

**For Committee Use Only**

Course	PHIL 210 (v. 2)
Date Submitted	11-11-09
Action	Approved
Date Action Taken	11-18-09

## 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: Philosophy

Course #: 210

New Course       Existing Course

Credits: 2

Course Abbreviated Title (29 characters max): WIP:Arguing Philosophically

Course Title: WIP:Arguing Philosophically

Average Weekly Contact Hours: 3

Discussion       Independent Study  
 Field Experience       Student Teaching  
 Lecture       Hybrid/Online

Course Description (100 words max; for catalog): An in-depth examination of various aspects of philosophical argumentation, in particular informal reasoning and informal fallacies.

## 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**.

Professional writing in philosophy typically takes one of two forms: refereed articles for professional journals (or book chapters), or book-length monographs. Getting to the point where one can produce written pieces of that length (a journal article is usually about 25 pages) involves mastery of a wide variety of skills, such as exposition, analogy, refutation, fallacy detection, close reading, schematic analysis, narrative, non-discursive argument analysis, abduction, explanation, and so forth. Even if one never intends to write a journal article or a book (as is the case with most students in any Philosophy program), the skills involved in writing philosophically are very useful. As a writing intensive requirement in the major, this course aims to develop these skills through weekly graded writing and daily informal writing. The formal (i.e., graded) writing assignments will be short (typically no longer than two pages), so that we can focus on one or two skills at a time.

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.

From the syllabus, page 2, Course Requirements, section B: (i) Formal: There will be a total of about 16 pages of graded writing (equaling 60 percent of the course grade). All of the formal writing will be short (roughly equivalent to about 2 pages in length per assignment). I will, however, assign more than 16 pages of writing during the semester, but only your highest scores across at least 16 pages of writing will calculate into your course grade. This means you will be welcome to skip some assignments. Nonetheless, you can expect to do some formal writing almost every week. Some of the formal writing in this course will take the shape of short formal papers (about two pages in length). Other formal assignments will involve less “scholastic” forms of writing, such as emails, statements of purpose, blog posts and blog comments, letters to the editor, argument diagrams, and so forth. Detailed instructions for each assignment, general expectations for graded written work, and links to writing resources can be found under the "assignments" tab on Blackboard. While all formal writing is revisable at the instructor's request for a change in the assignment's grade, some of the formal writing assignments will take place in stages, so they will require ungraded (but nonetheless required) drafts (on which I will provide feedback). This process will vary depending on the assignment.

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.

From the syllabus, page 2, Course Requirements, section B: (i) Formal: Some of the formal writing in this course will take the shape of short formal papers (about two pages in length). Other formal assignments will involve less “scholastic” forms of writing, such as emails, statements of purpose, blog posts and blog comments, letters to the editor, argument diagrams, and so forth.

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.*

From the syllabus, section B (i) Formal: There will be a total of about 16 pages of graded writing (equaling 60 percent of the course grade). All of the formal writing will be short (roughly equivalent to about 2 pages in length per assignment). I will, however, assign more than 16 pages of writing during the semester, but only your highest scores across at least 16 pages of writing will calculate into your course grade. This means you will be welcome to skip some assignments. . . . A note about grading: all (graded) written work is evaluated on the basis of content, clarity of presentation, and originality. A successful paper is (1) factually accurate, (2) carefully and clearly reasoned, (3) original, and (4) free of errors in spelling, grammar and style. More extensive discussions of grading (including the rewrite policy and scoring rubrics), writing, and arguing are posted on the Blackboard page for this course. Please familiarize yourself with them as soon as possible—you are responsible for their contents.

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.

(i) Formal: There will be a total of about 16 pages of graded writing (equaling 60 percent of the course grade). All of the formal writing will be short (roughly equivalent to about 2 pages in length per assignment). I will, however, assign more than 16 pages of writing during the semester, but only your highest scores across at least 16 pages of writing will calculate into your course grade. This means you will be welcome to skip some assignments. Nonetheless, you can expect to do some formal writing almost every week. Some of the formal writing in this course will take the shape of short formal papers (about two pages in length). Other formal assignments will involve less “scholastic” forms of writing, such as emails, statements of purpose, blog posts and blog comments, letters to the editor, argument diagrams, and so forth. Detailed instructions for each assignment, general expectations for graded written work, and links to writing resources can be found under the "assignments" tab on Blackboard. While all formal writing is revisable at the instructor's request for a change in the assignment's grade, some of the formal writing assignments will take place in stages, so they will require ungraded (but nonetheless required) drafts (on which I will provide feedback). This process will vary depending on the assignment.

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.*

From the syllabus, page 2, Course Requirements, section B (ii): "(ii) Informal: informal writing assignments fall into two groups: in-class writing and out-of-class writing. In class writing (e.g., minute papers) will not receive any credit all (though they will be responded to). Out-of-class writing

may include short comments on the class blog, discussion forum posts, and emails. These will not be graded as such, but you will receive feedback on them. Besides, failure to complete them adequately will result in significant penalties in the participation component of the grade."

## **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)

Philosophy 210 (Fall 2010)

Formal Assignment #4

Blog Post

### Task

Philosophers use the web all of the time nowadays—to post professional news, discuss their work in a less formal settings, and apply their skills to matters of public interest beyond the narrow scope of their research. For this assignment, construct a short (500 or so original word) blog post on a topic of current social or political interest.

### Audience

Since we're applying our skills here, the audience is a partially informed but not philosophically fluent one. They won't know what you mean by "inference" or "fallacy" so you'll have to explain those and similar terms if you use them. What is better, you'll have to find other terms most people will understand.

### Purpose

There are several purposes for assignment:

To employ skills of critical analysis;

To communicate to a non-expert audience;

To show the relevance of philosophical analysis in public discourse;

To develop an informal and engaging writing style.

### Due Dates

October 1 subject due (one sentence description) via email;

October 8 first draft, via email;

October 19 final post due (with revisions after October 8th version) via email. I will then post your post on the course blog.

### Format

This is a blog post, so use that format. Pictures, video, as well as abundant (but relevant) hyperlinks are welcome and encouraged. The post should be about 500 words, and formatted for publication on the class blog.

## Example

See <http://www.thenonsequitur.com> for a sample.

## Evaluation Criteria

The blog post will be evaluated in light of the purposes listed above. In particular, the bulk of the grade (70%) will depend on the quality of the critical analysis (how well you explain and defend your thesis, how well you employ supporting documentation, and so forth).

The remaining purposes will be weighted equally (10 percent for appropriate communication level, philosophical engagement, style and mechanics).

## Other Information

Hint: try to stay on territory you already are familiar with. If you like sports, for instance, write about that--as long as the subject provides an opportunity to engage in critical analysis.

Please answer the following questions regarding this sample writing assignment:

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

I will comment at all three stages, but you will receive a grade only at the end for the final product. The final product will be posted on the class blog, and the class will be invited to comment on it (on the content and analysis, but not the style, etc.)

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

See above, "purposes." The purposes for this assignment are directly linked to the following course learning outcomes found on page 1 of the syllabus: in particular:

2. to recognize and identify different types of argument;
3. to distinguish factual claims from inferential claims;
4. to evaluate inferential claims in different types of argument;
5. to uncover and correct sophistical reasoning.

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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.

Philosophy 210: Arguing Philosophically (Fall 2010)

Informal Writing Assignment

Blog Comments

### A. Background

Nowadays blogs do a lot of the work of the public square. They are the place where people meet and argue about ideas. They are informal, nay very informal, meeting places. People don't abide by the same rules of decorum or grammar of a newspaper letters to the editor section. The point is to get an idea out there fast in order to generate discussion.

### B. What to do:

Pick one of the threads on the course blog. Write a short (250 word maximum) comment.

### C. Turning it in:

1. Send me the hyperlink of your comment in an email.
2. Send me subsequent comments on your comment in an email two days later.

### D. When

1. Send me the link on October 2nd. The follow up then on October 4th.

E. I'll reply to you about your comment--but I won't make any editorial observations.

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?**  
See Section E above. I'll comment on your comment and encourage the other students to do so as well.

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

This assignment stresses informal, off-the-cuff expression (as described in section A above). The assignment is directly linked to the following course learning outcomes found on page 1 of the syllabus:

1. to distinguish arguments from non-arguments;
2. to recognize and identify different types of argument;

3. to distinguish factual claims from inferential claims;
4. to evaluate inferential claims in different types of argument;
5. to uncover and correct sophisticated reasoning.