

**For Committee Use Only**

Course	PSCI 392 (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: Political Science

Course #: 392

New Course       Existing Course

Credits: 3

Course Abbreviated Title (29 characters max): WIP:Contemp Political Philos

Course Title: WIP:Contemporary Political Philosophy

Average Weekly Contact Hours:

Discussion       Independent Study  
 Field Experience       Student Teaching  
 Lecture       Hybrid/Online

Course Description (100 words max; for catalog): State and governance are among the most traditional, and one might think settled, themes in modern political thought. But recent 21st century events have given these themes a new significance. Were these events, and related problems, prefigured in earlier crises of political order? How does "globalism" affect theories of state and governance? Are the liberal democratic and republican traditions able to meet the dilemmas of security and freedom presented by an increasing inter-connectedness among nation-states? To investigate these questions, this course will explore classics on state and governance and also read selected contemporary theories, histories and literary perspectives on political order.

## 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.**

Students will write weekly exegetical discussion memos guided by a question that will allow them to form a mini-thesis for these 300-500 word assignments. They will receive in-class instruction and read Harvey's *Writing with Sources* to learn the theory and practice of making an argument with cited evidence. These weekly assignments are building blocks in terms of skills and substance for the more developed formal essay assignments. In all of my theory courses, I use a modified version of Theodore Baird's epistemic approach to teaching writing—writing is a practice of knowing--because this is the approach that professional philosophers themselves take when working. (As an approach to teaching writing, however, I supplement this approach with other's strategies when needed such as Elbow's and others.)

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 memos are graded on a pass/fail basis and are a percentage of the overall grade, but I consider these lower stakes, rather than letter graded, assignments. Students will write a short essay titled the Alternative Media Project—4-5 pages, typed and double-spaced with citation—and this paper will be graded. Students will write 2 formal essays—8-10 pages, typed and double spaced, with citation—and these will be given a letter grade. (See "Course Objectives and Requirements" on the syllabus.)

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.

In addition to the formal essays, Alternative Media Project and weekly discussion memos described above, there will be several writing assignments titled In-Class Writing and Exchange of Ideas. Members of the class and I will write on a topic for discussion for 15 minutes and then exchange what we've written and discuss the topic. These assignments will be read aloud and discussed in class, but they will not be graded. (See "Course Objectives and Requirements" on the syllabus.)

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.

With the exception of the participation grade, all assignments in this course are writing assignments and a letter grade will be given on 60% of the assignments. (A 100-90, B 89-80, C 79-70, D 69-60, F 59 and below; see "Course Objectives and Requirements" on the syllabus.)

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.

Comments on all written work will be written as if a rewrite will be done, because this is how professional philosophers comment on each other's work. A draft is required on the first formal assignment, and it is optional but strongly encouraged on the second formal assignment. (See "Course Objectives and Requirements" on the syllabus.)

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.*

The spontaneous in class writing assignments will not be graded in any way. Throughout the semester, we will have between 7 and 9 unannounced in-class writing assignments. For these assignments, each student and the professor will write on a question for 15 minutes and then we will exchange and discuss the thinking recorded in these assignments. (See "Course Objectives and Requirements" on the syllabus.)

## **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)  
PSCI 392 – Theories of State and Governance  
Essay Assignment #1

Choose a topic and write an essay—8-10 pages, typed in a standard size font and double-spaced—on one of the following topics. You are to write a formal essay, and this means (1) your essay should have a clearly discernible and supported thesis, (2) you give textual evidence for the claims you make in support of your thesis, and (3) this evidence must be accurately cited with page numbers. If you have not yet studied Writing with Sources carefully to figure out citation for your memos, please do so now. For this class, all cites must be with page numbers. Do not regurgitate lectures, and hence do not ever consider citing something said in class. Let our discussions lead you back to the readings to answer the questions and develop your essays.

Talk with me and with each other about your ideas, but when you sit down to do the paper, do your own work. You are not to consult internet sources when writing these papers. If you do so, you do not understand the assignment and should talk to me immediately. These essays are all about what you can do with the questions and the texts we have read.

- Your paper drafts are due, under my office door, by 5:00 p.m. 10/24. Email attachments will not be accepted. After you receive comments, rewrites will be due by 5:00 under my door on 11/7.
- Absolutely, and positively, DO NOT go outside of the bounds of the assigned texts when answering these questions. These are exercises in giving cited evidence from a limited set of sources.

### **Topic One**

Is honor, as Montesquieu presents it in *The Spirit of the Laws*, a source of the problems that Hobbes is trying to counteract in *Leviathan*? To answer this question, think first about how honor is self-regarding. Then think about Montesquieu's celebration of virtue as political virtue—namely, love of homeland and love of equality. Hobbes thinks a certain kind of equality is a serious problem. Is this the same equality that Montesquieu celebrates? Or, is Hobbes trying to make a world in which Montesquieu's political virtue is possible? (Here, you really have to stick to the texts. None of these questions are asking you to make claims about history. The questions are asking you to think about the assumptions and logics of Montesquieu's and Hobbes' arguments.)

### Topic Two

Write an essay in which you compare and contrast Kant's and Mill's understandings of progress. Do they both believe in progress and is it for both thinkers "maturity?" Is progress for both thinkers a social project—namely, does it in some way require engagement with other people?

### Topic Three

Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the traffic in women—namely, the exchange of women—to the Friedmans' and Marx's understandings of the immense social powers of the market and/or capitalism. Does Rubin's account of kinship relations becoming meaningless in contemporary order better reflect and elaborate the Friedmans' or Marx's understanding of this power. Does Rubin's "The Traffic in Women" thus give you a way to compare and contrast the Friedmans and Marx?

Please answer the following questions regarding this sample writing assignment:

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

Each paper will be given internal comments remarking on content and mechanics. The end comments will begin with the strengths of the paper and then point out dimensions of the essay that need further work. Continuing my assumption that the writing of the paper, the mechanics of syntax and grammar as well as the structure of the paragraphs and argument are components of theoretical thinking, the comments will address and take into account the following points:

- clarity of thesis (including introductory statement and elaboration throughout the argument);
- mechanics (grammar, spelling, tone, and organization);
- textual evidence is accurately given and clearly cited; evidence given supports argument being made;
- representations of the theoretical texts and concepts are accurate ;
- complexity of argument: answers question and addresses counter-arguments to paper's thesis and interpretations, confronts dilemmas in comparing and contrasting intricate theoretical texts of argument.

Straightforwardly, this is what I do when I grade. I will first read through all of the papers in order to (a) write the internal comments, and (b) sort the papers into piles scaling out the papers in comparison to each other in terms of quality. (There will be piles within the grade categories A, B, C, et cetera.) Then, second, I will reread the papers and adjust the scaling if needed. And, third, I will go through and write the end comments explaining my assessment and making suggestions for improvement. (Importantly, I will make suggestions for improvement even on the A papers so that the writers of excellent essays do not stagnate.)

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

In this writing assignment, students will have reached the most difficult materials and the most taxing demands for synthesizing and applying themes of state and governance. This

assignment will give students the opportunity to incorporate what they've learned with regard to writing/thinking throughout the assignments of the course. Any students writing an optional draft on this assignment--it is required on the first, but not this one--will be given internal comments like the ones they have been receiving on their memos throughout the semester and on all grading in the course.

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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.

### IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENTS - Lowest Stakes Writing

In-Class Writing and Exchange of Ideas. Throughout the semester, we will have between 7 and 9 unannounced in-class writing assignments. For these assignments, each student and the professor will write on a question for 15 minutes and then we will exchange and discuss the thinking recorded in these assignments. These assignments will not be graded.

Examples of these assignments will include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) The instructor will ask "are there any questions on what we just went over?" If there aren't any, she will then issue the assignment: "good, then take out a piece of paper and say in your own words what we have been talking about this session." We will read what we've written aloud and discuss the points raised.

(2) At the beginning of the hour, "take out a piece of paper and write, first, what was most confusing about today's reading and, second, what seemed most important to you in the days reading." We will read what we have written along and discuss the points raised.

(3) The instructor will ask students to relate a point of reading to their life by writing on it for 15 minutes or so. Students will then read what they've written aloud and discuss the points raised.

### DISCUSSION MEMO QUESTION - Low Stakes Writing

On the Wednesday, the last day of class for the first week, the following will be written on the board.

MEMO Due, Wednesday, September 3, 2008 (class cancelled Monday for Labor Day):

Re-read Writing with Sources and consult your syllabus for instructions on writing memos and respond to the following question.

In the reading assigned for next week, how does Montesquieu define political virtue in contrast to honor and how is this distinction related to forms of government?

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 pass (a check mark) or pass minus (check mark and minus) will be given on all of the first assignments that meet the word number requirement, and instructions will be given on what to improve on. Subsequent grading will be based on responses to comments. Pass-

minus grades indicate improvement is needed in an area. Each student will be met on his/her own terms and allowed to work through the following schedule of skills: (1) clarity of thesis (including introductory statement and elaboration throughout the argument); (2) representation of the text and pertinent concepts is accurate; (3) complexity and soundness of argument: the internal logic of the writing is clear and easy to follow; (4) textual evidence is accurately given and clearly cited; (5) mechanics (grammar, spelling, references, tone, and organization).

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

Note that the entire course is using writing to learn and to probe the historical and political theoretical questions posed by the course. The assignments are nested levels of difficulty for teaching writing and for teaching the substance of the course. These lower-stakes Discussion Memos guide the student's first engagement with the material; then class discussion further guides and elaborates this perspective and prepares students for the later and more difficult political theoretic assignments.