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| General Education Handbook for FacultyUpdated January 2018 |

This document is intended as a resource for all Faculty at City College and particularly for Faculty teaching courses in the General Education curriculum. It provides an overview of the curriculum and its learning goals focusing on how different areas contribute to the development of students’ writing, critical thinking and information literacy skills. The Handbook also provides a summary of assessment findings and recommendations for improvement, one of which is the creation of this Handbook. The examples of writing assignments across the curriculum showcase writing experiences of our students that can be used as a guide for instructional planning and improvement. This is a living document which will be updated and improved based on departments’ feedback.

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**Pathways - General Education Requirement at City College**

The General Education Curriculum is an educational experience shared by all City College students, with some variations depending on major. Students are able to choose from a selection of courses which introduce them to different fields of knowledge and also build fundamental skills, such as writing, research, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. All students entering City College in Fall 13 or after follow the Pathways General Education framework. Pathways General Education Requirements consist of 42 credits distributed as follows:

**I. Common Core (30 credits)**

•**Required (Fixed) Common Core (12 credits / 4 courses)**

 1. English Composition (2 courses)

 •English Composition I (FIQWS or ENGL 110)

 •English Composition II (usually one of ENGL 210 series)

 2. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning (1 course)

 •Depends on major

 3. Life and Physical Sciences (1 course)

 •Depends on major

Courses in the Required Core adhere to specific [course learning outcomes](http://www.cuny.edu/academics/initiatives/pathways/gened/req-commoncore/Required-Common-Core-LearningOutcomes.pdf) and provide a foundation for communication, critical thinking skills and information literacy skills, as well as fundamental quantitative and scientific literacy.

•**Flexible Common Core (18 credits / 6 courses)**

Students complete one course in each of the five Flexible Core areas and an additional sixth course in one of them. Flexible core areas are:

 1. **World Cultures and Global Issues** (a) focus on Literature or (b) focus on Global History and Culture

*(2 courses for BA/BFA majors - one from each subgroup; 1 course for BS majors from either subgroup)*

 2. **U.S. Experience in Its Diversity**

 3. **Creative Expression**

 4. **Individual and Society**

 5. **Scientific World**

The Flexible core offers [a wide scope of courses](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways%20courses%20with%20descriptions%20sept%2015%202016.docx) which draw students into new areas of intellectual experience by introducing them to fundamental concepts and methods of a variety of disciplines including art, economics, psychology, Jewish studies, anthropology, chemistry, Asian studies, earth science, political science, history, theater, and more.

Courses in the *World Cultures and Global Issues* category familiarize students the belief systems, history, and social dynamics of at least one non-Western society expanding their global awareness and cultural sensitivity.

*Creative expression* courses explore how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present, and describe the significance of works of art in the societies that created them.

Courses in the *U.S Experience in its Diversity* category analyze major themes of U.S. history and discuss common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence, or are influenced by, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation.

The *Individual and Society* courses examine how an individual’s place in society affects experiences, values, or choices while assessing ethical views and their underlying premises.

Finally, the *Scientific World* category courses demonstrate how tools of science and technology can be used to analyze problems and develop solutions and evaluate the impact of technologies and scientific discoveries on the contemporary world, such as issues of personal privacy, security, or ethical responsibilities.

In addition to their category-specific goals, **all Flexible Core courses, are expected to further strengthen students’ communication, critical reasoning and information literacy skills** through assignments/activities asking students to critically analyze information from a variety of sources and produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments.

**II. College Option (12 credits / 4 courses)**

Students at City College are required to take 12 additional credits of General Education designated as College Option; College Option requirement varies by major. For the **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences** (with the exception of the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies at The Center for Worker Education), these requirements are:

**BA candidates:** Logical/Philosophical course, 3 crs. Foreign Language, 9 crs. or exemption

**BS and BFA candidates:** Logical/Philosophical course , 3 crs. Speech, 3 crs. or exemption, Foreign Language, 6 crs. or exemption

These courses are designed and delivered with intent to further strengthen students’ critical analysis and communication skills, and, through an acquisition of basic communication competency in an additional language, expand their cultural and global awareness.

Students in the School of Education, the Grove School of Engineering, the Spitzer School of Architecture, and the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education have [different College Option](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/gened/college-option) requirements which are in line with the expectations of their fields of study.

Students are advised to complete their General Education requirement in the first two years of study. [Course lists](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways%20courses%20with%20descriptions%20sept%2015%202016.docx) and [checklists](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/gened/general-education-checklists), which are available on the college’s [website](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/gened/pathways) and in advising offices, indicate courses appropriate for Freshmen and those appropriate for second year students.

Departments participating in General Education are working on defining benchmarks for their courses (target Gen Ed outcomes) so that Level I courses support skills acquired in English Composition I and Level II courses provide an opportunity to master skills learned in English Composition II.

General Education requirements are described on the [college’s website](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/gened) which contains sections for students, faculty and advisors and in the [Course Bulletin](http://ccny.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2017-2018/Undergraduate-Bulletin/General-Education-Requirements-Pathways) . Departments with heavy major requirements (mainly BS degrees) also include in their Bulletin pages recommended General Education courses which will allow students to complete their degree requirements most efficiently. General Education courses are labeled clearly in the online schedule of classes and on students’ records in CUNY First and DegreeWorks.

**Learning Outcomes and Written/Oral Communication Experiences Across the Curriculum**

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| **English Composition I (EC)** *recommended in the 1st semester of study* |
| ENGL 11000 | Freshman Composition |
| FIQWS 101XX | Composition section of FIQWS |

**Course Learning Outcomes**

* Explore and analyze in your own and others’ writing a variety of genres and rhetorical situations
* Develop strategies for reading, drafting, revising, and editing
* Practice systematic application of citation conventions
* Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations
* Develop and engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
* Understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences
* Locate research sources (including academic journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles) in the library’s databases or archives and on the internet and evaluate them for credibility, accuracy, timeliness, and bias
* Compose texts that integrate your stance and language with appropriate sources using strategies such as summary, critical analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and argumentation

**Writing Assignments**

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| Introductory Essay | Low-stakes, informal, ungraded. 2-3 pages. |
| This assignment asks students to introduce themselves to the instructor. Usually, instructors ask students to describe their experiences with reading and writing, languages other than English that the students speak, read, and write, their strengths and weaknesses as students, and to include any information that the student thinks the instructor should know about them.  |
| Literacy Narrative  | 2-3 pages. |
| The literacy narrative assignment is an autobiographical essay with a thematic focus. The writer will narrate the event(s), describe scenes and people, and interpret the meaning of the events—both at the time that they occurred and now, as the student is writing this essay. The student will practice discovery of ideas (invention), composing early drafts, revision, and editing. Students will also practice writing narrative, description, summary, and interpretation. The essay structure for autobiographical writing is typically chronological but may also entail topical organization. Primary and secondary sources are optional for this assignment.  |
| Summary and Response Essay  | 2-3 pages.  |
| Summary of and response to a reading assignment. |
| Exploratory Essay  | 4-5 pages. |
| Analyzing Texts OR Reporting Information OR Abstracts OR Annotated Bibliographies OR Evaluations. This assignment introduces students to research and citation practices and asks them to interpret and summarize the text. The essay is less concerned with critical analysis, though in practice the separation between analysis/ interpretation (a neutral summary) and critical analysis (an interpretation with an opinion attached) is hard to find.  |
| Researched Critical Analysis Essay | 5-7 pages. |
| This assignment can be based on any of the chapters listed for Exploratory Essay assignment (except for Annotated Bibliographies); it could also be based on Arguing a Position. This assignment extends the work of the Exploratory Essay. Students will have the opportunity to revise the exploratory essay again (after having already revised a first draft) and they will be able to develop and express an opinion about their subjects. They may also want expand their research.  |
| Reflection Assignments |  1-2 pages after each essay. |
| The goal of the course is for students to reflect on their writing in order to heighten their awareness of what they know about writing and to give them a vocabulary for discussing it. For each reflective assignment, they should describe their own essays in terms of its genre (what are its characteristic features), exigence (what need motivated the writer), purpose (what did the writer hope to accomplish), audience (who is the potential audience for the essay), and stance (what is the writer’s perspective? what is the relationship between the writer, her audience, and the medium?).  |
| Final Portfolio and Self-Reflection | 3-4 pages. |
| The Self-Reflection should be both a rhetorical analysis of their own work that should include references to genre, audience, purpose, stance, rhetorical situation, media/design, and exigence. Students should also use this opportunity to demonstrate that they’ve achieved the course learning outcomes. |
|   | **English Composition II (EC)** *recommended in the 2nd semester of study* |
| ENGL 21001 | Writing for the Humanities and the Arts |
| ENGL 21002 | Writing for the Social Sciences |
| ENGL 21003 | Writing for the Sciences |
| ENGL 21007 | Writing for Engineers |

**Course Learning Outcomes**

* acknowledge your and others' range of linguistic differences as resources, and draw on those resources to develop rhetorical sensibility
* enhance strategies for reading, drafting, revising, editing, and self-assessment
* negotiate your own writing goals and audience expectations regarding conventions of genre, medium, and rhetorical situation
* develop and engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
* engage in genre analysis and multimodal composing to explore effective writing across disciplinary contexts and beyond
* formulate and articulate a stance through and in your writing
* practice using various library resources, online databases, and the Internet to locate sources appropriate to your writing projects
* strengthen your source use practices (including evaluating, integrating, quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, analyzing, and citing sources)

**ENGL 21001 Recommended Writing Assignments**

1. A report (or a profile) based on an interview with a professional associated with humanities disciplines or with a discipline related to a student's academic degree program.
2. A report based on an interview with another student in the class. Questions can focus on the life of the student in school, at work, and in a family or neighborhood community. This assignment allows students to form a community of learners and to provide opportunities to quote, paraphrase, summarize, synthesize, and analyze information in written essays.
3. A summary and a written reader's response to an essay, story, journalistic report, poem, or essay published in a peer reviewed academic journal.
4. An essay or a multimodal composition written in response to a public speaking event, a film, a museum visit or a theatrical performance.
5. A researched argument on a topic selected by the instructor or by students.
6. A critical essay about a story or novel, with required use of secondary sources (e.g., published reviews of the story of novel).
7. An autobiographical essay or multimodal composition focusing on the student's educational and professional goals and related experiences.

**ENGL 21003 Recommended Writing Assignments**

1. A report (or a profile) based on an interview with a science professor or a practicing scientist about the topics, procedures, practices and goals of that person's research topics and professional life.
2. A summary of a scientific report or a lab report plus a written response (in which students comment on various aspects of the report).
3. A formal letter of introduction written to instructor at the beginning of the semester, with reflective comments on the student's goals as a college student and as a student in ENGL 21003 course.
4. A summary and written response to an essay in *The New York Times* Science Section, which is published every Tuesday. CCNY students and faculty have free access to *The New York Times*.
5. If students are writing scientific reports/ lab reports for other courses that they are enrolled in, they can consider writing of that report for credit in ENGL 21003 course. If students do so, they should inform their science course professors.
6. A collaborative research project in which students read multiple sources on one science topic, discuss the readings with students in their groups, write summaries of the readings, and then collectively create a poster presentation and present an oral report to other students in your course. You could prepare packets of materials for each group in advance.
7. A research report in which a student reads multiple sources on one controversy in a science or applied science field, analyzes the controversy, and reports on the controversy in a documented essay with references to multiple sources.

**ENGL 21007 Recommended Writing Assignments**

1. Low-stakes, in-class and online assignments (optional assignment)
2. Formal Letter of Introduction (optional assignment)
3. Memo (optional assignment)
4. Lab Report (required assignment)
5. Technical Description (required assignment)
6. Final Project
	1. Engineering Proposal (required assignment)
	2. Presentation (required assignment)
7. Digital Portfolio (required assignment)

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| **Flexible Core** |
| Level I | **Creative Expression (CE)**  *recommended in the 1st or 2nd semester of study* |
|  |  | Examples of writing assignments |
| AES 23202 | Survey of World Architecture I | Formal analysis of buildings involving description and analysis, culminating in short, thesis driven three-part papers |
| AES 24202 | Survey of World Architecture II |  |
| ART 10000 | Introduction to Visual Arts of the World | Visual in-depth analysis of two works of art based on observation and integration of references to published sources; includes a thesis statement and a working bibliography.  |
| MUS 10100 | Introduction to Music | Reports, concert reviews involving description and analysis, compare and contrast essay |
| MUS 10200 | Introduction to World Music  |  |
| MUS 14500 | Introduction to Jazz | Concert review involving description and analysis |
| THTR 13100 | Introduction to Theatre | Performance review involving summary/description and analysis through applying knowledge; possibly argument and critique |

*A Flexible Core course in this category must meet the following three learning outcomes.*

 • Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

 • Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

 • Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

*In addition courses in this category will have to satisfy at least three of the specified learning outcomes****.***

**Creative Expression**

 • Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to, arts, communications, creative writing, media arts, music, and theater.

 • Analyze how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present, and describe the significance of works of art in the societies that created them.

 • Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.

 • Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process.

 • Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.

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| **Flexible Core** |
| Level II **World Cultures and Global Issues (WCGI) - Literature** *recommended in the 3rd or 4th semester of study* |
|  |  | Examples of writing assignments |
| JWST 11700 | The Bible as Literature | Weekly response papers and take-home exams involving synthesis of reading materials and comparison/contrast of recurring themes in the semester  |
| FREN 28300 | The Literature of Contemporary France | Literary analysis (close reading; building arguments on the basis of formal analysis/textual evidence); Literary analysis grounded in secondary sources (combining close reading with appropriate use of secondary source materials including both literary criticism, literary theory and historical context); Informal writing and responses -weekly personal responses to texts |
| SPAN 28100 | Masterworks of Spanish Literature I |  |
| SPAN 28300 | Masterworks of Latin American Literature | Literary analysis with reflection |
| THTR 21100 | Theatre History 1 | Analysis involving creating argument, possibly through comparison and contrast |
| THTR 21200 | Theatre History 2 | Response involving description and analysis |
| THTR 21300 | Theatre History 3 | Presentation with persuasive argument using evidence from outside sources |
| WHUM 10100 | World Humanities I | Literary analysis involving creating argument, possibly through comparison and contrast |
| WHUM 10200 | World Humanities II | Literary analysis through comparison and contrast of given texts involving creation of argument; or Literary analysis and crating of argument involving research  |
| WHUM 10312 | World Humanities: Modern World Literature | Literary analysis through comparison and contrast of given texts involving creation of argument |

*A Flexible Core course in this category must meet the following three learning outcomes.*

 • Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

 • Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

 • Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

*In addition courses in this category will have to satisfy at least three of the specified learning outcomes****.***

**World Cultures and Global Issues**

 • Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures or global issues, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, ethnic studies, foreign languages (building upon previous language acquisition), geography, history, political science, sociology, and world literature.

 • Analyze culture, globalization, or global cultural diversity, and describe an event or process from more than one point of view.

 • Analyze the historical development of one or more non-U.S. societies.

 • Analyze the significance of one or more major movements that have shaped the world's societies.

 • Analyze and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation play in world cultures or societies.

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| **Flexible Core** |
| Level I **World Cultures and Global Issues (WCGI) - History & Culture** *recommended in the 1st or 2nd semester of study* |
|  |  | Examples of writing assignments |
| ANTH 10100 | General Anthropology | Summary and response |
| ASIA 10100 | Asia and its Peoples | Analysis in which one presents a summary of materials and develops an argument supporting one's particular standpoint |
| ASIA 20200 | Contemporary Asia | Analysis in which one presents a summary of materials and develops an argument supporting one's particular standpoint |
| ASIA 20500 | Contemporary China | Analysis in which one presents a summary of materials and develops an argument supporting one's particular standpoint |
| BLST 10200 | African Heritage: Caribbean-Brazilian Experience |  |
| CLASSICS 321 | Classical Myth in Film  |  |
| WCIV 10100 | World Civilizations I: Prehistory to 1500 AD | Historical analysis, possibly involving research, and argument |
| WCIV 10200 | World Civilizations II: 1500 AD to present | Historical analysis, possibly involving research, and argument |
| HIST 20400 | Early Modern Europe | Explanation, through drawing on both primary and secondary sources, of a major historical event, or process of historical change |
| HIST 20600  | Modern Europe | Explanation, through drawing on both primary and secondary sources, of a major historical event, or process of historical change |

*A Flexible Core course in this category must meet the following three learning outcomes.*

 • Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

 • Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

 • Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

*In addition courses in this category will have to satisfy at least three of the specified learning outcomes****.***

**World Cultures and Global Issues**

 • Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures or global issues, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, ethnic studies, foreign languages (building upon previous language acquisition), geography, history, political science, sociology, and world literature.

 • Analyze culture, globalization, or global cultural diversity, and describe an event or process from more than one point of view.

 • Analyze the historical development of one or more non-U.S. societies.

 • Analyze the significance of one or more major movements that have shaped the world's societies.

 • Analyze and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation play in world cultures or societies.

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| **Flexible Core** |
| Level I | **Individual and Society (IS)** *recommended in the 1st or 2nd semester of study* |
|  |  | Examples of writing assignments |
| ANTH 20100 | Cross Cultural Perspectives | Position paper involving summary |
| ECO 10250 | Principles of Microeconomics | Analysis with argument |
| JWST 10411 | Psychology of Religion |  |
| PSY 10200 | Psychology in Modern World | Evaluating the adequacy of a theory using a given hypothesis; Using a specific statistic measure in order to evaluate a particular problem; Writing a short research proposal for an experiment |
| SOC 10500 | Individual, Group and Society: An Introduction to Sociology | Response involving description and analysis |
| WS10000  | Women’s/Gender Roles in Contemporary Society |  |

*A Flexible Core course in this category must meet the following three learning outcomes.*

 • Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

 • Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

 • Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

*In addition courses in this category will have to satisfy at least three of the specified learning outcomes****.***

**Individual and Society**

 • Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology.

 • Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.

 • Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.

 • Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.

 • Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.

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| **Flexible Core** |
| Level I | **Scientific World (SW)** *recommended in the 2nd and 3rd semester of study* |
|  |  | Examples of communication skills activities |
| ASTR 30500 | Methods in Astronomy | Students collect points for class participation by reporting on breaking astronomy news, addressing questions posed by the instructor, and engaging in a dialogue with other students. |
| EAS 10000 | The Dynamic Earth |  |
| EAS 10100 | The Atmosphere |  |
| EAS 10300 | Environmental Geology |  |
| MED 10000 | Introduction to Drug Abuse and Addiction |  |

*A Flexible Core course in this category must meet the following three learning outcomes.*

 • Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

 • Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

 • Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

*In addition courses in this category will have to satisfy at least three of the specified learning outcomes****.***

**Scientific World**

 • Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the scientific world, including, but not limited to: computer science, history of science, life and physical sciences, linguistics, logic, mathematics, psychology, statistics, and technology-related studies.

 • Demonstrate how tools of science, mathematics, technology, or formal analysis can be used to analyze problems and develop solutions.

 • Articulate and evaluate the empirical evidence supporting a scientific or formal theory.

 • Articulate and evaluate the impact of technologies and scientific discoveries on the contemporary world, such as issues of personal privacy, security, or ethical responsibilities.

 • Understand the scientific principles underlying matters of policy or public concern in which science plays a role.

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| **Flexible Core** |
| Level I | **US Experience in its Diversity (US)** *recommended in the 1st or 2nd semester of study* |
|  |  | Examples of writing assignments |
| PSC 10100 | American Government and Politics |  |
| USSO 10100 | US Society | Analysis with argument |
| HIST 24000 | The United States: From Its Origins to 1877 |  |
| HIST 24100 | The United States since 1865 |  |

*A Flexible Core course in this category must meet the following three learning outcomes.*

 • Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

 • Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

 • Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

*In addition courses in this category will have to satisfy at least three of the specified learning outcomes****.***

 **U.S. Experience in its Diversity**

 • Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the U.S. experience in its diversity, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, history, political science, psychology, public affairs, sociology, and U.S. literature.

 • Analyze and explain one or more major themes of U.S. history from more than one informed perspective.

 • Evaluate how indigenous populations, slavery, or immigration have shaped the development of the United States.

 • Explain and evaluate the role of the United States in international relations.

 • Identify and differentiate among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government and analyze their influence on the development of U.S. democracy.

 • Analyze and discuss common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence, or are influenced by, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation.

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| **CLAS College Option** |
| Level II | **Logical-Philosophical Courses** *recommended in the 4th semester of study* |
| PHIL 10200 | Intro to Philosophy | Analytical essays that explain and apply philosophical ideas from historical and contemporary philosophers, as well as students’ own philosophical ideas. Essays will require some or all of the following: summarizing and explaining arguments and theories, analyzing arguments to determine whether they are logically valid, applying theories and arguments to new situations, and developing and defending students’ own theories and arguments. |
| PHIL 11250 | Scientia: the Unity of Knowledge  |
| PHIL 20100 | Logical Reasoning |
| PHIL 20600  | Philosophy of Science Fiction |
| PHIL 30001  | The Rational Animal (Honors Students Only) |
| PHIL 30500 | History of Philosophy I: Ancient Philosophy |
| PHIL 30800  | Ethics |
| PHIL 32200 | Philosophy of Science  |
| PHIL 33700   | Decision Theory |
| PHIL 34900  | Applied Ethics |
| PHIL 34905      | Biomedical Ethics |
| PSC 12400 | Political Ideas and Issues |  |

*A course in this category must meet the following learning outcomes:*

* Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
* Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
* Explain and apply philosophical ideas from historical and/or contemporary philosophers
* Analyze and discuss fundamental debates in fields such as ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, philosophy of science, and metaphysics.

**Benchmarks for Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy**

Flexible core and Logical-Philosophical courses support and build on the work students do in composition courses thus strengthening their communication, critical reasoning and information literacy skills. The courses have been categorized into Level I (first year) or Level II (second year) so that Level I courses support skills acquired in English Composition I while Level II courses strengthen skills learned in English Composition II.

**Level I:** AES 232, 242, ART 100, MUC 101, 102, 145, THTR 131, ANTH 101, ASIA 101, 202, 205, BLST 102, CLSS 321, WCIV, HIST 204, 206, ANTH 201, ECO 102, JWST 104, PSY 102, SOC 105, WS 100, MED 100, PSC 101, USSO, HIST 240, 241

**Level II:** WHUM, THTR 211, 212, 213, FREN 283, SPAN 281, 283, JWST 117, PHIL 102, 112, 201, 206, 308, 308, 322, 337, 349, PSC 124

Benchmarks defined for each level are presented in the table below:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Learning Outcome** | **Benchmark for Level I courses (1st year)** | **Benchmark Level II courses (2nd year)** |
|  | **Typical assignments** | **Level I**: summary and response, description, narration | **Level II**: reports, summary and response, researched critical analysis with argument |
| Writing SkillsThinking Skills | **Context of and Purpose for Writing** | Begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions  | Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s)   |
| **Thesis/Main idea** | Thesis is clearly stated **/** expressed as a main idea  | Thesis is clearly stated / defended with argument  |
| **Structure and Organization** | -Has a coherent introduction though it might lack some focus to set up the thesis-Progression of thought within paragraphs is clear and logical but not necessarily from paragraph to paragraph-Has a coherent conclusion though it might need greater focus  | -Has a focused introduction that effectively sets up the thesis-Progression of thought both within and between paragraphs is clear and logical-Has a clear and focused conclusion   |
| **Evidence and Development** | -Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work-Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing  | -Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.-Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.  |
| **Control of Syntax and Mechanics** | Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity; writing may include some errors  | Uses straightforward language that conveys meaning to readers and has few errors  |
| Critical Thinking Skills | **Explanation of issues** | Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated (might leave some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, backgrounds unknown  | Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated clearly delivering all relevant information Target 20%  |
| **Evidence /Analysis and Synthesis** Selecting & using info to investigate a point of view/conclusion | Information is taken from source(s) though with not interpretation/ evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis  | Information is taken from source(s) with at least some interpretation/ evaluation  |
| **Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)** | Conclusion is logically tied to information (although information might not be chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes are identified clearly  | Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes are identified clearly Target 20%  |
| *Optional, depends on class***Context /Assumptions****Student’s position** | N/A | -Analyze own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.-Formulate and argue a clear position on an issue taking into account different points of view |
| **Info. Literacy Skills** | **Demonstrates a clear understanding of info needs and is able to search efficiently** (within assigned texts and/or by source search) | -Understands the research question but may not be fully confident in identifying search term(s) -Has knowledge of an information source -Might need assistance in interpreting the information collected  | -Understands the research question -Has knowledge of an information source -Might need assistance in interpreting the information collected   |
| **Effectively evaluates information sources** | -Demonstrate an understanding of scholarly sources-Uses scholarly databases  | Understands and reviews information sources, considers whether the amount of information is sufficient to address the issue.  |
| **Articulates credibility of sources**  | If appropriate to the discipline, mentions one aspect of credibility (authority, affiliation of author, timeliness, bias)  | If appropriate to the discipline, articulates 2 or more aspects of credibility of sources (authority, affiliation of author, timeliness, bias)  |
| **Uses information ethically** | -Uses appropriate citation style; might need improvement in formatting the bibliographies and footnotes -Does not plagiarize  | Uses appropriate citation style; might need improvement in formatting the bibliographies and footnotes -Does not plagiarize  |

**Suggested Writing Assignment Checklist for Instructors**

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| When you write the assignment sheet for your students, does it contain the following important information?  |
| Is the **purpose** behind the assignment clear (i.e., why are they doing it? What skill or knowledge are they to demonstrate or gain from doing this?)? |  |
| Are the **Course Learning Outcomes** mentioned in the assignment? Have you considered outcomes for the content area of the course (see pg. 7-13) and benchmarks for writing, critical thinking, information literacy (see pg. 14) when designing the assignment?  |  |
| Is the **rhetorical mode** clear? For example: description, narration, analysis, compare and contrast, or argument. Do the directions suggest conflicting modes?  |  |
| Are there **explicit command words** designed to make it easier for students to understand what they're supposed to do? Common command words include: analyze, compare, contrast, critically evaluate, define, describe, discuss, evaluate, examine, explain, illustrate, interpret, narrate, outline, state, summarize. |  |
| **Do you lay out a scaffolding process** for the students to follow? (i.e., a suggested process they should go through to successfully complete the assignment) |  |
| Is the **type of research** that is expected explained to the student (i.e. primary vs. secondary sources, scholarly articles vs. journalism, Can they use blogs, etc.)? Do you specify **how much** research is needed? |  |
| Do you make the **length requirements** clear? **Due date(s)?** |  |
| What is the **rubric / grading criteria** for the assignment? |  |
| Are there superfluous directions which inhibit student engagement? Does the tone of the assignment **cultivate a positive learning environment**? |  |

**Assessment in General Education**

General Education courses are periodically [evaluated](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/gened/general-education-assessment) to ensure their adherence to the program expectations and to assess their effectiveness in terms of student learning.

DIRECT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

1. Analysis of writing assignments. Random samples of student work (research papers or other projects) from a sample of General Education courses are collected every semester and scored by a team or readers comprised of faculty teaching those courses. The rubrics which specify goals for student learning for [communication/writing](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/gen-ed-writing-rubric-fall-11.doc), [critical thinking](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/CriticalThinking%20exported.docx), and [information literacy](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/info%20literacy%20rubric%20gen%20ed.doc) are used in scoring. This scoring process is not grading and does not affect or inform the student’s grade for the assignment. The scores are reported as averages by individual rubric categories and include qualitative analysis of the skills assessed, along with specific recommendations for improvement. The purpose of the assessment is not to evaluate any specific course, instructor, or student but to assess how well the General Education program learning outcomes are being met by students. The results of the assessment are used to inform decisions about course content and structure, and about the program itself, as well as to refine the program learning objectives and outcomes.

2. Exam analysis

Student learning is assessed through analysis of their answers on exam or homework questions. Sample questions are correlated with General Education outcomes, and an analysis is done of the percent of students answering them correctly pointing out if students have difficulties with particular areas. It also helps instructors realign the focus of the class if needed as they may notice that an outcome is not addressed sufficiently in lectures or in exams/homework.

2. Syllabi analysis

Syllabi of all Flexible Core courses are collected and reviewed to ensure their adherence to the program goals. They are evaluated with respect to the presence/quality of the following information: course goals, course learning outcomes, general education program learning outcomes, alignment of assignments with the learning outcomes, ways to demonstrate learning/grade breakdown, types of writing assignments, guidance included for the writing assignments, academic integrity statement, and practical course information.

INDIRECT FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

1. Faculty surveys

Surveys are conducted in order to study faculty activities in and opinions about General Education program, obtain faculty opinion about student learning, and receive recommendations for improvement of the program.

2. Student surveys

End-of-semester Course and Teacher surveys are used to assess the effectiveness of individual sections and instructors. In addition to evaluating the instructor’s performance, students reflect on their achievement of learning outcomes in the specific course.

3. Student focus groups

Focus groups of 10-15 students are occasionally convened to obtain information about student experiences and opinions about General Education program. The open ended questions focus on students’ familiarity with the requirements and goals of the program, their experiences with faculty and advisors, their learning experiences, and their frustrations with the program.

**Spring 2016 Assessment Data**

Courses assessed: ANTH 101, 201, SPAN 283, THTR 211, 212, 213, MUS 101, 102, THTR 131, ECO 10250, WCIV 101, 102, WHUM 101, 102, 10312,

***Direct assessment (scoring of student essays)***

*Summary of findings across all courses (findings and recommendation for individual courses are available at* [*https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/gened/general-education-assessment*](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/gened/general-education-assessment) *.)*

* In general, students rise to the occasion and composed satisfactory responses to the assignments given.
* Assignments often don’t ask/specify that students need to use and cite sources; some assignments seem to expect that students know that they need to cite; as a result many essays don’t include citations and it is difficult to assess information literacy skills
* Many essays don’t engage with critical analysis; some are factual, others emotional responses
* Students are better at critical thinking than they are able to express it in writing
* Thesis statements are often missing in student essays
* Rubrics, geared for a research paper, don’t capture real values of some of the assignments, especially in Music and Theater
* Students wrote best essays when the assignments were relevant to their lives
* Scaffolding and staging of the final assignment produced very strong papers

*Recommendations*

Specific recommendations for each of the courses assessed are included in separate course assessment reports. The following are general recommendations made by instructors in the post-assessment meeting:

* **Faculty Development:** The College should provide faculty development for teaching Writing Across Curriculum (WAC); many instructors feel torn between teaching content and writing during their classes, some are not sure they are skilled to teach writing. Providing training on best WAC practices for instructors is crucial
* **WAC Fellows:** Utilize WAC fellows allocated to college to work with specific departments
* **Communicate Across Departments:** Define what writing/critical thinking/information literacy skills student need in Gen Ed courses; Composition courses (FIQWS/ENGL 110 and ENGL 210 should prepare students for that)
* **Instructors should pose Clear Assignment Prompts and Guidelines**:
* Assignment prompts should include specific guidelines; expectation for citations should be explicit; controlled research is encouraged (instructors can assign some of the sources and ask students to analyze them, rather than students just aiming to find a certain number of sources)
* Provide documents – “cheat sheets” (through the Writing Center?) easily available to students in all courses that address: effective theses, citations, argument writing, persuasive writing, transitions, etc.
* Provide students with examples of good essays (strong thesis, evidence, critical analysis, discussion on sources, citations…) as well as poor essays
* Staging/scaffolding papers is very important and is recommended in all courses (ex. Start with annotated bibliography)
* **Customize Future Assessment:** Design assessment methods (rubrics?) specific for each course/category; for example, Music and Theater papers had a lot of value that was not being captured by the current rubrics
* **Share Assessment Results** with all stakeholders through presentations and document sharing so that findings and recommendations can be utilized for curriculum improvement

***Analysis of assignments***

*Findings*

* Only a 40% (16/40) of the prompts specify genre and mode of the assigned essay, often minimally.
* Slightly more than half (23/40) provide specific command words in their instructions to students.
* 70% (28/40) state what the main focus of the assignment should be.
* About 85% of the prompts (33/40) specify the expected length of the essay; the lengths varied greatly - from 1 to 9 pages - with the majority being 3-4 and 5-6 page assignments. Short essays were usually assignments meant to lead to a longer essay.
* Of the 11 assignments requiring research, only 7 specified the amount of research expected.
* While most of the prompts submitted to the Gen Ed office did not include deadlines, it is assumed that they are specified to students. A few assignments included scaffolding process.
* Only 20 % (8/40) prompts specify evaluative criteria.

*Recommendations*

* **Organize faculty development workshops.** Possible topics include: • Scaffolding • Rubrics and evaluative criteria • What Is Analytic Writing? • What Are Our Writing Assignments For? What Sorts of Writing Are We Asking For?
* **Provide instructors with assignment prompt template**
* **Improve the assessment method for assignment prompts.**

***Faculty surveys*** *conducted in Spring 16 and Fall 16*

The survey confirmed the findings of other assessments that stronger support for faculty teaching Gen Ed is needed. Instructors desire to continue improving their teaching and would welcome additional resources and support in order to better align their curriculum and pedagogy with Gen Ed expectations. Therefore, the Office of General Education will:

* **Organize “Gen Ed 101”** sessions at the beginning of every semester to include:
* Curriculum overview
* Goals/Learning outcomes per category
* Scoring Rubrics for used in learning outcomes assessment
* Assessment overview and latest findings
* Goal of making a coherent writing experience in Gen Ed; coordinated writing assignments
* Coordinate with the English Department in developing **WAC workshop(s)**
* Develop a Gen Ed **pamphlet/handbook** for faculty and students

***Student Focus Group***

While the availability of information, curricular offerings and learning experiences are well received by students, the advising experiences and course structure can be improved. The Office of General Education will:

* Develop [**master list of courses with course descriptions**](https://www.ccny.cuny.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways%20courses%20with%20descriptions%20sept%2015%202016.docx) so that students don’t have to search for these on their own.
* Work on **collecting and publishing information about writing experiences in General Education courses** in order to provide more guidance in course section and communicate to students the importance of developing this skill as one of the goals of Gen Ed. This will be included in a handbook/pamphlet for both faculty and students.
* **Share the findings of this discussion and start conversations with relevant offices**: advising (on how to make advisement more personal) and departments/dean’s offices (about the importance of good TA structure in large lectures).

Writing Skills Rubric CCNY

 Developed from UC Davis Writing Program rubric, located at <http://writing.ucdavis.edu/programs-and-services/the-workshop-program/faculty-handouts>

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Beginning (1) | Developing (2) | Proficient (3) | Accomplished (4) |
| **Thesis and Topic Sentences** | -Responds to the assigned topic but lacks a coherent thesis-Body paragraphs lack topic sentences, or topic sentences either fail to address or only partially address the assignment | -Has a coherent thesis, but thesis is either too vague or too self-evident to be effectively developed-Body paragraphs have topic sentences, but they may be too general or too specific to be effective-Some but not all topic sentences develop thesis | -Has a thesis with sufficient focus and clarity to be effectively developed-All body paragraphs have effective topic sentences that serve to develop thesis | -Has a compelling thesis, and thesis may take into account competing point(s) of view-All body paragraphs have effective topic sentences that serve to develop complexity of thesis  |
| **Structure and Organization** | -Lacks a coherent introduction-Progression of thought within paragraphs is unclear or illogical-Progression of thought from paragraph to paragraph is unclear or illogical-Lacks a coherent conclusion | -Has a coherent introduction, but needs greater focus to set up the thesis-Progression of thought within paragraphs is clear and logical, but progression of thought from paragraph to paragraph is not-Has a coherent conclusion, but needs greater focus | -Has a focused introduction that effectively sets up the thesis-Progression of thought both within and between paragraphs is clear and logical-Has a clear and focused conclusion | -Has a compelling introduction -Has an organizing strategy that provides coherence throughout the essay-Has a compelling conclusion |
| **Evidence and Development** | -Has little supporting evidence or evidence is too general-Has major omissions of essential evidence-Makes limited use of specific examples-Connections between evidence and assigned topic are weak or missing-The paper reads more like a summary than an analysis | -Has supporting evidence, but not enough to effectively develop thesis-Has some omissions of essential evidence-Some but not all body paragraphs provide specific examples that develop thesis-Makes connections between evidence and thesis, but connections are not consistent throughout-Some analysis, but still relies too much on summarization | -Has sufficient supporting evidence to effectively develop thesis, and no omissions of essential evidence-All body paragraphs provide specific examples that develop thesis-Makes connections between evidence and thesis throughout-Summarization is subordinate to analysis | -Uses evidence in specific and thorough ways to develop thesis in depth-Uses counter-evidence to demonstrate broad understanding of the topic |
| **Mechanics and Style** | -The writing is unfocused and unclear at the sentence level-There are major problems in grammar, punctuation, and usage, some of which undermine the communication of ideas-The paper appears to be a first draft | -The writing is focused and clear at the sentence level but not at the paragraph level-There are a few major problems in grammar, punctuation, and usage, but they do not undermine the communication of ideas-Sufficient evidence of carelessness that suggests the paper was not proofread | -The writing is focused and clear at both the sentence level and the paragraph level-There are only minor problems in grammar, punctuation, and usage-The paper appears to have been proofread | -The writer uses a sophisticated vocabulary and a varied sentence structure-There are almost no errors in grammar, punctuation, and usage |

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| **Written Communication VALUE Rubric – alternative rubric** |  |

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles.

It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Capstone**4 | **Milestones**3 2 | **Benchmark**1 |
| **Context of and Purpose for Writing***Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).* | Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work. | Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context). | Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions). | Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience). |
| **Content Development** | Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work. | Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work. | Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work. | Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work. |
| **Sources and Evidence** | Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing | Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing. | Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing. | Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing. |
| **Control of Syntax and Mechanics** | Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free. | Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors. | Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors. | Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage. |

**Critical Thinking Skills Rubric AACU**

Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion.

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|  | **Capstone 4**4 | **Milestone 3**  3  | **Milestone 2** | **Benchmark 1**1 |
| **Explanation of issues** | Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. | Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions. | Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/ or backgrounds unknown. | Issue/ problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description. |
| **Evidence***Selecting and using information to investigate a point of view or conclusion* | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are questioned thoroughly. | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/ evaluation to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are subject to questioning. | Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/ evaluation, but not enough to develop a coherent analysis or synthesis. Viewpoints of experts are taken as mostly fact, with little questioning. | Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/ evaluation.Viewpoints of experts are taken as fact, without question. |
| **Influence of context and assumptions** | Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position. | Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position. | Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa). | Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position. |
| **Student's position (perspective, thesis/hypothesis)** | Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) is imaginative, taking into account the complexities of an issue. Limits of position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) are acknowledged. Others' points of view are synthesized within position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) takes into account the complexities of an issue. Others' points of view are acknowledged within position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis). | Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) acknowledges different sides of an issue. | Specific position (perspective, thesis/ hypothesis) is stated, but is simplistic and obvious. |
| **Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)** | Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student’s informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order. | Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly. | Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly. | Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified. |

**Information Literacy Skills Rubric CCNY**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Demonstrates a clear understanding of information needs and is able to search efficiently.**  | Does not define and articulate information needs, identify appropriate keywords for retrieval, identify which sources might be useful, and/or efficiently access the necessary information | Understands the research question but is not fully confident in identifying search term(s). Has knowledge of an information source. Needs assistance in interpreting the information collected. | Understands the research question, demonstrates an understanding of 1 or 2 information sources and how to access them, and can interpret the collected information | Creates original thesis statements or focused research questions appropriate to the assignment; demonstrates clear understanding of many different types of information sources and how to access them; uses appropriate information sources; and insightfully interprets the information collected |
| **Effectively evaluates information sources** | Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the criteria for evaluating information sources in relevance to the research assignment. Uses unscholarly or unreliable sources. | Some understanding of the criteria for evaluating information sources. Uses scholarly databases containing researched sources. | Understands and reviews information sources, considers whether the amount of information is sufficient to address the issue. | Comprehensive in the ability to evaluate information sources effectively for relevance to research assignment. Evaluates information thoroughly and effectively for reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias. |
| **Articulates credibility of sources** | No mention of credibility, such as authority, affiliation of author, timeliness, or bias | Mentions one aspect of credibility, such as authority, affiliation of author, timeliness, or bias | Mentions two aspects of credibility, such as authority, affiliation of author, timeliness, or bias | Mentions all aspect of credibility, such as authority, affiliation of author, timeliness, and bias |
| **Uses information ethically** | Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of acknowledging sources. Inaccuracy of citations, footnotes, bibliographies; inappropriate citation style; does not understand plagiarism. | Some understanding of acknowledging sources. Uses appropriate citation style; needs improvement in formatting the bibliographies and footnotes. Understands what constitutes plagiarism and does not plagiarize.  | Acknowledges sources and uses the correct citation style for formatting footnotes and bibliographies. Understands what constitutes plagiarism and does not plagiarize.  | Thorough acknowledgement of sources through careful incorporation of citations, footnotes, endnotes, or other widely accepted documentation style. Includes complete bibliographic information formatted with near complete accuracy. Does not plagiarize. |