

# Writing Emphasis Guidelines

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In accord with the Purpose and Policies of the UW-Green Bay Writing Emphasis requirement, instructors of WE courses are not expected to teach writing skills but are expected to provide a series of writing assignments in accord with the guidelines below and to identify students with weak writing skills and assure that they get help from the Writing Center.

1. Students must complete three or more "public discourse" writing assignments as part of the course requirements. Public discourse assignments are written for an audience other than the writer. (Journals and diaries are excluded.) Typical public discourse assignments include--but are not limited to--research papers, essays, essay exams (in class or take home), lab reports, literature reviews, and others.
2. The three or more public discourse writing assignments must total a minimum of 2000 words (i.e., by the end of the semester each student must have turned in at least 8 to 10 pages of "public discourse" writing).
3. The public discourse assignments must count for a significant portion of the course grade. The intent of this guideline is to provide a strong incentive for students to take their writing assignments seriously. Writing assignments typically constitute 25%-33% of the final WE course grade.
4. The quality of the writing must be evaluated, not just the content. Organization and development of ideas, clarity of expression, coherence between sentences and paragraphs, and adherence to the conventions of written English are among the factors that instructors are expected to take into account in evaluating the public discourse assignments.
5. At least one public discourse assignment must be evaluated and returned to students during the first third of the course (i.e., before the end of the 4th week of a regular semester course). The intent of this guideline is to assure that students with weak writing skills are identified early enough in the semester to allow them to get help for their writing problems. Note that there is no required length for this assignment, nor is there a requirement that it count significantly towards the final grade. As long as other assignments in the course meet the other guidelines listed above, any writing assignment that provides the instructor with the opportunity to identify students with serious writing problems may be used to meet this guideline. Thus a typical first assignment might be a one or two page summary of--or reaction to--an assigned reading or a lecture, or a review of a film, or a preliminary description of the major paper the student proposes to write for the course, or a discussion of a problem related to the course that the student is interested in investigating, or a one-page answer to a study question.
6. Instructors of WE courses are required to notify students at the start of the semester that the course is a Writing Emphasis course and to strongly encourage students who need writing-skills help to use the services of the Writing Center. The syllabus should identify the course as a WE-approved course, describe the writing assignments in detail, and inform students that the Writing Center is the place to seek help with their writing skills.
7. Instructors of WE courses are expected to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the writing assignments in helping students improve their writing skills and to make appropriate adjustments in those assignments in response to the evaluation results.

## WE Required Assignments

- Three or more "public discourse" writing assignments must be included as part of the course requirements. "Public discourse" means the work is written for someone other than the writer. (Thus, journals and diaries are excluded.) These assignments may include in-class work including essay exams.
- These writing assignments must total a minimum of 2000 words.
- Writing assignments must constitute at least 25% of the grade for the course.
- One public discourse assignment must be evaluated and returned to the student before the end of the 4th week of class. (This is to allow students to seek help with their writing early in the course.)