

Program in American Studies
State University of New York Oswego
Donald Vanouse, Coordinator

PLAN FOR WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

I. GOALS

Upon completing the requirements for a degree in American Studies, students should be able to:

- Summarize literature that they have read.
- Synthesize information from a number of sources, raise critical questions about the information and the methods used to acquire that information, and generate questions for further inquiry.
- Understand and use the basic concepts and vocabularies of the disciplines which they have included in their American Studies program.
- Write accurate reports using a variety of methods (e.g., participation observation, survey analysis, content analysis, interpretation, etc.).
- Present data in an appropriate fashion (e.g., narrative, graphic, or statistical form).
- Evaluate theoretical perspectives.
- Evaluate methodological perspectives.
- Document sources in methods appropriate to the disciplines included in their programs.
- Assess the validity and accuracy of arguments in popular media and in professional publications.

II. OBJECTIVES

Each American Studies major will write frequently as part of her/his required course work and receive instructive criticism, with subsequent opportunity to improve on her/his grade. The American Studies Program sees the writing experience as a developmental skill, with lower level writing courses helping to develop simple, basic writing skills, and the intermediate and advanced writing experiences providing opportunities for developing higher order writing skills.

A. **Writing Experiences:** American Studies majors will engage in a variety of writing experiences that include, but are not limited to:

- Journal writings
- Reaction writings
- Review articles
- Position essays

- Critical Interpretations
- Field notes
- Standard research papers

- B. **Conditions:** American Studies majors will be provided with examples of the kind of writing expected along with specific instructions for each kind of writing assignment. They also will learn the requirements of such appropriate resources as the *MLA Handbook*, or the *Chicago Handbook*, or the *Style Manual of the American Sociological Association*.
- C. **Criteria:** Each student is required to take five courses that have a substantial writing requirement. Each of the five courses must be included in one of the following three types (Introductory, Writing to Learn, and Advanced). Students are required to take one course of each type. The remaining two courses may come from either Writing to Learn or Advanced Courses.

The courses that would fulfill the writing requirement for the American Studies Program fall under three categories:

- A. **Introductory:** To meet the introductory writing requirement, AmS majors will be required to take one of the following courses which incorporate relatively short writing assignments such as journal writing, review articles, book reviews, etc. Emphasis is placed on students' ability to understand and use appropriately the basic concepts and vocabulary of an AmS discipline. At least 25% of the student's evaluation will be based on written exams, papers, or other writing assignments.
- HIS 201 W The American Experience
 - HIS 202 W The US to 1865
 - HIS 203 W The US since 1865
 - SOC 250 Structures of American Society
 - Additional options TBA
- B. **Writing to Learn:** The following courses help students to comprehend sociological literature and summarize what they have read in their own words. Emphasis is placed on students' ability to write accurate reports using a variety of methods. At least 30% of the student's evaluation will be based on written exams, papers, or other writing assignments.
- ENGL 3XX Any course on a topic in American literature
 - ENGL 4XX Any course on a topic in American literature
 - ART 358 Survey of Native American Art
 - ECO 326 American Economic History
 - HIS 340 History of American Labor
 - HIS 341 America's Vietnam War
 - HIS 342 US Diplomacy in the 20th Century
 - HIS 350 Slavery in America
 - HIS 351 US Civil Rights Movement
 - HIS 354 Native American History
 - HIS 356 Civil War and Reconstruction
 - HIS 358 History of Urban America I

- HIS 359 History of Urban America II
- HIS 360 American History through Biography
- HIS 366 Age of Big Business
- HIS 369 US since 1945
- MUS 316 American Music
- MUS 317 Evolution of Jazz and Rock
- PBJ 347 Crime and Society
- PBJ 363 Women and the Law
- POL 333 Religion and Politics: Tolerance
- POL 345 Constitutional Law
- POL 355 Civil Liberties
- POL 365 Political Parties
- SOC 341 Social Inequality/Stratification
- SOC 365 Urban Sociology
- SOC 366 Popular Culture
- SOC 370 Deviance
- SOC 372 Juvenile Delinquency
- SOC 379 White Collar Crime
- SOC 381 Sociology of Gender Roles
- SOC 383 Sociology of Aging

C. **Advanced:** The following courses will incorporate a major research process that will develop students' own positions on a given subject matter. Emphasis is placed on students' ability to evaluate information as well as define theoretical and methodological perspectives. These courses emphasize not only advanced writing skills but also oral presentation skills. At least 50% of the student's evaluation will be based on written exams, papers, presentations, or other writing assignments.

- AM S 400: Sections of this required seminar are usually double-listed from Departmental seminars in topics pertinent to American Studies. In addition, students may take **advanced** courses from American Studies **topics** offered by participating departments, such as:
 - SOC 401 Topics course
 - SOC 463 Social Movements

III. Special Circumstances

- A. **Double Majors:** While American Studies majors must take all of their writing courses within the departmental listing, double majors will be permitted to complete this requirement through the department of their first major.
- B. **Transfer Students:** Students transferring to SUNY-Oswego from another institution will need to present their previous transcript(s) for evaluation. The Program's advisement coordinator in consultation with the student's advisor will make a determination as to what specific courses taken at other institutions have met the sociology writing plan.

- C. **Undeclared or Internal Transfer Students:** Undeclared students or students switching majors to American Studies will be expected to complete their writing courses within the Program's listing.