ENGL 1007
The Seminar & Studio in Multimodal & Academic Writing

UConn's First-Year Writing courses introduce students to the work of college writing, which includes posing questions, developing sustained intellectual projects, and generating knowledge that invites engagement with wide and varied audiences. Writing, here, is project-building—a practice of making something, composing—and the courses reflect this attention to purposeful engagement and meaningful contribution. As a prerequisite to many University courses and all Writing Competency courses, First-Year Writing seminars foreground collaborative, student-driven inquiry developed in the context of a shared course investigation. Students work on projects in which they select and define places where they might advance the class conversation across various media.

First-Year Writing

UConn's First-Year Writing (FYW) pedagogy is grounded in active learning and universal design for learning. These values inform all our practices.

Inquiry and Project

We bring students into the course by shaping an **inquiry** we can investigate together. More than a topic or theme, an inquiry opens a territory that students must navigate and map individually and as part of a community of explorers. The framing questions for an ENGL 1007 course tend to be large, not easily rendered as sides in an argument one might win or lose. The inquiry itself is text-driven and generative, fostering curiosity, eliciting more questions and enabling student-driven lines of thought to take shape.

A **project** emerges from sustained intellectual engagement with complex texts and ideas. To build projects, students interact with a range of texts and connect them to their own experiences, knowledge, interests, and contexts. Each of the major projects presents an opportunity for students to enlarge their frames of reference and to work toward more complex and nuanced responses to others' work through the texts they generate.

Accessibility and Inclusion

We recognize the strength that comes from diverse embodiments (in terms of race, gender, sexuality, language, ability, and experience) while actively working against structural inequalities that create systems of privilege. Adopting a Universal Design approach to writing and composing improves access and inclusion for all students because UD favors flexible negotiation of learning spaces over rigid standards. In our attention to rhetorical flexibility, we foreground audience, use, efficacy, and impact. Students in FYW contribute to and make use of linguistic, cultural, intellectual resources.

Essential Components

1. **COURSE INQUIRY**—drives the intellectual work of the writing/composing, linking:
   - assigned texts
   - field research/documentary elements
   - sequenced assignments
2. **FIELD RESEARCH COMPONENT** — engagement with people, sites, artifacts
3. **STUDIO PEDAGOGY** — at least one quarter of the course happens in a studio mode
4. **MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION** — a consequence of prioritizing access and inclusion; develops rhetorical flexibility and metacognition
5. **INFORMATION & DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY** — a UConn General Education requirement
6. **REFLECTIVE WRITING**

Writing Moves

The Writing Moves for ENGL 1007 describe activities of writing and composing, thresholds for making thinking visible, and meaningful features of the texts we make.

- **COLLECTING & CURATING**
- **ENGAGING**
- **CONTEXTUALIZING**
- **THEORIZING**
- **CIRCULATING**

Practices

- Assignments, projects, and in-class work built around **writing moves**
- **Readings and assigned texts** that foster engagement and model inquiry
- Substantial amounts of **revised writing and composing in various modes and genres** (3 or more major projects)
- **Additional short and informal writing and composing** (both in and out of class)
- **Cycles of feedback, circulation, and revision** with each project (including various forms of conferencing and workshopping)

Course inquiry

A course inquiry includes questions that frame readings and assignments; it also provides enough specificity or focus to enable academic and perhaps public contributions to the questions, not just open-ended consideration or writing "about" topics. A course inquiry is cross-disciplinary—the readings and assignments invite inquiry and work that reflects concerns, approaches, and vocabulary from disciplines beyond just English. Course inquiries can have subtopics and digressions. There's room for experiment and play.

Field research / Documentary component

A documentary component ensures that the course includes contact with the world, not just reading and writing. This field research requires sustained and meaningful engagement with a person, site, or artifact—e.g., an interview or profile. Documenting an encounter should inform a part of at least one major project and at least one studio session. The FYW courses help students develop language for these processes and support critical reflection on the tools and methods we can use in composition.

Studio pedagogy

The studio approach affords ways of teaching beyond the lecture, seminar, or discussion. In studio mode, the classroom becomes a workspace. Studio pedagogy, in our program, emphasizes active and accessible learning, play, design, and digital literacies.

Multimodal composition

Multimodal assignments develop functional digital literacy (knowing how to do things with certain technologies) and provide opportunities to compose in multiple modes (e.g., with combinations of images, sound, text, etc.) across diverse technologies as ways of writing. FYW courses strive to encourage critical digital literacy skills and rhetorical strategies for composing through a variety of means besides traditional alphabetic text. We want students to be makers and not just consumers of digital and social texts.

Information and Digital Media Literacy

IDML, an explicit component of UConn's General Education requirements, addresses making, not just receiving, knowledge and includes direct instruction in some elements of library research.

Reflective writing

Reflective writing—characterizing, reconsidering, or qualifying one's work—fosters awareness and metacognition about writing and writing processes. Reflective writing in FYW seminars is an ongoing and need not be graded or end-of-term. Reflective forms include process notes, in-class reflections on (or presentations of) one's project, other kinds of metatexts, including placing of one's work within the context of others' work, introductory texts, remixes, etc.

Assignments and projects built around writing moves

The FYW writing moves are **collecting and curating, engaging, contextualizing, theorizing, circulating**. These moves serve as a transferable framework that fosters contextually sensitive projects and enables students to address diverse audiences across disciplines and contexts. The moves position student work as purposeful contributions within an ecology of other compositions (not merely demonstration of competence or compliance with unexamined "rules" for writing).

Readings and assigned texts that foster engagement and model inquiry

Students should interact with texts that are complex and nuanced, that offer different perspectives and can be put to use in different ways. Students should also practice and develop some familiarity with academic writing, both the forms that appear in academic journals and in public forums such as Science, Longreads, Nieman Storyboard, or even TED Talks and public lectures.

A substantial amount of revised writing

Instructors should assign substantial writing throughout the course—typically across at least three major projects. Within these major projects, students produce writing of various modes and genres that goes through cycles of feedback and revision. Writing processes are complex and recursive, and students need to be able to return to projects (usually after receiving feedback) and rethink their claims, ideas, and rhetorical choices. This most often happens through multiple drafts for major assignments. Leave plenty of time between drafts and build class sessions around the sharing and discussion of in-process drafts.

Additional short and informal writing

Not all writing or composing in FYW courses needs to be high-stakes (graded). Sometimes the purpose of writing is simply to practice, brainstorm, or learn. We recommend that students do some writing or composing most days in class.

Feedback and circulation

Writing is social; that is, it's an interaction between an author/composer and an audience. Student writing should therefore circulate to different audiences and receive feedback from those audiences (whenever possible). Feedback includes the comments an instructor makes on each draft as well as feedback and input students provide for each other and through collaborative work. Substantial class time is directed toward this reflection on the work that students have done and can include peer review, UX testing, various forms of conferencing, workshopping of specific examples, and so on.

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