Criteria for Communication-A Courses
Originally approved: November 21, 1994
Update approved: June 25, 2012

Purpose

The first course is to be a basic course in communication skills at the college level, developing student abilities in writing and public speaking, for both exposition and argumentation. As such, the course is to serve as a general foundation in the central skills and conventions required for student success in a variety of subsequent course work, as well as in careers after college.

Objectives

The course will advance basic skills in:

- The four modes of literacy: writing, speaking, reading & listening, with special emphasis on writing
- Critical thinking
- Information-seeking skills and strategies

These skills should be taught through continuous practice in the process of writing and speaking. Although the items listed below suggest a sequence, many or all of them are simultaneously learned in this process. Courses which satisfy the new University requirement must advance student skills in the following areas:

- **Planning:**
  Selecting, narrowing, and focusing topics
  Identifying and analyzing audience information needs
  Generating and organizing ideas
  Comprehending and analyzing texts

- **Drafting:**
  Learning structures of exposition and argument & the use of evidence
  Organizing and developing paragraphs, papers, and speeches
  Adapting writing and speaking for intended audiences
  Learning conventions of academic writing
  Mastering elements of grammar, usage, and style
  Preparing speeches for oral delivery
  Citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, and compiling accurate bibliographies

- **Revising:**
  Developing critical skills for reading and listening -- in review of peer writing/speaking
  Revising and editing essays and speeches -- for spelling, punctuation, grammar, style, organization, and logic
  Critiquing assigned readings and speeches delivered outside class
Information-Seeking Skills and Strategies:
Develop and adapt information seeking strategies in order to access information effectively
Evaluate information retrieved and select information sources appropriate to the particular
research need information

Requirements

- Frequent assignments in writing and speaking totaling 25-30 pages of clear, revised prose,
  including at least one researched essay and several prepared oral presentations, including one
  researched speech; completion of the information component developed in conjunction with the
  campus library user education program.

- "Students required by their school/college to complete two freshman-level courses shall
  complete both courses before earning 45 credits; students required to take one freshman-level
  course shall complete the course during the freshman year and the remaining credits later as
  prescribed by the school/college" (Faculty Document 1065).

Assessment

There will be normal evaluations of student work by individual instructors. In addition, each course
proposal shall include an assessment plan designed to demonstrate that the course meets the objectives
stated above.

Consistent with the University General Education Assessment Plan (first approved in May 2008),
student learning with respect to the broad learning outcomes for Comm A courses will also be assessed
at the program level.

Format

Class size should be held to 20 or fewer students; 2-3 contact hours per week (L & S policy
currently requires 3 credits).

Instructors

Faculty, academic staff, experienced TAs.