Writing

The Writing Core Requirement

This general education requirement helps students develop the fundamental writing- and revision-oriented skills and habits of mind necessary to participate in intellectual communities of all kinds. Focusing on interdisciplinary inquiry, courses and seminars in this category teach students to analyze evidence creatively and critically, to make compelling arguments, to communicate discoveries to a wide range of audiences, and to express themselves freely and well.

Transfer students (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/transfercredit/transferstudents/) may be eligible to obtain credit for this general education requirement for coursework taken at other institutions. Current College students must satisfy the Core writing requirement at the University of Chicago.

Students may complete this requirement via one of two tracks. The Maroon Track carries 100 units and is a one-quarter course taken for a quality grade. The Grey Track carries 0 units and is a two-quarter series of co-curricular writing seminars taken for a Pass/Fail grade. Most students will be on the Maroon Track in the 2026–27 Academic Year. Students indicate preferences for their Writing Core track in advance of matriculation and in consultation with their Academic Adviser.

Writing Core Course Options

Maroon Track

The Maroon Track will be available for students enrolled in specific Humanities (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/humanities/) general education sequences. Students on the Maroon Track satisfy the Core writing requirement by completing the one-quarter course 'Inquiry, Conversation, Argument' for a quality grade (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/takingcourses/#gradingscale). Students in these Humanities sequences will enroll in the following course (during pre-registration (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/registration/#pre-registration) or the add/drop period (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/registration/#adddropperiod)) during their first year:

WRIT 10100. Inquiry, Conversation, Argument. 100 Units.

Inquiry, Conversation, Argument (ICA) is a one-quarter intensive writing seminar that supports students in developing the skills and habits of mind necessary to participate at the University of Chicago and beyond. By emphasizing analytical composition and revision, this course helps students understand, practice, and appreciate writing as a recursive process. This process is both challenging and valuable, as it produces and refines ideas through sustained critical inquiry and as a means of cultivating free expression. Each section of ICA is motivated by a distinct interpretive question, which students explore from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives. Scaffolded sequences of exercises and essays help students learn to read critically and creatively, analyze evidence, structure complex ideas, and develop independent arguments by making original claims that contribute to ongoing intellectual conversations.

Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn, Winter, Spring

Grey Track

The Grey Track will be available for students enrolled in specific Humanities (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/humanities/) general education sequences. Students on the Grey Track satisfy the Core writing requirement by completing a two-quarter series of co-curricular writing seminars taken for a pass/fail grade (http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/takingcourses/#passfailgrading). Students in these Humanities sequences will be enrolled in the following writing seminars administratively after the start of the quarter (i.e., without needing to pre-register):

HUMA 19100. Humanities Writing Seminars. 000 Units.

Writing seminars introduce students to the analysis and practice of expert academic writing. Experts must meet many familiar standards for successful writing: clear style, logical organization, and persuasive argument. But because they work with specialized knowledge, experts also face particular writing difficulties: they must be clear about complexities and specific about abstractions; they must use uncomplicated organization for very complicated ideas; they must create straightforward logic for intricate arguments; they must clarify the obscure but not repeat the obvious; and they must anticipate the demands of aggressively skeptical readers. Writing seminars do not repeat or extend the substantive discussion of the Humanities class; they use the discussions and assignments from those classes as a tool for the advanced study of writing. Students study various methods not only for the construction of sophisticated, well-structured arguments but also for understanding the complications and limits of those arguments.

Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn, Winter