W2 Course Guidelines and Proposal Form

Each question below is linked to one or more of the five categories of shared commitments for a W2 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 be able to independently create a question that drives research and writing and decide on the best genre and medium for approaching a particular audience and purpose.

1. To cultivate attention toward the process of writing, the W2 course offers a variety of writing assignments—varying, for example, in purpose, genre, sequencing, and complexity. A W2 course asks students to take on several different assignments, or one substantial assignment with components scaffolded across a semester, equaling approximately twenty to twenty-five pages of finished prose. (A course that assigns one large paper without stages for feedback and revision would not meet the expectations of a W2.)

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

2. When taught as part of the scholarly writing process, revision allows students to revisit their ideas and rethink their rhetorical choices; feedback from readers (whether faculty, peers, writing assistants, or Writing Specialists) is key to guiding this rethinking. Students might undertake revision of one part of an assignment or of an entire draft, or have opportunities for rewriting. Students should be reminded of the differences between revising and editing and understand the importance of each in the writing process.

Please describe the approach to commentary and revision you anticipate for your course:
B. ARGUMENT
Students should be able to construct, support, and defend an argument or line of thinking appropriate for the scholarly approach being taken.

To help students improve their critical thinking skills and their ability to create and support a line of thinking, a W2 course engages students in the relevant scholarly conversation of a discipline, field, or interdiscipline. 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 be able to show a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the kinds of support and source materials deemed credible within a discipline—making choices, for example, among primary and secondary, text-based and data-driven, or print and multimedia sources. [The W2 course deepens and broadens students’ understanding of research and writing as modes for creating and communicating knowledge. In the W2, students strengthen their skills with the research process through assignments and class dialogue that encourage them to ask, investigate, and answer questions of interest and significance. Attention to library resources might entail an assignment-specific session in the library or an introduction to the research methodology of a particular field or fields.

Please describe specific research-related activities you anticipate including in your course:
D. ORGANIZATION and STYLE

Students should understand different organizational approaches and choose the one that is best for the purpose at hand; they should recognize that different approaches to organization exist in different media.

Students should use fluid and sophisticated prose, showing an appreciation for tone and diction appropriate to the discipline, genre, and medium.

In the spirit of “teaching writing, not just assigning it,” W2 courses devote some class time to discussion of the writing process and craft, practical exercises, or workshops that teach discipline- or assignment-specific writing concepts and skills (such as the literature review, the research question, or disciplinary conventions). These discussions might take place on a regular basis 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, when attached to W2s); numerous teaching materials from Writing at Bates are also available for your class.

Please describe how you anticipate covering issues of organization and style: