



ENGL 1004

Introduction to Academic Writing

What is FYW? UConn's First-Year Writing courses introduce students to the work of college writing, which includes posing questions, developing sustained intellectual projects, and generating knowledge that invites engagement with wide and varied audiences. Writing, here, is project-building—a practice of making something, composing—and the courses reflect this attention to purposeful engagement and meaningful contribution. First-Year Writing seminars foreground collaborative, student-driven inquiry developed in the context of a shared course investigation. Students work on projects in which they select and define places where they might advance the class conversation across various media. UConn's First-Year Writing (FYW) pedagogy is grounded in active learning and universal design for learning.

What is ENGL 1004? ENGL 1004 helps students build their confidence in writing at the college level and prepare them for the approaches to writing they will encounter in ENGL 1007. ENGL 1004 is designed to provide students time, instructor support, and small classes to reach these learning objectives. In 1004, students spend time developing and reinforcing the habits of practice central to ENGL 1007. Although ENGL 1004 and 1007 explore the same habits of practice, 1004 seminars tend to enact these practices one at a time, through smaller, more frequent writing projects. Meanwhile, 1007 courses tend to work cumulatively toward more complex projects that connect two or more habits of practice. ENGL 1004 provides flexibility for instructors to focus on particular ENGL 1007 components and design their teaching according to the needs of their individual students. Instructors scaffold the foundational concepts that build toward the 1007 Habits of Practice.

Inquiry and Project

We bring students into the course by shaping an **inquiry** we can investigate together. More than a topic or theme, an inquiry opens a territory that students must navigate and map individually and as part of a community of explorers. The framing questions for an ENGL 1004 course tend to be large, not easily rendered as sides in an argument one might win or lose. The inquiry itself is text-driven and generative, fostering curiosity, eliciting more questions and enabling student-driven lines of thought to take shape.

A **project** emerges from sustained intellectual engagement with complex texts and ideas. To build projects, students interact with a range of texts and connect them to their own experiences, knowledge, interests, and contexts. Each of the major projects presents an opportunity for students to enlarge their frames of reference and to work toward more complex and nuanced responses to others' work through the texts they generate.

Learning Objectives

- Practice composing and writing as acts of inquiry and discovery.
- Practice composition as multimodal and complex—more than just the written word.
- Recognize yourself as a writer who can enter and contribute to academic and public conversations.
- Discover, engage with, and use the texts of others in ethical and meaningful ways.
- Compose rhetorically, with an audience in mind.
- Reflect on and practice various writing modes, genres, and processes, including drafting and revision.

- Develop your strengths in information, digital, and media literacies.
- Contribute to hands-on, collaborative studio practices within a composition process.

Core Components

1004 courses students gain confidence through the following core components:

1. **COURSE INQUIRY**—a central question that drives the intellectual work of the writing/composing.
2. **STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING**—class sessions that focus on students' own writing through workshoping, conferencing, and composing activities.
3. **MULTIMODAL COMPOSITION**—students work in multiple modes (e.g., with combinations of images, sound, text, etc.) across diverse technologies as ways of writing.
4. **ACTIVE READING**—reading practices that center various forms of written engagement and collaborative meaning making.
5. **REFLECTIVE WRITING**—students write to reflect on their engagement with texts, composing practices, and personal experiences.
6. **REVISION PRACTICES**—students compose over multiple drafts and substantially revise their work in response to peer and instructor feedback.

Of these core components, the course inquiry must be described on the syllabus. References to the other components may be woven into the course materials to help define the work of the course.

Habits of Practice

The Habits of Practice for ENGL 1004 describe activities of writing and composing, provide thresholds for making thinking visible, and highlight meaningful features of the texts we make. ENGL 1004 provides a space for students to begin to familiarize themselves with habits of practice that they will enlarge, improve, and enhance in ENGL 1007.

- COLLECTING & CURATING
- ENGAGING
- CONTEXTUALIZING
- THEORIZING
- CIRCULATING

Core Components

Course inquiry

A course inquiry includes questions that frame readings and assignments; it also provides enough specificity or focus to enable academic and perhaps public contributions to the questions, not just open-ended consideration or writing “about” topics. A course inquiry is **cross-disciplinary**—the readings and assignments invite inquiry and work that reflects concerns, approaches, and vocabulary from disciplines beyond just English. Course inquiries can have subtopics and digressions. There’s room for experiment and play.

Student-centered learning

The FYW classroom is a working space for active and accessible learning, play, iteration, and real-time peer and instructor feedback. Class sessions should focus on students’ own writing through composing activities, project scaffolding, workshopping, conferencing, and engaged seminar discussions and activities.

Multimodal composition

Multimodal assignments develop functional digital literacy and provide opportunities to compose in multiple modes (e.g., with combinations of images, sound, text, etc.) across diverse technologies as ways of writing. Students practice rhetorical strategies for composing through a variety of digital and analog forms. **We want students to be makers and not just consumers of digital and social texts.**

Active reading

Attending to the practice of reading, as writing’s counterpart in the construction of meaning, is central to 1004. Students should interact with texts that are complex and nuanced, that offer different perspectives and can be put to use in different ways. Active reading entails reading with purpose and is informed by affordances of the different genres and media of the course texts. Digital annotation strategies and other reading strategies can be introduced to help students simultaneously produce meaning through the practices of reading and writing. Instructors should select active reading strategies that are relevant to their course goals and that best support the course’s projects. Regardless of how students interact with text, writing is presented and modeled as a way for students to make sense of what they read.

Reflective writing

Reflective writing—characterizing, reconsidering, or qualifying one’s work—**fosters awareness and metacognition about writing and writing processes**. Reflective writing in FYW seminars is an ongoing process and need not be graded for end-of-term. Reflective forms include process notes, in-class reflections on (or presentations of) one’s project, other kinds of metatexts, including the placing of one’s work within the context of others’ work, introductory texts, remixes, etc.

1004 courses should include low-stakes (ungraded) writing. Sometimes the purpose of writing is simply to practice, brainstorm, or learn in a low-stakes environment that builds confidence as writers and contributors to a writing community. We recommend that students do some writing or composing in most class sessions.

Revision practices

Instructors should assign substantial writing throughout the course—typically across at least three major projects. Within these major projects, students produce writing of various modes and genres that goes through cycles of feedback and revision. Feedback includes the comments an instructor makes on each draft as well as feedback and input students provide for each other and through collaborative work. Writing processes are complex and recursive, and students need to be able to return to projects (usually after receiving feedback) and rethink their aims, ideas, and rhetorical choices. This most often happens through multiple drafts for major assignments. Leave plenty of time between drafts and build class sessions around the sharing and discussion of in-process drafts.

Accessibility and Inclusion

We recognize the strength that comes from diverse embodiments (in terms of race, gender, sexuality, language, ability, and experience) while actively working against structural inequalities that create systems of privilege. Adopting a Universal Design for Learning approach to writing and composing improves access and inclusion for all students because UD favors flexible negotiation of learning spaces over rigid standards. In our attention to rhetorical flexibility, we foreground audience, use, efficacy, and impact. Students in FYW contribute to and make use of linguistic, cultural, and intellectual resources.

Information, Digital, and Media Literacy

IDML, an explicit component of UConn’s Common Curriculum requirements, addresses making, not just receiving, knowledge and includes direct instruction in some elements of library research and attention to digital and media literacy.

In ENGL 1004, students engage with sources across modalities and genres. They focus on analyzing texts in the context of information literacy, and engage in finding, evaluating, and using research. Students develop active-reading skills to determine the rhetorical purpose of a variety of texts, to prepare them for the kinds of research they will do in ENGL 1007.