W1 Course Guidelines and Proposal Form

I. Guidelines

A W1 course is the first of three progressively more advanced writing-attentive courses required of students. The legislation creating the three-tiered writing requirement states that the overarching goal of the W1 course is to “enhance students’ understanding of how analysis and intellectual discovery shape the process of writing.”

To attain this goal, W1 courses are guided by five broad pedagogical principles:

1. Writing is taught, not just assigned.
2. Writing assignments of varying scope or genre are a significant portion of the coursework (at least one-third of the total work of the course and approximately fifteen pages of finished, polished writing).
3. Faculty members give feedback on writing, commenting on rhetorical issues in addition to content.
4. Students have multiple opportunities to write and to revise their writing.
5. Research skills and scholarly citation practices are assigned.

In addition to these broad pedagogical considerations, faculty have agreed on a shared commitment to specific learning goals for students in W1 courses; these learning goals fall under the categories of Inquiry, Argument, Evidence, Organization, and Style. The learning goals in full can be found at the end of this form [or at this link.] While the committee does not expect that each individual learning goal will be explicitly addressed in a W1 course, we anticipate that the W1 classroom will be a logical place to integrate discussions, exercises, and assignments that might address multiple goals as appropriate throughout the semester.

A Note about Support
As you plan your W1 course, keep in mind numerous kinds of support available to you for your teaching and to students for their writing [add short descriptions here or provide links to more in-depth pages]:

1. Short Term pedagogy seminar
2. Syllabus colloquium at September FYS meeting
3. Director of Writing feedback on syllabi and assignments
4. Integrated workshops by Library staff and Writing Specialists
5. Peer Writing Assistants
II. Proposal Form

Each question below is linked to one or more of the five categories of shared commitments for a W1 course and suggests sample strategies for approaching these learning goals. Please answer each question by describing specific ways you will address these goals in your course. In writing these descriptions, you may find it useful to consider how this course would differ from a similar but non-writing-attentive course you might teach.

A. INQUIRY

*Students should recognize that writing, thinking, and research are ongoing processes and become accustomed to rethinking and deepening their ideas.*  [Read entire list of inquiry-related learning goals here.]

1. To cultivate attention toward the process of writing, a W1 course asks students to write a number of assignments that may vary in length, scope, and approach; these assignments might take the shape of several short but interrelated essays, sequenced assignments, or a longer writing project completed in stages, with an end result of approximately fifteen pages of finished formal writing. Informal writing—assignments that are short, often done in-class, and often ungraded—also helps students improve their writing process.

**Please describe the number, type, and general outline of the writing assignments that you anticipate including in your course:**

2. To encourage students to “rethink and deepen their ideas,” a W1 course asks students to revise their writing in response to comments from other readers (instructor, peers, writing assistants, and others). Revision should be built into the majority of assignments but might take a number of forms: graded or ungraded rough drafts, further revision of graded work, or commentary and revision on sections of a longer work (introduction, thesis, or annotated bibliography, for example). Commentary can likewise come in a variety of forms: written feedback from instructors; electronic feedback from instructor or peers; individual conferences with instructors, writing assistants, or others; or peer review between classmates.

**Please describe the approach to commentary and revision you anticipate for your course:**
B. ARGUMENT

Students should develop a question or a position, articulated as a thesis statement or guiding idea. [Read entire list of argument-related learning goals here.]

To help students improve their critical thinking skills and their ability to create and support a line of thinking, a W1 course engages students in the relevant scholarly conversation, as both readers and writers. Doing so might entail such assignments as critically evaluating the argument of course texts, discussing the questions asked in a particular field or about a particular issue, creating and defending an original argument, and exploring differing viewpoints.

Please describe the ways in which you anticipate that your course will ask students to critically assess their own arguments and the arguments of others:

C. EVIDENCE

Students should have a command of varied research strategies, be able to critically evaluate sources, and be able to use their sources responsibly. [Read entire list of evidence- and research-related learning goals here.]

1. To help students more skillfully locate and use information, a W1 course asks students to develop their research skills, both in the use of library or electronic resources and in the responsible use of sources within their own writing. Use of library resources might entail an assignment-specific session in the library or an introduction to the research methodology of a particular field or fields; responsible use of sources within their own writing might entail discussion of citation formats, quoting and paraphrasing, and plagiarism.

Please describe specific research-related activities you anticipate including in your course:
2. Students benefit from having a style, citation, or research guide to consult, not only during their W1 course but throughout their college career. Recommended guides at Bates include *The Pocket Style Manual* (Bedford/St. Martin’s) and *Writing with Sources* (Rowman and Littlefield), as well as discipline-specific guides such as MLA, APA, or Chicago. (Some departments have developed in-house guides, as well.) The Director of Writing or the Director of the Peer Writing Center can suggest other guides best suited to your course.

**Please list the guide or guides to be used for this course:**

**D. ORGANIZATION and STYLE**

*Students should understand the ways in which the organization and structure of a piece of writing guide the reader and strengthen an argument.* [Read entire list of organization-related learning goals here.]

*Students should appreciate the careful crafting of language and understand common conventions.* [Read entire list of style-related learning goals here.]

In the spirit of “teaching writing, not just assigning it,” W1 courses typically incorporate some discussion of the practice of writing, whether sentence-level (such as grammar or mechanics), paragraph-level (such as transitions or development), or essay-level (such as introductions and conclusions or ordering of evidence). These discussions might take place on a regular basis (for example, a 30-minute period set aside each week), or they might be scheduled to correspond with various stages of an assignment. Resources available to your class to supplement class discussion include workshops led by the Director of Writing or the staff of Writing at Bates (Writing Specialists and peer writing assistants); numerous teaching materials from Writing at Bates are also available for your class.

**Please describe how you anticipate covering issues of organization and style:**
Learning Goals for Students in W1 Courses

Inquiry
1. Learn what kinds of questions scholars ask
2. Craft questions worthy of inquiry
3. Respond to texts critically and thoughtfully
4. Identify an audience for an assignment
5. Understand that purpose and audience will shape the way they present their ideas
6. Ultimately, recognize that writing, thinking, and research are ongoing processes and become accustomed to rethinking and deepening their ideas

Argument
1. Recognize when argument is the appropriate mode for a particular writing project
2. Think about the ongoing conversation their work is entering—and the way in which they enter the conversation
3. Develop a question or position, articulated as a thesis statement or guiding idea
4. Learn how to use evidence to advance an argument

Evidence
1. Read and evaluate sources critically to understand a text’s argument and to formulate their own position about that argument
2. Understand the different types of evidence recognized as authoritative by various disciplines
3. Choose appropriate sources to support their own arguments
4. Understand the value of fairly presenting an opposing viewpoint
5. Acknowledge and articulate the limitations of evidence

Research Skills:
6. Learn how to use their time efficiently while researching
7. Be able to mine sources for further evidence
8. Have a command of larger research horizons (interlibrary loan or field research, for example)

Organization
1. Understand that thinking must be organized in order to communicate effectively with an audience
2. Be able to identify different organizational patterns, recognize the way in which their choice of organizational pattern is informed by purpose and audience, and draw upon these patterns as models for their writing
3. Understand the ways in which various components of organization (such as introductions, conclusions, paragraphs, transitions, and disciplinary-specific sections) guide the reader and strengthen an argument

Style and Conventions
1. Appreciate the careful crafting of language
2. Understand that different disciplines have different stylistic conventions and understand the rationale behind the different conventions
3. Be aware of their audience’s conventional expectations (vocabulary, diction, style, citations, etc.)
4. Understand proper ways to reference and acknowledge others’ work
5. Become more facile with concision, fluency, and variety of sentence structure
6. Acquire self-editing skills that improve writing’s clarity
7. Understand the most common conventions of punctuation, grammar, and mechanics