

## **Principles and Goals of the Writing and Rhetoric Requirement**

The new Writing and Rhetoric requirement approved by the Faculty Senate in May 2001 includes courses at three levels. The first-level course, taken in the first year, can be satisfied by courses in PWR or SLE; the curriculum emphasizes analysis and research-based argument. The second-level course is a writing and oral/multimedia presentation course that students should complete by the end of the sophomore year and that will be taught by both the Program in Writing and Rhetoric and other programs and departments. The third-level course is a Writing in the Major course taught in each major.

This new set of required courses provides a coordinated approach responsive to how students mature as writers, researchers, and presenters during their undergraduate years. At each level, students will be given opportunities to develop greater sophistication in conducting inquiry and producing scholarly work in progressively more specific disciplinary contexts.

The Writing and Rhetoric Requirement Governance Board oversees the coherence of the three levels of the program and reviews all course proposals to ensure adherence to the guidelines below.

### **Guidelines for Writing and Rhetoric Requirement Courses**

The ability to communicate clearly, effectively, and eloquently is a cornerstone of university education. The Writing and Rhetoric Requirement is dedicated to enabling Stanford students to achieve this goal by guiding them in exploring and understanding the complex nature of all communicative acts, by recognizing the strengths and weaknesses that all students bring to writing and speaking tasks, and by systematically building on their strengths. Because the media of communication are increasingly intertwined, the Writing and Rhetoric Requirement focuses not only on producing effective written texts but also on spoken and multimedia texts. Toward these ends,

**WR 1** courses focus on engaging students in carrying out significant research that leads to polished and persuasive research-based argument. These courses

- carry 4 units of credit.
- make writing assignments in which students carry out increasingly sophisticated forms of rhetorical and contextual analysis, taking into account differences in audience, purpose, and genre.
- engage students in conducting research drawing on the University's rich resources and in identifying, evaluating, and using a range of primary and secondary sources in support of their own research-based arguments.
- offer students an opportunity to write for a range of audiences and in several genres.

- offer students opportunities for substantive revision of their own work focusing on content, organization, and style as well as for frequent peer review of the work of their colleagues.
- provide ample opportunity for individual conferences on writing and for reflection on writing and writing development.

**WR 2** courses aim to develop further students' skills in writing and, increasingly, in oral and multimedia presentation, emphasizing the ongoing development of content, organization, and style. These courses

- carry at least 3 units of credit.
- give writing and oral presentation assignments appropriate to students who have completed the first-level requirement.
- emphasize students' development of clear, effective, and appropriate written and oral presentations.
- offer students consistent opportunities for practice and revision of written assignments and oral presentations, with feedback and coaching provided through such means as videotaping and peer review.
- give students opportunities to present the results of scholarly inquiry in varying forms, including writing and speaking.

Further, it is recommended that WR 2 courses:

- offer students opportunities to work collaboratively on presentations
- incorporate peer review into the students' process of preparing and revising written assignments and oral presentations
- explore rhetorical distinctions among presentations in various forms (e.g., in print, on the web, before a live audience)

**Writing in the Major** courses provide students with focused opportunities to develop writing skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to write effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles. These courses

- carry at least three units of credit
- require a substantial amount of writing, scheduled to take place at regular intervals throughout the quarter
- provide rigorous attention to the process of rewriting, with feedback and coaching
- devote attention to the standards of writing excellence in the discipline
- incorporate writing instruction into the content of the course
- are situated in the overall curriculum of the major to contribute most effectively to students' training in the discipline.