WRITING PROGRAM

Director, Stacey Sheriff

Program Affiliated Faculty: Assistant Professors Stacey Sheriff (Writing Program and English) and Paula Harrington (Farnham Writers’ Center Director, Writing Program, and English); Visiting Assistant Professors James Barrett (Writing Program and Classics), Elizabeth Ketner (Writing Program), and Elisabeth Stokes (Writing Program)

Writing is a crucial component of a liberal arts education. Accordingly, the mission of the Colby Writing Program is to support a culture of writing that ensures Colby students develop their writing and research abilities to become successful communicators in academic, personal, and, ultimately, professional environments after college.

The Writing Program is an academic program that draws on many disciplines, most notably the field of rhetoric and composition studies, which brings together writing and communications pedagogy, rhetorical theory, and research in writing across disciplines. It is responsible for coordinating and assessing first-year writing (W1); helping faculty develop upper-level writing in the majors and across the curriculum; offering faculty development around writing-related pedagogy and research; and, through the Farnham Writers’ Center, providing student peer-to-peer writing tutoring and faculty support.

Colby Writing Program faculty teach writing courses at varied levels, with a particular focus on first-year writing. For more information, please see the “Colby Writing Program” and “Farnham Writers’ Center” sections of the catalogue or visit the program website, colby.edu/writingprogram.

Course Offerings

WP111f  Expository Writing Workshop  For first-year students who are non-native speakers of English to advance their skills in academic writing in English, especially their fluency in grammar, syntax, idiom, and the conventions of the American college-level essay. Prepares students for first-year writing (W1) and other writing-intensive courses through immersion in forms of expository writing and rhetorical modes, with intensive practice in composing essays and revising prose. Nongraded. Previously listed as English 111. Three credit hours. HARRINGTON

WP112fs  Writers’ Workshop  For any student who wants extra work in writing. Taken in conjunction with a first-year writing (W1) course or any writing-emphasis course at any level. Meets as an individual tutorial in the Farnham Writers’ Center. Each student must meet with the tutor for at least 10 sessions during the semester. The goal is for the students to improve their writing, and the expected outcome is that they will complete the course with improved skills in grammar and essay writing. Nongraded. Previously listed as English 112. One credit hour. HARRINGTON, SHERIFF

WP115Af  First-Year Writing: Rhetoric, Writing, Social Change  Focuses on active reading, rhetorical analysis, and effective writing for different audiences—including the Colby community. In addition to three formal essays, there is a multi-part writing project in which each student identifies a problem in the Colby community and comes up with a realistic solution to that problem. Each week, we focus on a different aspect of college-level academic writing (e.g., paragraph development, sentence-level editing, analyzing research sources, making persuasive arguments, etc.) Readings are diverse and include essays such as Swift’s "A Modest Proposal," New York Times articles on current events, videos, and scholarly writing on rhetoric, identity, and literacy. Previously listed as English 115. Four credit hours. W1. SHERIFF

WP115Bf  First-Year Writing: Truths and Fictions  Poem. Short Story. Essay. As we read materials from these domains, we will ask what kinds of truths fiction can tell and what sorts of fictions may pass as truth. Ongoing and sustained focus on writing forms the backbone of the course. Closely tied to the readings, frequent writing assignments—formal, informal, and creative—are directed toward developing critical thinking, persuasive argumentation, and a mastery of grammar and style. Previously listed as English 115. Four credit hours. W1. BARRETT

WP115Cfs  First-Year Writing: Reimagining the Essay  Reconsiders the essay's potential for self-expression and analytical argumentation. Students read powerful essays of the past 70 years, write five essays, and reimagine their relationship to the genre. Of particular emphasis are clarity of expression, development of ideas, logical organization, and effective and correct use of research to support claims—both to prepare for future writing assignments and to appreciate the form as a means to express ideas complexly, gracefully, and persuasively. Previously listed as English 115. Four credit hours. W1. KETNER

WP115Ds  First-Year Writing: Food for Thought  We will examine our cultural relationships with food through both canonical and contemporary food writing. Possible tangents include intersections with environmental literature, questions concerning sustainable consumption, and the industrialization of organic food. Previously listed as English 115. Four credit hours. W1. STOKES
WP115Es  First-Year Writing: Writing through the Multicultural Lens  We will use the theme of multiculturalism/multilingualism as our framework to analyze a multitude of non-fictional texts that are composed by writers from a variety of cultural/linguistic backgrounds. The primary goal is to encourage students to question, interrogate, and challenge the stereotypes that have prevailed in the news and social media, aiming to foster cross-cultural communication. Students will write four papers that center around a topic of their choice. Students from underrepresented contexts, domestically and globally, as well as those with a functional knowledge of an additional language(s) are especially welcome.  

Four credit hours.  W1.  GHERWASH

WP120As  Language, Thought, and Writing: Literary Conversations  Individual works of literature take part in a larger literary conversation that transcends time and space. Writers join the conversation by replicating existing literary forms and conventions. They also respond to perennial themes that have sparked writers' imaginations. Literary scholars also engage in ongoing conversations about the purpose and meaning of literary texts. We will enter these conversations by reading, writing about, and discussing literary texts. We will have regular opportunities to respond creatively and analytically, in speech and writing, to some amazing poems, plays, and novels. Previously listed as English 120.  

Four credit hours.  W1.  KETNER

WP151Af  Reading and Writing about Literature: Gothic Literature  We will trace the origins of the Gothic in literature and explore the human appetite for the sublime and the supernatural, reading poetry, short stories, and novel-length works. Previously listed as English 151.  

Four credit hours.  W1.  STOKES