

UPPER-LEVEL WRITING REQUIREMENT COURSE GUIDELINES

September 2014

Statement of Purpose

The Sweetland Center for Writing approves the departmental curricular offerings that satisfy the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Upper-Level Writing Requirement (ULWR). The Upper-Level Writing Requirement, which may be completed in the major, must be fulfilled by all students in LSA in order to graduate. The ULWR builds upon the skills and strategies developed in first-year writing courses by providing upper-division students with a significant writing experience that refines their ability to write effectively both within and beyond specific disciplines. ULWR courses foreground attention to the writing process, with structured opportunities for feedback and revision. These courses are taught in all departments and programs in LSA, and assignments reflect the range of writing activities and forms typical of academic and professional contexts.

Course Goals

Upper-Level Writing Requirement courses assign writing tasks designed to help students learn to:

- build on skills and strategies developed in first-year writing courses;
- produce complex, analytical evidence-based arguments that address specific audiences;
- refine their ability to write effectively both within and beyond specific disciplines;
- use feedback to improve their writing through revision;
- demonstrate familiarity with the genres and conventions characteristic of effective writing.

Writing Assignments

To foster the development of student writing, assignments in ULWR courses:

- require a substantial amount of polished writing, usually between 25 and 40 pages (7500-12,000 words) over the course of the semester (or the equivalent in digital media projects), though this may vary among disciplines;
- take a variety of forms typical of academic and professional writing in particular fields, including projects that incorporate collaboration, digital media, or other relevant genres;
- integrate writing with course content;
- are sequenced throughout the semester to facilitate the development of ideas and concepts;
- provide clear and explicit guidelines to help prepare students for challenging rhetorical tasks;
- include a clear indication of when and how writing-related instruction will take place during lecture and/or discussion;
- provide at least three structured opportunities for students to receive feedback on their writing-in-progress, and require substantial revision of at least 50% of their writing.

Faculty Role

To ensure that the goals of the ULWR are addressed, faculty members:

- engage fully in writing instruction and provide models of effective academic writing;
- provide structured opportunities for feedback on students' drafts;
- make clear connections between course readings and writing assignments;
- establish and communicate clear standards for evaluating writing;
- treat the course as an opportunity to mentor GSIs (if they have them);
- take responsibility for grading a portion of student writing even if they have GSIs.

GSI Role

To contribute to the instructional effectiveness of ULWR courses, GSIs:

- function as a fully integrated partner in planning and delivering the course content;
- collaborate with the faculty member in establishing clear standards for evaluating writing;
- take responsibility for grading a portion of student writing.

Courses that meet the ULWR must be offered at the 300- or 400-level, and for a minimum of three credits. Students must receive a C- or above to receive credit for the Upper-Level Writing Requirement.

For more information about the ULWR, please contact the Sweetland Center for Writing at 734.764.0429 or sweetlandinfo@umich.edu.