Saint Xavier University
Writing Program

Information Booklet

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The Saint Xavier University Writing Program Mission Statement

The purpose of the Saint Xavier University Writing Program is to support the mission of the University and its General Education Core Curriculum by helping students learn how to write, read, and research effectively.

The Saint Xavier University Writing Program

The Saint Xavier University Writing Program consists of four courses designed and offered by the Department of English and Foreign Languages and managed by the Director of the Writing Program.

1. English 100: Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric
2. English 101: Critical Thinking and Writing
3. English 102: Research and Writing
4. English 150: Honors English

Assumptions about Teaching and Learning the Art of Writing in College

Many misconceptions exist about the teaching of writing. One of the most powerful of these is the belief that introductory writing courses are strictly “skills” courses where students are taught how to write correctly and clearly so that when they take more advanced course work or join the workplace they will be able to communicate their ideas effectively.

But it would be misleading for us to teach writing as if the ideas "writ" do not matter. It would also be misleading to teach writing as if it were an activity that takes place outside the social and affective realms. Students best learn to think and write when they are able to find personal and public significance in what they think and in what they write. They will come to value correctness and clarity when they value their ideas and their readers.

Therefore, it should be our responsibility to promote the writing classroom as a place where students attempt to assert their individuality and achieve cooperation through the use of language, where writing is not just a skill to be learned and applied neutrally to knowledge, but a reflection of students’ developing understanding of what it means to think and write effectively in response to the beliefs, experiences, and arguments of others in and outside of the classroom.

In the Saint Xavier University Writing Program, the use of language to discover, evaluate, and communicate knowledge should be valued for its ability to aid inquiry and to share knowledge honestly and precisely. This ability is further dependent upon the promotion and practice of certain critical attitudes, including hope, honesty, humility, courage, consideration, and perseverance. When students understand how their attitudes toward reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking affect their abilities to learn in these and other areas, they have a better chance of developing more fully as readers, writers, speakers, listeners, thinkers, and, it follows, as scholars and citizens.
Saint Xavier University Writing Program Course Descriptions

English 100: Reading, Writing, and Rhetoric (3)

An elective course designed for students who wish additional help in reading, writing, and rhetorical analysis.

English 101: Critical Thinking and Writing (3)

Application of the principles of clear thinking and effective writing to expository and argumentative essays. Must be passed with a grade of C or better.

English 102: Research and Writing (3)

Prerequisite: English 101 with a C or better.
A continuation of English 101 but including training in writing documented research papers. Each instructor may choose a topic and assign selected readings, which provide the subject matter for student writing. Must be passed with a grade of C or better.

English 150: Honors English (3)

Prerequisite: Invitation by the department based on ACT scores.
Reading, discussion, writing and training in the process of documented research. Instructor will choose a topic and assign selected readings, which provide the subject matter for student writing. Fulfills both English 101 and 102 requirements.
Saint Xavier University Writing Program Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the required courses in writing at Saint Xavier University, students should have developed and demonstrated acceptable competency in the following areas.

1. Understanding the values of reading, writing, and critical thinking in the University community
2. Understanding rhetoric
3. Reading actively, critically, and responsibly
4. Understanding writing as a process
5. Writing clearly and effectively
6. Thinking critically
7. Understanding the formal conventions of various essay genres, paragraphs, sentences, and word usage
8. Developing an awareness of language
9. Conducting primary and secondary research
10. Understanding the responsibilities associated with citing and documenting sources

While these areas are the primary and initial concern of the SXU Writing Program, each of these learning objectives demand continual reinforcement in other courses throughout the University curriculum.
Descriptions of Learning Objectives

1. **Understanding the values of reading, writing, and critical thinking in the University community** Students should recognize the role reading, writing, and thinking play in the University, as well as the significance of such intellectual virtues as humility, courage, honesty, perseverance, hopefulness, consideration, and civility.

2. **Understanding rhetoric** Students should be introduced to rhetoric and understand the dramatic and situational nature of communication. Understood as the art of discovering, evaluating, and communicating knowledge in response to the ideas of others, rhetoric reminds us that writing is the means, not the end of communication, the evidence of a writer’s desire to affect a particular audience through crafted prose for a specific purpose.

3. **Reading actively, critically, and responsibly** Students should learn to analyze the writing of others, noting focus, arrangement, logical development, vocabulary, and style. Students should learn the difference between reading information and reading literary art. Students should also learn to acknowledge how their experiences and attitudes limit, enable, and determine their responses to texts.

4. **Understanding writing as a process** Students should learn writing as a process of various problem-solving tasks, including planning, discovering, drafting, revising, and editing. Students should also learn that this process is situational: different purposes and audiences for writing demand distinct writing processes and presentation formats.

5. **Writing clearly and effectively** Students should learn to see writing as an act of communication rather than solely an act of private expression. They should learn about the issues and responsibilities entailed in composing concise, vivid, and coherent prose for a general readership and specific audiences.

6. **Thinking critically** Students should learn critical thinking as an active, purposeful, and organized process that we use to make sense of the world. They should learn to evaluate the quality of their ideas as well as the ideas of others.

7. **Understanding the formal conventions of various essay genres, paragraphs, sentences, and word usage** Students should learn the basic textual conventions of academic writing, including the personal essay, expository writing, analysis, and argument, as well as understand the need to fulfill readers' expectations about focus, organization, development, and voice in each. Students should learn the conventional forms and functions of paragraphs. Students should also develop the ability to use various sentence patterns and to edit for correctness, variety, and correct usage.

8. **Developing an awareness of language** Students should learn how language is a value-laden tool for discovering and communicating ideas. Students should recognize how a language-user is always a language-chooser who promotes or inhibits (consciously or not) further thinking, communication, and action.

9. **Conducting primary and secondary research** Students should learn, through research and through an introduction to the Library's principal resources, to seek out and consider facts and opinions beyond their own experiences and knowledge. They should learn the difference between primary and secondary evidence. They should also be introduced to the fundamentals of both deductive and inductive analysis and presentation of source materials.
10. Understanding the responsibilities associated with citing and documenting sources
Students should learn to incorporate research into their own writing by using sources sparingly, representing them accurately, and acknowledging them carefully. They should learn the differences between paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting sources. They should also learn the appropriate formats for parenthetical documentation and works cited pages.
Coordination of Learning Objectives for English 100, 101, 102, and 150

To be emphasized in English 100 and English 101

1. Understanding the values of reading, writing, and critical thinking in the University community
2. Understanding rhetoric
3. Reading actively, critically, and responsibly
4. Understanding writing as a process
5. Writing clearly and effectively
6. Thinking critically
7. Understanding the formal conventions of various essay genres, paragraphs, sentence, and word usage
8. Developing an awareness of language

To be emphasized in English 102 and English 150

1. Understanding the values of reading, writing, and critical thinking in the University community
2. Understanding rhetoric
3. Reading actively, critically, and responsibly
4. Understanding writing as a process
5. Writing clearly and effectively
6. Thinking critically
7. Understanding the formal conventions of various essay genres, paragraphs, sentence, and word usage
8. Developing an awareness of language
9. Conducting primary and secondary research
10. Understanding the responsibilities associated with citing and documenting sources
Differences in Emphasis and Rigor in English 100 and 101

While the learning objectives in English 100 and English 101 are identical, we should expect to focus student learning in different ways. For example, students in English 100 will probably need more time to work on essay, paragraph, and sentence development. Formal essay assignments in English 100 should also be shorter, two to three typed pages instead of the three to four page assignments in English 101. And because English 100 is considered a developmental course for students who wish additional help in reading, writing, and rhetorical analysis, we should provide students with a variety of short integrated lessons and in-class activities to extend their learning and confidence in these three areas. If we can create a language-rich environment for students who may feel unfamiliar and uncomfortable in English studies, a place where they experience reading and writing and rhetoric as personally engaging experiences, we have a better chance at helping them understand the value and purpose of these activities in their lives in and out of school.

In English 101, we should expect students to feel more confident about their abilities to read, write, and think well. Students in this course should write longer essays, but like English 100, they should have multiple opportunities to revise and edit their work in response to our comments. In English 101 particularly, we should also emphasize reading and writing assignments that help students develop their critical thinking skills, especially as those strategies promote critical thinking as “thinking about thinking” or a systematic method for evaluating the quality of ideas.