

### For Committee Use Only

Course	GES 250 (v. 2)
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## Writing Intensive Course Proposal Form

NEIU Writing Intensive Program, Center for Academic Writing  
Ronald Williams Library [www.neiu.edu/~wip](http://www.neiu.edu/~wip)

Beginning with students who newly enroll in Fall 2008, all students must successfully complete a Writing Intensive course within their discipline in order to graduate. Successful completion of ENG 101 or its equivalent with a grade of "C" or better is a prerequisite to enrolling in a Writing Intensive course. Writing Intensive courses must be NEIU courses.

Writing Intensive courses:

- Are 200-level or 300-level courses offered relatively early in the major
- Must be a minimum of 3 credit hours
- Have an absolute maximum of 25 students so that the instructor can devote a great deal of time to provide feedback on early drafts of written work
- Meet the Writing Intensive Guidelines (see p. 3 or <http://www.neiu.edu/~wip> for the guidelines)

Departments and programs have several options for implementing Writing Intensive courses:

- Create a new course to add to the list of requirements for the major\*
- Modify an existing course\*
- Choose to offer one course that students must use to fulfill the Writing Intensive requirement or allow students to choose one of several courses that can be used to fulfill the Writing Intensive requirement
- Work with faculty in a group of departments/programs to develop a Writing Intensive course that can be used by all their majors
- Consult with the Writing Intensive Faculty Advisory Committee (WIFAC) if they wish to propose alternative ways of providing Writing Intensive courses for their majors

**\*Note:** Departments and programs that choose to create a new required course or modify an existing course that was not previously required will need to propose a change in the major program and submit the program change through the appropriate governing bodies.

Support for designing Writing Intensive courses, preparing the course proposal documents, and/or designing and implementing writing assignments is available through the Center for Academic Writing. The sources listed below can also provide guidance in designing Writing Intensive courses.

Bean, J. C. (2001). *Engaging ideas: The professors' guide to integrating writing, critical thinking, and active learning in the classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gottschalk, K., & Hjortshoj, K. (2004). *The elements of teaching writing: A resource for instructors in all disciplines*. Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's.

Please contact Kate Hahn at x4490 or [mk-hahn@neiu.edu](mailto:mk-hahn@neiu.edu) with any questions or visit <http://www.neiu.edu/~wip> for more information.

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## Writing Intensive Course Proposal Form

### INSTRUCTIONS

The following need to be submitted electronically to WIFAC at [mk-hahn@neiu.edu](mailto:mk-hahn@neiu.edu) for each course that is proposed:

- Writing Intensive Course Proposal Form
  - Available at <http://www.neiu.edu/~wip>
- Proposed Course Syllabus
- Curricular Proposal Transmission Form
- FCAA Course Proposal Checklist (and any necessary documents, e.g. proposal rationale)

Please use the "Save As" function to save this document with the Subject and Course Number of the proposed course as the document name (for example, PSYC202.doc). Provide the information requested on the following pages.

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Subject: G&ES

Course #: G&ES 250

New Course       Existing Course

Credits: 3

Course Abbreviated Title (29 characters max): WIP:Writing in Geog and Env. St.

Course Title: WIP:Writing in Geography and Environmental Studies

Average Weekly Contact Hours: 3

Discussion       Independent Study  
 Field Experience       Student Teaching  
 Lecture       Hybrid/Online

Course Description (100 words max; for catalog): This course is a writing intensive experience, offering students the opportunity to develop written communication skills by utilizing basic concepts, theories, and techniques in Geography and Environmental Studies. Topics and exercises include note taking, outlines, drafts, styles, bibliography and references, essays, reviews, policy statements and reports of varying length. Sources including library, internet services, and direct observation will be explored. Students will incorporate maps, graphs, and other visual aids.

## WI GUIDELINES

Complete the chart below by showing how the proposed course meets each of the WI Guidelines. Please make a reference to where in the proposed syllabus this information can also be found. **Refer to the complete guidelines and notes below for more information.** Contact the CAW and/or see Bean (2001) and Gottschalk and Hjortshoj (2004) for help designing a WI course (full references at the bottom of page 1).

1. The writing activities should be an integral part of the course and should be designed so that students will receive **active instruction in disciplinary writing.**

The first six weeks focuses on short assignments, and the last part of the course deals with longer essays. Specific instruction on organizational skills and documentation are detailed as a checklist on the syllabus and in the weekly schedule. As the syllabus states, each of these will be explained and demonstrated in class. Students "will be taught and encouraged throughout the course to diagram, draw and label, outline and model" their thoughts.

More complete response:

In Part One (see Syllabus, pps 8-11) students will study and produce in written form the various parts/components commonly found in typical G&ES papers. Hence, the writing and re-writing activities of an informal and formal nature will focus on: inter alia, preparing bibliographies from library and internet searches; practicing note taking and reports writing from lectures and readings; summarizing books, articles, and other sources; explaining and illustrating text with maps, graphs and other visual aids (including power point); practicing exams writing; and preparing outlines and opening paragraphs for proposals, essays, and theses papers.

In Part Two (see Syllabus, pps. 12-13) students apply the skills acquired in the first part to specific, substansive papers on G&ES topics. The focus here is on three forms of writing: proposals, descriptive essays, and hypothesis-based papers on G&ES topics.

2. Students will write the **equivalent of at least 15 pages of graded assignments** over the course of the semester.

**NOTE:** See *Guideline 4* for more specific information about these graded assignments.

The syllabus states, under Student Tasks and Requirements, "There will be a minimum of 18 pages of graded work in the course. At least 4 pages of graded work in the first 6 weeks, and a minimum of three 4-page papers of graded work in the remained of the course." The Portfolio will include a Table of Contents and Introductory page, which will also be graded. All graded work will be proceeded by ungraded drafts. (Syllabus, pg. 3)

3. Each Writing Intensive course will require **multiple types of writing**. Writing assignments might include correspondence, memoranda, proposals, progress reports, research reports, work-logs, site descriptions, observations, case studies, lab reports, creative writing, problem-solving, or computer programming, as well as other forms of course-related writing.

The syllabus refers to these various types of writing, all of which will be taught during the course: Note taking from lectures and readings, interpretation of visual information in captions and summaries (for graphs, maps, tables, aerial photographs, and satellite images), writing lab and field reports, proposals for longer papers, outlining chapters for longer documents, bibliography and referencing, hypothesis-testing papers. These are explicated in the syllabus section : Weekly Schedule.

More Complete Response:

The multiple types of informal and formal writing in the course include (specific examples in parenthesis):

- \* free-style writing (new problems/questions, e.g., is the world cooling?, how do solar panels work?) (Syllabus, eg., pg 8, 11)
- \* journals (e.g., on a field experience ---- perhaps an hourly report on wildlife activity in local parks) (Syllabus, pg. 9)
- \* reaction--response notes (after reading a newspaper article on a G&ES topic, e.g., sustainable development) (Syllabus, pg. 11)
- \* critiques of other students' work , used throughout course at informal writing, draft, and final stages
- \* reviews (articles, books, policy statements, etc. ---- material drawn from specific G&ES journals and books) (Syllabus, pg 10)
- \* laboratory notebooks and reports: focused on logic/conciseness; examples drawn from G&ES lab and workbooks (see Syllabus, pg 11)
- \* case studies (effectively using real world examples of basic concepts, models and theories in G&ES) (Syllabus, pg 8)
- \* note taking from lectures and readings; observations --- at different levels (on-going jotting down of what you see and learn); outlines, opening paragraphs, citations, references (Syllabus, pps. 8-10)
- \* Three substantive papers: 1) proposal 2) descriptive essay, 3) thesis-style paper. (Syllabus, pps 12-13)
- \* Portfolio (to consist of all work done in the course and a minimum of two new pages: tables of contents, etc.) (Syllabus, pps 12-13)

4. The graded assignments, consisting of multiple types of writing, will constitute a significant portion (**at least 50 percent**) of the final grade for the course; the grade on each assignment will reflect effective and correct written expression as well as knowledge of content.

**NOTE:** As such, in-class exams and quizzes will not apply toward the 15-page requirement unless effective and correct written expression are explicitly considered in determining the grade.

The syllabus' GRADING POLICY AND FORMULAE indicates that 60% of the grade will be based on written work: Short papers 15% and long papers 40%. An additional 5% will be for the graded portfolio. Portions of the exams (20%) will be written as well.

5. On some graded assignments, students will be provided an **opportunity to produce multiple drafts**, in order to learn that writing is a process as well as a tool for invention and discovery. Students will get feedback from the instructor on those early drafts of written work before the grade is assigned.

Every assignment in the course---and virtually every week---will provide an opportunity for at least one re-write and/or draft of short and long papers. (see Syllabus, pps 3, 8-13) All drafts will be ungraded, but drafts as well as final papers will receive feedback from peers and the instructor, as per appropriate sections of the Checklist. (Syllabus, pps. 4-5)

6. Each Writing Intensive course will also provide an opportunity for students to engage in **ungraded assignments**, such as writing-to-learn activities, in order to practice writing and also to become actively engaged in processing the information that is presented in class or in a textbook. Informal journal writing is another useful means of developing students' critical thinking skills.

**NOTE:** *Ungraded writing activities might include in-class minute papers, muddy point papers, brief reflections on what students have learned in the class period, or brief explorations of questions students have about a topic. Although some of these assignments and activities may receive completion points, some must be truly ungraded, and not contribute to a student's course grade in any way. Contact the CAW if you would like more information on designing and implementing these kinds of writing-to-learn activities.*

All free-style writing and drafts are ungraded. (Syllabus, pps. 5-6). Ungraded work will proceed all graded assignments, thus affording students the opportunity for feedback and re-writing of each important part of the total learning process. Every week will begin with some form of free-writing. Students are encouraged to jot down what they already know or think about the topic in G&ES introduced by the instructor in lecture form or from their readings, etc. They are also encouraged to develop the habit of continuously diagramming, drawing/writing, and noting their ideas and thoughts about a topic and/or observation within the classroom and in the field. They are challenged to integrate what they already know ---or think they should know---about a topic into what they are currently reading by placing notations in margins and notepads. All ungraded work must be organized and saved in the portfolio.

## **SAMPLE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

Include here at least two sample writing assignments: one formal, graded assignment and one informal, ungraded assignment/activity. For each assignment:

- Provide the information that will be given to students when the assignment or activity is given,
  - Clearly describe how each assignment or activity will be evaluated and/or responded to, and
  - Indicate how each sample assignment or activity is connected to course objectives or learning outcomes.
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## **FORMAL, GRADED WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Student Writing Assignment Sheet (paste into the gray box below the handout given to students)  
“Essay on G&ES Topic” (example from the second part of the course).

### Task

Based on the conceptual framework provided to you in the introductory lecture to this generic assignment on spatial analysis and environmental policy, you are to write a research paper on a topic which highlights a locational or policy problem. Imagine that you are preparing this paper for the annual Research Symposium here at Northeastern Illinois University or a similar conference. You may assume that the audience is generally well-educated but not expert in G&ES. You will initially present your drafts and final paper to your fellow students in this class for feedback before you “take it on the road.”

### Format

Write an essay-style paper using a problem-thesis structure and the AAG format (as provided in style sheet and Chapter 5 in Northey and Knight).

Due Dates N.B. You must respect all dates.

Due date 1: Topic selection and tentative title \_\_\_\_\_

Due date 2: Outline of Paper (including bibliography) \_\_\_\_\_

Due date 3: Opening Paragraph \_\_\_\_\_

Due date 4: Draft 1 (including maps, graphs, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Peer and Instructor Feedback

Due date 5: Draft 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Peer and Instructor feedback

Due date 6: Final Version and Presentation \_\_\_\_\_

## Evaluation -

The checklist is used for evaluation and is divided into three interrelated, user-friendly categories to help to determine if the piece of work is 1) well organized, 2) well documented, and 3) well expressed.

Checklist: The grade will be assigned according to the overall evaluation. Each of the categories below does not necessarily carry the same weight. The checklist insures that every student will get specific feedback. Checklist (Yes/No)

### Well Organized

Yes/No Are the purpose and approach of this essay evident from the beginning?

Yes/No Are all sections of the paper relevant to the topic?

Yes/No Will the subheadings be meaningful to the reader?

Do they clearly identify the various sections in my paper?

Yes/No Do my paragraph divisions give coherence to my ideas?

Do I use them to cluster similar ideas and signal changes of ideas?

Yes/No Do any parts of the essay seem disjointed?

Should I add more transitional words or logical indicators to make the sequence of ideas easier to follow?

Yes/No Are my illustrations, graphs, and tables useful?

Do they present the data in the clearest, most effective way, or would a different form make a better presentation?

Is my discussion of each clear and complete?

Yes/No Do my conclusions accurately reflect my arguments in the body of my work?

### Well Documented

Yes/No Have I been accurate and fair in my representation of what my sources state?

Yes/No Have I cited all the sources I have used?

Is the style of the in-text citations consistent?

Yes/No Are all my illustrations and tables correctly numbered?

Have I identified them in the text?

Yes/No Are all the tables complete and correct, with the source(s) noted?

Yes/No Is my reference list (or bibliography, whatever is appropriate) accurate and complete in all publication detail?

Yes/No Are all the ideas sufficiently developed? Is there enough evidence?

Yes/No In presenting my argument, do I take into account opposing arguments or evidence, explanation and illustrations? Is my discussion balanced and objective?

Yes/No Are all contents of my appendices useful? Are they complete and accurate?

Well Expressed

Yes/No Is the organization logical?

Yes/No Have I checked my sentence structure, diction, punctuation, spelling and style?

Yes/No Is my title imaginative, informative and precise?

Yes/No Have I identified my weak areas---for example, irrelevant evidence, faulty logic or run-on sentences?

Yes/No Would an educated person who hasn't read the primary material understand everything I'm saying?

Please answer the following questions regarding this sample writing assignment:

**1. How will this writing assignment be evaluated and/or responded to?**

Only the final draft of this assignment will be evaluated for a grade by the instructor. Any earlier work will be evaluated informally by fellow students and the instructor. The response to a paper by fellow students and the instructor will be based on the same editing checklist that the writer may use to check his/her own work before submission. The checklist (see above) consists of a series of questions found in the students' textbook (Northley and Knight, pp.65-66 --- also see syllabus, pps. 4-5). This same questions in the checklist will be used by the instructor when grading the final version of the paper.

**2. How is this writing assignment connected to course objectives or learning outcomes?**

This type of assignment addresses directly the main stated outcomes and learning objectives in the course by linking an intensive writing exercise to space as the unifying, central concept in Geography, and to environmental-conservation policy as the focus of Environmental Studies. Specifically these two learning outcomes are stressed in this assignment:

1. think and express themselves in spatial terms and with a clear awareness of the environment and the interrelationships within and among natural and social systems in decision-making: what is where, why is it there, and why should we care?
2. be able to identify and write an essay, proposal and hypothesis-based paper at the appropriate level and in different venues.

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## INFORMAL, UNGRADED WRITING ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY

Paste into the gray box below handout for the writing assignment/activity or describe the writing assignment/activity.

Each week you will undertake at least one informal (ungraded) writing exercise. Usually each section of the course---including sessions devoted to longer papers--- will begin with a form of free-style writing. Most techniques used in Geography and Environmental Studies will be introduced with some form of informal as well as formal writing. You are taught and encouraged throughout the course to diagram, draw and label, outline and model your thoughts. Note: all drafts are also ungraded.

### TASK/EVALUATION

You are given two maps of the world showing pressure systems in July and January. Do the following:

Stage 1: Jot down your first impressions of the maps.

Stage 2: Try to write a brief explanation of what is happening in the mid-Atlantic Ocean and why. Also, why is this important?

Stage 3. Listen to the lecture. Now re-write Stage 2 in your own words, as if explaining the material to a classmate.

Stage 4: Write a brief memo to yourself of what you have learned from this exercise.

Stage 5: Share your experience with a fellow student.

The evaluation of this ungraded exercise will occur by the class and instructor discussing the stages, merits, and problems encountered doing the exercise. The instructor will place the rationale of the exercise into a wider framework and explain why it is important to be able to link what you see on a map and other visual representations to broader ideas in G&ES. In this way, all that you see and do become part a meaningful whole, not unconnected bits and pieces. All your written work---including the informal writing in this exercise--- is to be given a title, dated, and saved in the Portfolio.

Please answer the following questions regarding this sample writing assignment/activity:

**1. How will this ungraded writing assignment/activity be responded to or used by the instructor?**

The students and the instructor will briefly discuss the stages, merits and problems encountered doing the exercise. The instructor will place the rationale of the exercise into a wider framework.

**2. How is this ungraded writing assignment/activity connected to course objectives or learning outcomes?**

This informal exercise teaches students the importance of what is on a map and how, with two maps and a concise writing explanation, it is possible to teach people very powerful and useful concepts. Specifically, these learning outcomes are addressed:

1. be able to comprehend, initiate thinking and write how links between the human and physical systems operate in the landscape.
2. provide written explanation of phenomena and concepts expressed in maps, graphs, tables, aerial photos, satellite images and other visual representations. Be able to provide proper titles, explanations, etc. to different types of visual presentations.
3. provide written explanations of fieldwork, survey, map analysis, remote sensing techniques and results.