policy should not be used in a way that undermines learning and teaching objectives. For example, assigning a 0 for attendance/participation for X number of missed classes might result in the student’s withdrawing from participating in classes he/she attends after such penalties are enforced. Instead of stressing how participation/attendance points can be lost, stress how they can be gained. Consider positive incentives in place of negative incentives. For
example, tie attendance to meaningful participation (peer reviews, writing portions of an essay in class, informal writing, presenting questions on reading, getting feedback on ideas, etc.). These are all ways that students can have a meaningful role in the course and help shape and own their learning. If all these things are happening, then a penalty for lack of attendance is no longer necessary.

If you are doing a lot of teaching and modeling in class, students who miss these activities will not be able to demonstrate proficiency in the skills those activities model. Thus, missed classes will be reflected in the grade the student receives for individual assignments and for the course in general.

Policies that replace solving an attendance problem with negative consequences ultimately undermine teaching and learning. When students start missing class, it might be a moment for the instructor to ask why this is happening. (Does the class respond to this student’s needs? Is there something going on in the student’s life that prevents him/her from coming to class?)

Finally, policies that fail students because they have missed too many classes can come in direct conflict with the College grading policies and cannot be included on syllabi.

Please remember that participation should be defined in a way that goes beyond the idea that participating means talking a lot. Participation and engagement can happen in a variety of ways (active listening, asking questions, reading aloud, online posts, in-class writing, etc.) and these ways should be described for students.

**Policy Statements: Sensitive Material**

If your course includes unusually violent, sexually explicit, or otherwise potentially disturbing materials, please add a short warning to your course description and syllabus. This need not be much, perhaps something as simple as, “Please be aware that this course has violent or highly graphic sexual content (whichever pertains) that some may find upsetting. Please feel free to contact the instructor for more information.”

**Policy Statements: Grading**

For the sake of consistency across sections and to help instructors develop grading scales, we have both a college scale and a Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program scale. Please use one of these scales when calculating grades. **Please also be sure that your grading scale and grading procedure are transparent and explained on your syllabus.** Students should be able to see grading percentages and grading scales.

For those who assign only letter grades and need to calculate grades, you may use either the grading scale established by the College or the 1-100 scale established by the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program. The College scale may be found on the Registrar’s web site: [http://www.rochester.edu/registrar/gradescheme.html](http://www.rochester.edu/registrar/gradescheme.html).

For those who prefer a 1-100 scale, the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program has established the following scale:

- 95 - 100 = A
- 90 - 94 = A-
- 87 - 89 = B+
- 83 - 86 = B
- 80 - 82 = B-
- 77 - 79 = C+
- 73 - 76 = C
- 70 - 72 = C-
Statements about Support Services: CETL

We have worked with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) to develop a program statement for WRT syllabi that would invite (but not require) students with special needs to speak with instructors about their learning needs. Please use this statement for your syllabus:

*Please know that this classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and that I invite you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully.*

If you wish, you might also mention the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) as a resource for all students. CETL “supports undergraduate students in the College with services that promote academic success, including course-specific collaborative study groups, study skills counseling, a study skills course, and disability support.” (CETL provides support for graduate students as well: they support graduate-student work as classroom TAs, laboratory TAs, and instructors. Graduate students are also welcome to make use of services that support their own learning.) The following statement comes from the CETL website:

*CETL is a resource available to all students in the College. All kinds of students with all kinds of GPAs and academic records make use of our programs. We work with strong students who wish to become even better, as well as with students who have not yet tapped into the strategies needed to succeed in college, and everyone in between. We offer an extensive study group and Workshop program, individual study skills counseling, study skills workshops and a study skills course, and disability support. We are located in 1-154 Dewey Hall on the River Campus. To make an appointment or to learn more, stop by our offices, call us at (585) 275-9049, or send an email: cetl@rochester.edu.*

Statements about Support Services: The Writing and Speaking Center

It is important to emphasize that the Writing and Speaking Center is not just for struggling writers. Instead, introduce the Writing and Speaking Center services by stressing the idea that the Writing and Speaking Center is a place where students can get critical feedback:

*At the University of Rochester, we all communicate as writers and speakers, and every writer and speaker needs an audience. The Writing and Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the University--undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty. The Writing and Speaking Center welcomes visitors who are at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming ideas to polishing a final draft. Similarly, students can visit a Speaking Fellow at any point as they are developing or practicing a presentation. To learn more about the Writing and Speaking Center's services and/or to find a tutor, please visit [http://writing.rochester.edu](http://writing.rochester.edu).*

At the beginning of each semester, the Writing and Speaking Center Coordinator invites all writing instructors to schedule class visits from experienced Consultants who can introduce their services to WRT students.

**Educational Practices: Revision**

Because feedback and revision are central to effective writing, all WRT 105/E courses must include at least one cycle of feedback and revision for each formal paper. Whether you select one of the revision models below or develop a different model, that model must be grounded in two principles: 1) students may revise
as much as they would like before the paper is submitted for a grade; 2) once the paper has been graded, students may not revise the paper for a higher grade.

Instructors currently use a number of acceptable models that meet these requirements. Most instructors assign a final grade after the last revision. Still others avoid grades as much as possible, relying instead on the portfolio system. In addition, instructors choose different end points for the revision process, with some instructors asking for a final revision at the end of a unit and others asking for them at the end of a course. All these approaches are consistent with the program's philosophy, provided that your syllabus and assignments articulate your revision requirements and options.

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Instructors vary not only in their approach to revision and feedback, but in their beliefs about the role of instructor feedback in short argumentative essays that occur late in the semester. Some instructors consider their feedback essential to the revision process at all times. Others, however, view it as an optional complement to the feedback from peer reviews and self assessment—a perspective which is based on the belief that students' final experiences in WRT 105 should reflect expectations in upper-level writing courses, where students take greater responsibility for completing revisions and seeking out instructor feedback. If you hold the latter view and choose to make your input optional for one short formal assignment late in the semester (not to include the research essay), then please articulate your approach and its purpose on your syllabus. Please also be very clear that any student still has the option to come to you for your input during this process.

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**Educational Practices: Extra Credit**

Most WRT instructors do not include extra credit as part of their courses. If you do feel strongly about offering your students opportunities for extra credit, be sure to state this in your syllabus, and be sure that your policies around extra credit are clear, fair, equitable, and available to all students in your course. **Extra credit may not be used to increase the grades of formal writing assignments.**

**Educational Practices: Extensions**

It is helpful to supplement late policies with an invitation to students to come and talk to you *if and when* they need an extension. As with all course policies, be sure any policies around extensions are fair and equitable for each student in your course. If you grant an extension to one or a few students for a test or sporting event, offer extensions to the entire class. The exception would be an extension for a student who has had extenuating health or personal circumstances which have prevented him/her from working on and completing the paper on time; in this case the extension provides the student an equitable amount of time to complete the work. Occasionally, you may have a student with a documented disability whose accommodations include extensions. In these cases, instructors would be notified by CETL (Center for
Excellence in Teaching and Learning) and often work with CETL to develop a plan which is reasonable for both student and instructor.

**Educational Practices: Quizzes, Exams, and Tests**

WRT courses stress the use of writing to aid critical reading, problem definition, and discovery. We want students to understand the principles of academic writing that work across different disciplines and develop the ability to choose strategies that put these principles into practice. Quizzes help little or not at all in meeting these objectives. In fact, they might reinforce the view of writing that students often carry from high school: that writing is a prescribed set of steps, rules, and static strategies that can be mastered through memorization. In addition, quizzes and tests too closely resemble high school activities—a standard complaint that students have about WRT105—and are often perceived as busy work. But more importantly, since this is a writing course that aims to teach students to write and research in the way more advanced students and faculty do, then we should as much as possible try to introduce them to the integrated reading/writing/research process that faculty engage in as they do their work.

Instead of scheduling quizzes that test students’ knowledge of readings, create exercises, in-class activities, or discussions that encourage students to use their knowledge actively—activities that students cannot complete without having done the reading.

**Required Reading Assignments: Assigning Texts on Writing**

If you are planning to use a textbook on writing in a specific discipline (like “Writing in Philosophy”), please supplement it generously with texts that address writing from a non-disciplinary perspective. Focusing too much on teaching students how to write in a particular discipline might do a disservice to those students who are not planning to pursue your discipline as a major. Using non-discipline specific textbooks/articles will help you avoid being confined to the conventions of your own discipline, and will compel you to consider how general writing principles and strategies work across various disciplines—including yours. Whenever you consider assigning a discipline-specific reading on a particular writing issue, think about whether you can address this writing issue through texts that are more cross-disciplinary. If you believe that there is a good reason for using discipline specific texts, think about how you will provide links between what disciplinary texts say and what might be done in other disciplines. One of the questions that will be added to our course evaluations will focus on instructor’s ability to make cross-disciplinary connections.

When using texts on writing, treat them just like content texts: ideally, they should be discussed, critiqued, and used in class to inform writing strategies. The key here is to make writing issues interesting problems that are individualized so that each student can begin to understand himself/herself as a conscious writer who can make choices about his or her process and goals. Also, a key here is to link a writing text to reading texts. A good syllabus check: note readings on writing for each part of your writing story, and indicate how these will relate to chosen readings.

**What to Include in Syllabus Calendar**

**Instructional Practices: Deadlines for Work**

During the semester, assignment deadlines and submissions must be on days when your class meets. Deadlines for all work must be on or before the last day of class. (It is against University policy to schedule work during the reading period. Warranted extensions may, however, overlap with reading days.)
Instructional Practices: Pacing Reading and Writing Assignments

If your writing assignments are increasing in complexity and length, students should be given increasing amounts of time to complete them. Typically, students take three courses other than WRT 105, and many spend a significant number of hours in labs. In general, “students expect 2-3 hours of outside study time for every one hour in class” (Freshman Handbook). Since this is a writing class, the majority of outside work ought to focus on developing the writer and his/her writing abilities. Think about the following questions when working on your syllabus:

1. How much time do you expect the assignment to take? (Please include time for research when applicable.) Is this reasonable given students’ other obligations?
2. How much time do you give yourself to provide feedback? Is this reasonable, given your other obligations? (In general, papers should be turned back within a week’s time of receiving them.)
3. Do you ask students to turn in major papers and complete readings on the same day? If yes, how much time do you expect them to spend on your class to meet this requirement? Is this reasonable?
4. How much time do you leave students to complete pre-writing activities in preparation for formal essays? Is this reasonable?
5. How much time do you allow a student to revise an essay?
6. How much time do you leave for the student to visit the Writing and Speaking Center or to consult with you about your comments or peers’ comments?
7. How much time do you allow for in-class peer reviews of drafts? Is this reasonable?

Primary Writing Requirement Outcome Criteria

To fulfill the Primary Writing Requirement (PWR), students must earn a “C” or better in WRT 105/E. Based on the principles of backward design, the criteria for the PWR should inform the grading criteria for formal writing assignments in WRT 105/E.

For a list of the Primary Writing Requirement (PWR) outcome criteria, please click here.

Cancelled Classes

You may cancel class up to two times during the semester to schedule personal conferences with students.

It may happen that you will need to cancel a class, perhaps because of a conference presentation, a special family event, or an emergency. Because college courses (unlike high school courses) have so little contact time with students, we encourage people to do their best to work around their teaching schedules for non-emergency situations. If you have to miss a class, then you might consider replacing this class with individual or group conferences after you return, organized well-structured peer response activities for this day, or swapping with another instructor who may need to miss a future class to attend a conference. Alternatively, if your syllabus indicates that a class later in the semester will be cancelled and replaced with individual conferences, you can reconvene this later class in place of the immediate cancellation, while still holding your individual conferences later in the semester.

In these special cases, please let the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program know about your absence so that we can have appropriate information for your students.

With respect to cancelling classes and hiring substitutes, the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program can only bring in and compensate substitute teachers in the case of an emergency that goes beyond missing one class, such as surgery, serious illness, or death of a family member.
Returning Final Papers and Portfolios

In addition, as we are nearing the end of the semester, we also want to highlight important information on returning students' final papers. Students' final work should not be left for them in any public area, as this violates their right to have information about their academic performance kept confidential. If you plan to return work after classes end, please use one or more of the following methods:

1. Final papers may be returned to students through Blackboard, as long as students do not have access to other students' work.
2. Arrange times when the student can come to your office to pick up his/her work. These times might include next semester's office hours for students who plan to leave shortly after classes end.
3. Mail work to the student's CPU box. It's easiest if students choosing this option write their CPU box number at the top of their work.
4. Mail work to the student's off-campus address. In this case, you might ask the student to attach a self-addressed-stamped-envelope to the final paper or portfolio.

If you have other plans for returning work after the semester ends, please be sure that your actions do not violate students' privacy rights. If in doubt, please check with Stef, Rachel, or Deb.