I. Writing Plan Cover Page

Date Mon 10th January 2017


Sociology

WEC Unit Name

Sociology

Department

CLA

Teresa Gowan

College

WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)

Associate Professor

tgowan@umn.edu

Title

Email

612-626-1863

Phone

Writing Plan ratified by Faculty

Note: This section needs to be completed regardless of Writing Plan edition.

Date: Dec 7th/8th 2017

If Vote: 28 / 32

# yes # total

Process by which Writing Plan was ratified within unit (vote, consensus, other- please explain):
The vote was taken through an online form which contained a summary preamble and a pdf of the 3rd Writing Plan. See screenshot on following page.

28 out of 28 voted to approve the plan. 6 did not vote. 7 of the 34 faculty were on leave.

A few faculty used the comments option to add the following feedback to the vote:

- great!
- Teresa and Jack, and their WEC work, have been really helpful for me and for my undergrads. These students need a lot of writing help, and I am not trained in teaching them how to write, so this has been VERY useful.
- I fully endorse this proposal. The more help we can give to our students in this domain, the better.
- We probably need a refresher on the writing styles.
- thank you for working on this Teresa and Jack (and everyone else!)
Screenshot of final vote.

Vote for the revised WFC writing plan

28 responses

Yes, I support the plan
No, I do not support the plan

100%

Name

28 responses

Micheala Phelps
Jack Alnquist
II. **Unit Profile: Sociology**

Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty:

- 16 Professors
- 11 Associate Professors
- 7 Assistant Professors
- **34** Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major(s)</th>
<th>Total # students enrolled in major as of Fall 2017</th>
<th>Total # students graduating with major Spring 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BA</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BA with emphasis in Law, Crime and Deviance</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BS with emphasis in Health Care and Careers</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BS with emphasis in Law, Crime and Deviance (including those with the additional emphases below)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BS with emphasis in Organization/Business/Non-Prof</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BS with emphasis in Policy Analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology BS with Quantitative Emphasis</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>523</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WEC Implementation Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEC Implementation Process</th>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th># participated</th>
<th># invited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultations in SOC 1001 (course visits; planning sessions with instructors and TAs)</td>
<td>Spring 2016 – Spring 2017</td>
<td>3 instructors; 9 TAs; ~300 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations in SOC 3801 (course visits; planning sessions with instructors and TAs)</td>
<td>Spring 2016 – Summer 2017</td>
<td>2 instructors; 7 TAs; ~200 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations in SOC 4966W (course visits; planning sessions with instructors and TAs)</td>
<td>Spring 2016 – Fall 2016</td>
<td>1 instructor; 1 TA; ~80 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultations in Writing Intensive courses (course visits; planning sessions with instructors and TAs)</td>
<td>Spring 2016 – Spring 2017</td>
<td>3 instructors; 3 TAs; ~150 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching lunches in sociology</td>
<td>Spring 2016 – Spring 2017</td>
<td>~12 sociology faculty, ~20 sociology graduate students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA availability for consultations with instructors and TAs in other sociology courses</td>
<td>Spring 2016 – Spring 2017</td>
<td>4 faculty members; 8 teaching assistants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty liason presents IRC and discusses with faculty at full meeting</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>29 faculty members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing, consulting, piloting and developing the SOC WEC instructional resource collection (IRC)</td>
<td>Spring and Fall 2017</td>
<td>The faculty liason plus 4 other faculty One WI class intensive piloting (~20 students). Extensive use of IRC plus liason-led workshop in Schurman WI course (~60) Fall 2017. No of student impacted less clear once faculty are using IRC independently.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Signature Page

Signatures needed regardless of Writing Plan edition. Please fill in the gray areas on this form.

If this page is submitted as a hard copy, and electronic signatures were obtained, please include a print out of the electronic signature chain here.

WEC Faculty Liaison

Teresa Gowan

WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)

Signature

Associate Professor

Title

12/12/17

Date

Department Head/Chair

Douglas Hartmann

Print Name

Signature

Professor and Chair

Title

12/12/17

Date

Associate Dean

Penny Edgell

Print Name

Signature

Professor of Sociology and Associate Dean

Title

12/12/17

Date
IV. Writing Plan Narrative, 3rd Edition

Introductory Summary:
Briefly describe the reason(s) this unit (department, school, college) become involved in the WEC project, the key findings that resulted from the process of developing this plan, and the implementation activities that are proposed in this Writing Plan, with particular attention to the following questions: what is new in this 3rd edition of the Writing Plan? What, if any, key changes have been made to the 2nd edition? What key implementation activities are proposed in this edition of the Writing Plan? (1 page maximum)

This is the third Writing Plan for the Department of Sociology. This edition of the plan was developed in fall 2017 academic year and builds on our first phase research on student needs and skills conducted, and on our second phase experiences developing and promoting a transparent and flexible set of sociological writing resources for students, instructors, and assistants.

In terms of our goals, we have made only minimal changes to the second edition. As we said in the second Writing Plan: “First and foremost, we want to address directly the frustration and confusion expressed by many of our undergraduates about mixed messages and lack of clarity about writing expectations, models, genres, and standards. This is why we are encouraging targeted, direct education and communication with undergraduates at key points in the major. In order to achieve this primary goal, we simultaneously need to energetically foster a more coherent common language about expectations, models, and genres between faculty, graduate students, and contingent faculty. By focusing on curriculum development and working closely with many members of the department community, we expect that this phase of the sociology WEC process will seed a sustainable enhancement in our shared teaching culture.”

Where there is some shift is around our key implementation activities. As described in more detail in Section 5, we have developed a substantial WEC instructional resource collection (IRC), designed to simplify and synthesise the Desired Writing Abilities articulated by the faculty. Much of our work over the last 18 months has been on the development and testing of these curricular resources, with the collaboration of faculty from diverse orientations and specialties within sociology. In the third phase our aim is to make the IRC as accessible as possible to faculty, assistants, and students, using the most appropriate online technologies, supplemented by regular hands-on meetings with instructors and assistants to assess the accessibility and usefulness of different elements. We aim to extend the materials to cover research question and thesis development in more detail, and to modify all or any of the materials based on solicited feedback via personal contact and yearly online surveys. We will continue our successful series of teaching lunches (one per semester), which do much to foster a common language around writing. The aim is not to impose any particular model on the faculty and instructors, but to encourage us all to talk to students in similar terms about similar kinds of writing issues. Through consultation across the department we have found much agreement about student weaknesses and what faculty want from student writing. We are therefore optimistic that the writing modes and “paper style” models we have developed express broad consensus rather than contention.

We have had considerable success working with a skilled (ABD) RA, who have developed several specific workshops on question and thesis development for different core classes, and collaborated with the liaison to develop and
disseminate the IRC in general. Fortunately, we will be able to employ this RA again in the upcoming semesters, giving a vital continuity to the Sociology WEC team. Depending on his employment situation, it is possible that we can publish some of the work we have produced as a WEC team within a journal such as Teaching Sociology.

Section 1: DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC WRITING CHARACTERISTICS
What characterizes academic and professional communication in this discipline?

☒ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☐ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)

While there have not been substantial revisions to this section of the writing plan, our emphasis has been to distill forms of sociological communication into simplified, legible “modes of writing” and “paper styles” for students via the WEC instructional resource collection (IRC). During the third phase we will be placing more emphasis on developing and promoting sample rubrics which directly intersect with the IRC terminology, encouraging instructors to reduce student confusion by using similar language to explain similar kinds of assignments.

Section 2: DESIRED WRITING ABILITIES
With which writing abilities should students in this unit’s major(s) graduate?

☒ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☐ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)

As suggested above, we have simplified and distilled the writing abilities generated by the faculty into:
1. Different writing modes: descriptive/interpretive, and analytic.
2. Different “paper styles”: Applying the Sociological Imagination, Developing a Sociological Question, Case Studies, and Empirical Tests. These IRC resources employ paper style to explain and contextualize key desired writing abilities such “Identifies patterns found in qualitative data accurately and succinctly” or “Organizes points clearly and persuasively with logical paragraph structure.” See below for more detail.

Section 3: INTEGRATION OF WRITING INTO UNIT’S UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM
How is writing instruction currently positioned in this unit’s undergraduate curriculum (or curricula)? What, if any, course sequencing issues impede an intentional integration of relevant, developmentally appropriate writing instruction?

☒ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☐ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)

Given that sociology is a unit which welcomes a large number of transfer students, it is not possible for us to structure the major with a strong developmental character. However certain core classes, which should be taken in chronological order, introduce different “paper styles”: 
The 1000 level Introduction to Sociology assignments work on "Applying the Sociological Imagination," while instructors of SOC 3801 Sociological Research Methods can use "Developing a Sociological Question" to help students formulate a research proposal. Statistics classes, the various writing intensive classes (WI) and SOC 496W, the Major-Project Seminar all give the students opportunities to develop "Case Studies" and/or "Empirical Tests." These skills build on each other, and the more that instructors and assistants emphasise the common language developed in the IRC, the better students will be able to understand the progression through these different levels of skill acquisition.

In Spring 2017, the WEC team started to work with both faculty and TAs to develop and disseminate these models, and the liaison introduced them to the full faculty. Several faculty who had not previously participated showed interest in the materials and process, and some of them have started to work with them. There is however still much to do to reach more instructors and students and thus consolidate a stronger common language and culture around teaching student writing in this department. We plan to use the third phase to consolidate and refine the IRC materials and the sample rubrics (the latter still in development) through more in-class workshops, short visits to faculty meetings, and continued outreach to faculty and instructors.

Section 4: ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WRITING
What concerns, if any, have unit faculty and undergraduate students voiced about grading practices?

Please include a menu of criteria extrapolated from the list of Desired Writing Abilities provided in Section II of this plan. (This menu can be offered to faculty/instructors for selective adaptation and will function as a starting point in the WEC Project’s longitudinal rating process.).

☒ There have not been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan.
☐ There have been substantial revisions to this section of the Writing Plan. (Discuss these explicitly.)

The ratings criteria were considered satisfactory and useful at the last ratings exercise (2017). The ratings showed continued strength in "addressing a lay audience," which makes sense given our department’s emphasis on outreach to the public and rendering sociological knowledge accessible -- what we call “public sociology." We saw slight improvements on several core Desired Writing Abilities: "Conveys cases, examples and contexts with adequate depth," "Identifies patterns found in qualitative data accurately and succinctly," "Organizes points clearly and persuasively with logical paragraph structure.” However all these abilities still hovered below “2” or satisfactory, indicating much work to be done. As we have explained, we see better paper organisation and thesis development as important keys to producing these writing characteristics, and most of the faculty seem to agree with us on this. These results encourage us to continue working to give students more skill and confidence in thesis development and generally in structuring, editing, and restructuring their writing.

Section 5: SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS, including REQUESTED SUPPORT, RELATION TO PREVIOUS IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES, and SUSTAINABILITY PLANS
What does the unit plan to implement during the period covered by this plan? What forms of instructional support does this unit request to help implement proposed changes? What are the expected outcomes of named support?

How do the implementation plans of the 3rd edition Writing Plan relate to implementation activities from the 1st and
2nd edition Writing Plans? What has been successful? What was not successful? How do implementation plans build on what was learned from the first year of implementation? How do implementation plans anticipate the ongoing application of this final edition Writing Plan?

How will the unit move toward ownership of the implementation process after the end of eligibility for WEC funding? When needed, what will be sources of funding and resource support? How will ongoing evaluation and improvement of the Writing Plan take place?

The Overall Goal for Sociology’s 3rd Writing Plan: To consolidate transparent and empowering writing cultures across the undergraduate curriculum, involving as many faculty and graduate students as possible.

The third writing plan aims to consolidate the developmental and outreach work of the second plan, while removing the monthly writing blog, which we did not feel had sufficient impact. The regular Teaching With Writing (TWW) tips from the Writing Centre already reach the faculty, and we suspect that generalised e-mail contact with ideas about teaching writing is not sufficiently effectual for reaching already overwhelmed instructors. Personal and face-to-face group outreach have been much more successful.

To meet our goal of consolidating transparent and empowering writing cultures, we propose to continue working on refining and promoting use of the instructional resource collection (IRC) for in-class exercises. As explained above, the IRC is aligned to our desired writing abilities, but simplifies and organizes these for better student comprehension.

Content of the IRC

The preamble to the instructor’s version of the IRC reads as follows: “This instructional resource collection (IRC) provides a set of resources to assist students with structure and organization for writing effective writing in sociology courses. Across the sociology curriculum, we have observed (and instructors have told us) that our students’ work usually contains at least some of the basic sociological insights we are looking for, but typically fails to situate these insights within a well-organized paper that provides a conceptual background, establishes the importance of the analysis, and links the work to broader social contexts. Students’ best sociological thinking is often obscured by muddy, undeveloped, aimless writing; their insights are often hidden amid poorly constructed sentences and paragraphs that are not well connected to one another and do not work together to point toward a coherent point or set of conclusions. As a first step toward improving the organization and structure of students’ writing in sociology courses, the IRC offers the following basic concepts and teaching strategies.

1 Suggestions and strategies oriented to the overall writing process, encouraging students to move beyond the rushed late-night “one-off” way of doing assignments by incorporating free writing, outlining, and editing into their process.

2 Graphic and textual explanations of sample “Paper Styles” for common assignment types

3 Graphic and textual explanations on paragraph design and good sentence structure, with editing exercises aimed at different elements of the writing (e.g. Eliminating Redundancy, Repetition and Filler; Creating Flow through Paragraphs; Strong Paragraph Structure etc.)
The "Paper Styles" introduced by the IRC

One of the key Desired Writing Abilities which students struggled the most with is “Organize a paper so that it flows logically, perhaps using section headings.” In our qualitative research with undergraduates during Phase 1, we found that assignments required or suggested several different organizational structures (or none at all), and that students were often mystified by which kind of structure to apply to different assignments. In many cases this led them to write papers which were very badly organized. The faculty agree that strong organization is central for successful mastery of many of the other Desired Abilities. We therefore have developed resources within the IRC which distinguish between two writing modes (called “genres” in the previous plan: descriptive/interpretive and analytical. The IRC then integrates use of these writing modes into “Paper Styles” with different suggested logics and structures:

1: Applying the Sociological Imagination
2: Developing a Sociological Question
3: Case Studies
4: Empirical Tests

See the Appendix for some examples of slides and narrative for instructors from the IRC.

Across all of these paper styles we are encouraging faculty to develop in-class paper development and editing practices which much improve the final results of assignments without adding extra stages of grading.

The IRC’s in-class editing exercises

A primary concern of our faculty is poor grammar and paragraph structure. The IRC presents various tools for in-class editing, from basic proofreading to sentence and paragraph structure, which are being employed at the current time (end of Fall 2017) in a few classes. (See the Appendix, example C, for a sense of what these tools look like.) We are working to popularise regular quality revision, which usually would take the form of students bringing a printout of an assignment before the due date for in-class editing (which can often be done in 20 min, depending on the kind of editing and the kind of assignment). This work helps students raise confusions about grammar and structure collectively, and has can greatly improve the quality of the writing, helping both students and graders.

The need for institutionalization of in-class exercises on question and thesis development, paper structure, and editing

Until now, in-class editing exercises have been primarily undertaken in the form of class visits from the liaison and grad RA. We will continue to do these when working with new faculty and instructors, but our intention is to get the department instructors to regularly use these kinds of exercises themselves, either drawing directly from the IRC or copying/modifying it for their own purposes.

At present the RA and liaison play a central role in gathering and sharing writing resources, and modeling effective ways to use them. Only by helping department members to regularize their own teaching writing practice will we be able to sustain the this work. For this reason, consolidation and institutionalization has to be our primary goal for the third phase.

Development of sample rubrics which incorporate the IRC language

We will add a collection of sample rubrics to the IRC, using the same terminology as the instructional slides. This will help instructors frame their assignments in ways broadly consistent with the language we have developed in the IRC,
aiding transparency and student comprehension across the curriculum. We already have a collection of faculty rubrics, and will be doing some consulting and pilot-work with a cross-section of faculty and instructors before launching the sample rubrics more publicly in fall 2019.

Summary of Goals for the Third Phase

1. Promotion and further development of the IRC both face-to-face and online
   a. We will work to make the IRC better known and used more widely. At the moment it is available as a set of slides with an accompanying instructor narrative on Google Drive, but we are experimenting with ways to make it even more accessible.
   b. We will integrate the material developed in our workshops on thesis and question development better into the IRC, also consulting with several faculty we have identified as particularly successful with teaching thesis development.
   c. We will add a collection of sample rubrics to the IRC, using the same terminology as the instructional slides.
   d. During at least one semester, the graduate RA will work intensively with statistics instructors on writing with statistics, and develop this element of the IRC to a higher level.

2. We will continue to present annual demonstrations to the faculty and the new teaching assistants.

3. We will continue outreach to core writing courses (Intro, Methods, Senior Capstone and WI courses), and any other instructors interested in using or modifying the IRC.

4. We will continue to offer our thematic teaching lunches every semester led by the liaisons and WEC staff. These do much to foster and consolidate department community around teaching writing.

Section 6: PROCESS USED TO CREATE THIS WRITING PLAN

How, and to what degree, were a substantial number of stakeholders in this unit (faculty members, instructors, affiliates, teaching assistants, undergraduates, others) engaged in providing, revising, and approving the content of this Writing Plan?

This is the third writing plan for the Department of Sociology. We began our involvement with the WEC program at the conclusion of the spring semester of 2013 with the collection of writing samples from key classes across our curriculum (specifically, our 1000-level Introduction to Sociology course, our 3000-level Methods courses, and our 4000-level Senior Projects course). The following fall semester marked the start of our broader departmental conversations about writing in the curriculum.

An online survey, designed and administered by the WEC staff, went out in September 2014 to our faculty, graduate instructors and teaching assistants, and undergraduate students. The survey allowed our department to compare experiences and expectations of writing held by faculty and graduate students with those held by our undergraduate students.

We discussed this information and have built upon it in subsequent faculty meetings. In the first (October 28, 2014), the faculty listed and discussed the characteristics we thought marked good writing in our discipline, and how these
related to specific abilities we wanted to see our majors develop and master by the time of graduation. In a series of meetings between the liaison and WEC’s Pamela Flash, this discussion was codified and developed into Sections 1 and 2 above. A later meeting of an ad-hoc departmental committee helped to translate these ideas into criteria for evaluation of student writing (Section 4).

The second large meeting (December 2, 2014) was scheduled to map the desired writing abilities to the curriculum. This meeting was somewhat more difficult and inconclusive. It became clear that our faculty are already incorporating elements of the desired writing abilities into their courses, but also that we are collectively doing so in many different ways. It also became clear that the “flatness” of our curriculum meant that we could not tie writing abilities to the curriculum in a highly structured way – at least without major changes to the structure of the program itself. As we have explained elsewhere, however, we have over the years formulated “Writing Modes” and “Paper Styles” designed to complement writing assignments at different levels, especially in department core courses.

During the 2014-15 year, as explained in the above sections, we focused on more in-depth research with our own students, using surveys and focus groups to understand student trajectories, but also to get to the heart of the difficulties in writing for sociology courses from the students’ own perspectives.

Our aim for the Second Writing Plan (Spring 15), was to start to develop, pilot, and implement various tools for creating more transparent and cohesive writing cultures in classes. We aimed to reducing student confusion and cultivate stronger skills, from thesis development to strong paragraph and sentence structure. All but 2 of the faculty voted to support the Second Plan.

The faculty liaison presented the instructional resource collection (IRC) to the faculty in April 2017. Since then several faculty have used and adapted the materials, but we still need to do much more quick and appealing outreach to our overworked faculty and graduate student instructors and assistants. We are currently experimenting with simpler web accessibility. As the vote shows, our faculty are strongly in support of the third writing plan as articulated in the previous sections.
V. WEC Research Assistant (RA) Request Form

☐ No RA Funding Requested

RAs assist faculty liaisons in the WEC Writing Plan implementation process. The specific duties of the RA are determined in coordination with the unit liaison and the WEC consultant, but should generally meet the following criteria: they are manageable in the time allotted, they are sufficient to their funding, and they have concrete goals and expectations (see below).

RA funding requests are made by appointment percent time (e.g., 25% FTE, 10% FTE, etc.). Appointment times can be split between two or more RAs when applicable (e.g., two 12.5% appointments for a total of 25% FTE request). Total funds (including fringe benefits when applicable) need to be calculated in advance by the liaison, usually in coordination with administrative personnel.

Please note that, outside of duties determined by the liaison, WEC RAs may be required to participate in specific WEC activities, such as meetings, Moodle discussion boards, and surveys.

RA Name (Use TBD for vacancies): TBD
RA Contact Information: email ______, phone ______
Period of appointment (Semester/Year to Semester/Year): Fall 2018 to Spring 2020
RA appointment percent time: 25%

Define in detail the tasks that the RA will be completing within the funding period:
The RA will work with the Liaison and as many faculty as possible to promote use of the instructional resource collection (IRC). The idea is that faculty will gradually take over the writing workshop units themselves and adapt them as they see fit, but we know from conversations with faculty that many of our instructors are excited to get some support, added direction and the modelling of some tried practices.

Further develop the IRC’s unit on question and thesis development in consultation with De Waard, Maier and other faculty. Give in-class workshops to those new to the IRC, and encourage and support others to do so through regular personal and email outreach. Develop and pilot (Spring 2018) and promote (Fall 2018) a packet of sample rubrics which directly intersect with the IRC terminology, encouraging instructors to reduce student confusion by using similar language to explain similar kinds of assignments.

Define deadlines as applicable (please note that all deadlines must be completed within the funding period):
Spring 2018
The RA will be mostly paid for by rollover funds (see budget). By May 5th 2018 develop and pilot sample rubrics and rubric elements in coordination with regular teachers of Intro, Methods, WI courses, and the Major-Project Seminar.

Fall 2018
By September 24th 2018: Present the rubrics in faculty meeting and offer consultations with core course teams and other instructors.

Ensuring in-class workshop and rubric development/publishing will not have specific deadlines – but the grad liaison
will promote use of the IRC across the department, and to assess the success of different elements. Timing will depend on the schedule decided in consultation with the faculty for the timing of workshops. The liaison and WEC RA will meet with the faculty members at least one week before the workshops with the proposed curriculum in hand, prepared for adjustments if necessary.

**Spring 2019**

Spring 2019 will be specifically dedicated to researching and developing stronger IRC materials and rubrics for writing with statistics. We will work closely with demography professors De Waard and Wrigley-Field, who have already engaged strongly with the WEC process. The WEC RA for this semester should therefore be an advanced graduate student expert in statistical writing.

**Fall 2019 and Spring 2020**

Our last semesters of grad liaison support will be used to further develop the IRC, adding new elements (to be determined in consultation with faculty) and ensuring its accessibility and usefulness across the department.

In Fall 2020 we want to place particular emphasis on writing with theory, both within Social Theory, 3701, and across the curriculum. We have found that most students lose their theoretical literacy quickly after taking 3701, partly due to lack of reinforcement in other classes.

During Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 we hope to extend the workshops to every faculty member that has not hosted them, and to subsequently hold meetings bringing together the teachers of each of the department core classes, including the instructors of Social Theory, 3701, evaluating the success of the IRC and sharing strategies for continuing to improve student writing in the future. The RA will organize these meetings and take minutes, as well as continuing to hold primary organizational responsibility for the conduct of the workshops.

Describe how frequently the RA will check in with the liaison:

At least weekly by email, on Mondays, and biweekly meeting to be arranged.

Describe in detail the RA’s check-in process (e.g., via email, phone, in-person, etc.):

See above.

---

1 An example for determining funding for appointments can be found on the WEC Liaison Moodle. This is for planning and example purposes only and cannot be used to determine final budget items for the Writing Plan.
Appendix: Examples from the Sociology WEC instructional resource curriculum (IRC)

**Example A – from Paper Style II: Developing a Sociological Question**

*Purpose:* to articulate why a sociological question is important and suggest a means by which it might be addressed

*Kinds of assignments where students would use this approach:*

- Extended, critical literature reviews
- Research proposals

**Display of examples of less than successful literature reviews from our disidentified writing samples**

This (sample) is a literature review in the literal sense. It states what other scholars have found. But it falls short of the mark, because it does not use the literature to say anything about why a particular question is important, or how a proposed study might yield new insights about a social phenomenon.

For this reason, we suggest using a metaphor—marshalling—to encourage writers to take control of the literature rather than plodding through over-detailed but non-directional summaries of previous work. It is crucial to communicate that in their writing, students should not only be reviewing the literature. They should be using it for a purpose: to set up the importance of their research question. Most of the “reviewing” is actually background work that should take place in the early stages of the project, before the final written version is anywhere close to complete, like this:
In other words, the “literature review” is a step that should be completed before the writing begins. Students should be reading widely and summarizing the studies they find, but these summaries should not constitute the written product that they turn in; they should merely provide background for it. The final product, rather, should draw strategically on the literature students have read in order to convince the reader that their investigation is of interest.

This is the rationale for presenting the “ghost layer” of the lit research that informs the written review in the image below. In general, a literature review of this kind does little to explain how the student’s particular (or intended) study contributes to the general area of inquiry. They don’t marshal the existing literature, they simply summarize it. We want students to instead do the summaries of the different studies as part of the pre-writing work, and to use the literature review section of the paper to actually make an argument about what their study offers.

Example B: Structuring the Case Study
Text for instructors to draw on:

In a case study, the structure of the final product is essential to the coherence of the work. Brilliant insights that are not laid out systematically lose their luster. Since the structure and the content are linked, students should be thinking about how they will structure their final written work early in the research process. Providing students with examples of each kind of structure, and asking them to reflect often on which might best fit their work, will help them to organize their thoughts effectively using one of the paradigms in the slide (or another that you introduce for them). Emphasize that field notes are necessarily chronological but generally shouldn’t be used to create a chronological paper structure – you need to use one of the other models.
Example C: How to Get Rid of Boring, Static or Repetitive “Filler” (From the In-class editing unit.)

This slide can be used to get students to cut their work substantially without losing any of the important elements. We suggest the instructors that they do not penalize students for coming in under the word count if they can show that they made these cuts in class. Instructors might want to give slightly higher word counts for the in-class draft. Students have cut up to 40% of their writing!

How to Get Rid of Boring, Static or Repetitive “Filler” - Leaping and Crowding

So – what should we “leap over”?

The redundant

“I think” Your personal reflection is only interesting if you are discussing your own experience or positionality. Paradox – you still should aim for a strong VOICE (a sense of energy, engagement, and making an original point)

“It’s interesting that” CUT IT OUT then SHOW how it’s interesting

“I found an article/book that said…” YOUR journey of research is not usually interesting

“[Author] wrote an article/book that said ..)” Just use the text to say something important and add a citation)

the wimpy

maybe, seems, perhaps. CUT IT OUT!

the repetitive

saying the same idea twice, using the same word or phrase three times!

What to do:

If you can take it for granted the reader knows what you are still talking about, you can usually CUT IT OUT. If you really can’t, try to substitute a synonym or something else close enough.
VI. WEC Writing Plan Requests

Unit Name: Sociology

Financial Requests (requests cannot include faculty salary support) drop-down choices will appear when cell next to "semester" is selected

Total Financial Request: $24,998.00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABD RA 25% Tuition and Fringe</td>
<td>$5,847.00</td>
<td>ABD RA 25% Tuition and Fringe</td>
<td>$5,847.00</td>
<td>ABD RA 25% Tuition and Fringe</td>
<td>$5,964.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA Orientation Workshop</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
<td>TA Workshop Orientation</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semester 1 Total: $344.00 Semester 2 Total: $6,019.00 Semester 3 Total: $6,019.00 Semester 4 Total: $6,136.00 Semester 5 Total: $6,308.00 Semester 6 Total: $172.00

Rationale for costs and their schedule of distribution

During the next five semesters (Spring 2018-2020), a WEC RA, with the guidance of the liaison, will further develop and promote the instructional resource collection (IRC). The idea is that faculty will gradually take over the writing workshop units themselves and adapt them as they see fit, but we know from conversations with faculty that many of our instructors are excited to get some support, added direction and the modelling of some tried practices. Further develop the IRC’s unit on question and thesis development in consultation with the WEC, other faculty and other centers. Give in-class workshops to those new to the IRC, and encourage and support others to do so through regular personal and email outreach. Develop and pilot (Spring 2018) and promote (Fall 2018) a packet of sample rubrics which directly intersect with the IRC terminology, encouraging instructor to reduce student confusion by using similar language to explain similar kinds of assignments. Spring 2019 will be specifically dedicated to researching and developing stronger IRC materials and rubrics for writing with statistics. In Fall 2020 we want to place particular emphasis on writing with theory, both within Social Theory, 3701, and across the curriculum. We have found that most students lose their theoretical literacy quickly after taking 3701, partly due to lack of reinforcement in other classes.

Service Requests drop-down choices will appear when cell in the "service" column is selected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester 1:</th>
<th>Semester 2:</th>
<th>Semester 3:</th>
<th>Semester 4:</th>
<th>Semester 5:</th>
<th>Semester 6:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Qty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description and rationale for services

The RA will set up and promote one departmental teaching lunh in collaboration with the liaison and WEC specialists during each semester. The Lunches continue the dialogue across the department and increase understanding and empowerment across the department around the teaching of writing, drawing on the expert leadership of Pamela Flash, Matthew Luskey and other WEC consultants.
February 8, 2018

To: Teresa Gowan
From: Robert McMaster, Office of Undergraduate Education
Subject: Decision regarding WEC plan funding proposal

The Department of Sociology recently requested the following funding to support its Writing Enriched Curriculum:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2018</strong></td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2018</strong></td>
<td>TA Orientation Workshop</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2018</strong></td>
<td>ABD RA 25% Tuition and Fringe</td>
<td>$5,847.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2018</strong></td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2019</strong></td>
<td>ABD RA 25% Tuition and Fringe</td>
<td>$5,847.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2019</strong></td>
<td>TA Workshop Orientation</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2019</strong></td>
<td>ABD RA 25% Tuition and Fringe</td>
<td>$5,964.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2019</strong></td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2020</strong></td>
<td>ABD RA 25% Tuition and Fringe</td>
<td>$5,964.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2020</strong></td>
<td>TA Workshop Orientation</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2020</strong></td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall 2020</strong></td>
<td>Workshop Lunch</td>
<td>$172.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$24,998.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All items above have been approved by the Office of Undergraduate Education, for a total of $24,998.00. Please email Pat Ferrian (ferri004@umn.edu) and Heidi Solomonson (heidis@umn.edu) within 30 days of the receipt of this letter with the EFS account string in your department that will receive these funds. Pat will transfer $344.00 in Spring 2018, $12,038.00 in FY19, and $12,616.00 in FY20.

CC: Dan Emery, Pat Ferrian, Pamela Flash, Matt Luskey, Hildaviktoria Mork, Bryan Mosher, Jennifer Reckner, Rachel Rodrigue, Leslie Schiff, Heidi Solomonson