

Intermediate Writing Course Criteria

Students who have completed ENL 101 and 102 are "emerging" writers. Most are just beginning to meet expectations for college-level writing, and so still require ongoing support for and guided practice in writing.

Intermediate Writing courses foster continued growth in student writing by integrating writing assignments with practice in disciplinarily-defined critical thinking skills.

Intermediate Writing courses at UMD meet the following criteria:

- 1. Intermediate Writing courses employ writing as a method for deepening student learning.** Assignments in the course ask students to practice working in writing with concepts central to the course content. Intermediate Writing courses also often use informal or "low-stakes" writing exercises, pre-writing exercises, and other "best practices" (such as peer review and online written discussion) to help students recursively practice concepts and problem-solving methods before asking them to turn in formal written work for a final grade.
- 2. Faculty provide feedback, on-going guidance, and clear expectations for "effective" written response.** Intermediate Writing courses enable students to write as "apprentices" in the field; faculty act as writing mentors and disciplinary "experts." The exact nature of this relationship will vary from class to class. Best practices include: holding one-on-one or group conferences about student written work, commenting on early drafts before papers are submitted for a final grade, peer review and response activities, discussions and modeling of techniques for drafting (organizing content, integrating sources, contextualizing the ongoing conversation of the field, assessing the type and amount of information readers need, making appropriate grammatical and stylistic choices), breaking down writing assignments into manageable chunks for students, and giving feedback to students about their writing throughout the writing process.
- 3. Writing accounts for 40 to 60 percent of the final grade.** A significant portion of the graded work for the course should be writing about the course material. Students must complete all writing assignments to pass the course.
- 4. Students must complete at least 20 pages of writing.** Informal (pre-writing, low stakes, and freewriting) and formal writing may be included in this final count. The type of writing assigned will be determined by the course content, and may include analytic/persuasive/critical essays and reports, white pages, reviews, journals, proposals, lab reports/observations, written responses to readings, application of key concepts, reflections on their own written work. This page count does not include in-class exams or drafts of final papers.
- 5. Intermediate Writing courses should have a lower number of students, in the 20 to 25 range.** This enrollment goal allows instructors to devote attention to each student's writing (in the form of in-person and written feedback).

6. Intermediate Writing courses should primarily be designed around single semester of work. Within a given area of major, there should be more writing than just what is present in designated intermediate writing courses. *

*In some cases, due to pragmatic needs a department can request that an intermediate writing sequence of courses serve as a substitute for a single intermediate writing course, providing the following standards are met:

- The courses have demonstrated linked learning objectives in common regarding the development of intermediate writing skills.
- The courses have a common, measurable assignment for assessment purposes.
- There is a coordinated effort across courses and instructors that clearly demonstrates a continued effort to refine writing with a discipline specific product.
- There is a minimum of 12 pages of writing per semester for each course in the sequence
- There is a final project or projects that will be reviewed with the highest standard in the field from all the instructors in the sequence.
- The sequence of courses is set such that a uniform set of expectations are clearly articulated.