

Colby Writing Program

Guidelines for Upper-Level, Writing-Intensive Courses

W2 Common Understandings

Upper-level, writing-intensive courses teach, not just assign, writing and research practices appropriate to a particular discipline or field of study. W2 courses build on the W1 student learning outcomes and common understandings. For pedagogical reasons, the recommended course cap is 18 students.

At a minimum, W2 courses will:

1. Introduce students to the stylistic, research, argument, and genre conventions of the discipline(s)/field(s). Total word count or pages required will vary by discipline/field.
2. Use some class time for writing instruction.
3. Provide some “scaffolding” to give students practice with essential steps in the writing process. (e.g., drafts, annotated bibliographies, pre-writing, topic proposals, outlines, brainstorming, methods, or discussion sections.)
4. Have students practice revision and learn to incorporate faculty feedback on their writing.
5. Include writing-related goals on the syllabus and provide guidelines for major assignments.

W3 Common Understandings

W3 courses increase students’ understanding of the purposes, forms, and conventions of communication in a field of study. W3 writing-intensive experiences provide practice in advanced writing and research and build on the goals and understandings for W1 and, normally, W2 courses. Some departments and programs may structure W3s as in-depth independent projects, group projects, or performance/art pieces accompanied by a substantial written component. For pedagogical reasons, the recommended course cap is 18 students.