

1. Writing Plan Cover Page

Please fill in the gray areas on this form.

June 21, 2011

First Edition of Writing Plan

Subsequent Edition of Writing Plan: previous plan submitted summer 2010, First edition submitted summer 2010

African American & African Studies

WEC Unit Name

African American & African Studies

Liberal Arts

Department

College

Walt Jacobs

Associate Professor and Chair

WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)

Title

wrjacobs@umn.edu

612-624-8012

Email

Phone

Writing Plan ratified by Faculty

Date: May 12, 2010 If Vote: /
yes # total

Process by which Writing Plan was ratified within unit (vote, consensus, other- please explain):

No vote was taken. At the May 12, 2010 faculty meeting we reviewed the 2009-2010 WEC process, and outlined the main elements for the Writing Plan document. The general structure of the first edition of the Writing Plan was approved by consensus at thus May 12 meeting, and then drafts of the documenty were circulated for comments. No subsequent vote was taken for the second edition of the Writing Plan, as no new thematic elements introduced.

2. Unit Profile: African American & African Studies

Please fill in the gray areas on this form.

Number of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty:

<u>2</u>	Professors	
<u>4</u>	Associate Professors	1 Asst. professor is Contract faculty.
<u>4</u>	Assistant Professors	
<u>10</u>	Total	

Major(s) <i>Please list each major your Unit offers:</i>	Total # students enrolled in major as of Spring 2011	Total # students graduating with major AY 10-11
African American & African Stu	30	7
Total:		

WEC Process	Date	# participated	/	# invited
Intro Meeting for Faculty	9/2/2009	8	/	16
Online Faculty Survey	9/21/2009-10/7/2009	6	/	11
Online Student Survey	9/21/2009-10/7/2009	7	/	38
Online TA/GI Survey	9/21/2009-10/7/2009	1	/	6
Meeting 1	10/28/2009	5	/	16
Meeting 2	11/18/2009	7	/	16
Meeting 3	12/9/2009	10	/	16
Meeting 4	2/3/2009	12	/	16
			/	
			/	

3. Signature Page

Please fill in the gray areas on this form.

Electronic signatures may be submitted in lieu of this page. If this page is submitted as a hard copy, please include a print out of the electronic signature chain here.

WEC Faculty Liaison

Walt Jacobs

Associate Professor

WEC Faculty Liaison (print name)

Title

Signature

June 21, 2011

Date

Department Head/Chair

Walt Jacobs

Associate Professor

Print Name

Title

Signature

June 17, 2011

Date

Associate Dean

Jennifer Windsor

Professor

Print Name

Title

Signature

Date

For College of Liberal Arts units only:

CLA - Curriculum, Instruction, and Advising Committee approved Writing Plan on

Date

Print Name

Title

Signature

Date

4. Writing Plan Narrative

Please retain section headers and prompts in your plan.

Executive Summary (1-page maximum): For what reason(s) did this unit (department, school, college) become involved in the WEC project? What key implementation activities are proposed in this edition of its Writing Plan and what, briefly, is the thinking behind these proposed activities? If this is a second+ edition of this unit's Writing Plan, please also highlight activities that are new to this edition.

Currently there is no systematic writing instruction conducted in the Department of African American & African Studies (AA&AS), other than in the Senior Seminar. In all other classes writing instruction is left to the discretion of the faculty member. One of the challenges of the department's major is that the majority of AA&AS majors do not decide that they want to enroll in the major until after they've taken several 3000 level classes. A typical AA&AS class may have seniors enrolled as well as freshmen, and will include advanced English speakers and writers, as well as those who require remedial attention (such as some English Language Learners). Given that it is extremely difficult to build abilities from class to class since students' movements through courses are so unpredictable and there exists a wide variance in students' communicative proficiencies, we wanted to explore other ways in which we could address student writing. Through the WEC process the department developed a 'toolkit' of diagnostic assignments that reveal where the students in each class are in terms of our articulated writing abilities, and procedures that instructors could use to address gaps. [See a table of the toolkit's contents at the end of this narrative; the complete toolkit is provided under separate cover.]

During the academic year of the first edition of the Writing Plan (fall 2010 and spring 2011) our Graduate Research Assistant (RA) developed the toolkit and pilot tested assignments with two faculty in two of our spring 2011 classes: AFRO 1012 Black "Worlds in Global Perspective: Challenges and Changes," and AFRO 3910 "Digital Storytelling." The toolkit currently contains 16 'tools' that instructors can use to address student writing; both in and out of class tools were designed, for early- and/or mid- semester implementation. The toolkit also contains a list of resources instructors can use to engage concerns with the mechanics of writing (punctuation, citation format, spelling, grammar, etc.). Over the summer of 2011 the RA will meet with each member of the faculty about the AA&AS toolkit in order to introduce the faculty member to the toolkit materials and to strategize about tool deployment in specific courses. During this period the RA will also meet with the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies to revise the Senior Seminar to (a) use tools from the AA&AS toolkit, and (b) implement best practices used in other WEC units that have Senior Seminars.

The current second edition of the Writing Plan does not propose any new activities that were not present in the first edition; the second edition expands the implementation of the central element of the initial Writing Plan, the AA&AS toolkit. During second edition implementation the department expects that each faculty member will deploy tools from the toolkit at least twice during the 2011-2012 academic year (two different tools, or one tool used in the fall and reused in the spring), and then the faculty will meet at the end of spring 2012 to assess the results and decide on next steps. The AA&AS WEC Liaison will work with WEC staff to develop specific assessments of the efficacy of the Writing Plan. We are not requesting any additional financial support, given that the toolkit was successfully developed and pilot tested during the initial edition of the Writing Plan. The WEC Liaison and the Director of Undergraduate Studies will share responsibility for helping faculty use the AA&AS toolkit in lieu of hiring another Graduate Research Assistant.

AA&AS believes that using the AA&AS toolkit to share writing expectations with students and to deploy devices to become more intentional in writing instruction will create efficiencies based on the instructor's goals for the course. Such a class-by-class approach fits with the department's philosophy of meeting students where they are. In sum, the toolkit (a) helps students better understand the instructor's objectives and goals, and (b) helps instructors design classroom procedures and assessments that more accurately reflect the students' interests and abilities.

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

- Addresses the matrix of domination (connections of race, ethnicity, gender, and class)
- Addresses multiple sources and audiences
- Analytical
- Argumentative (persuasive versus polemical)
- Articulative (linking and persuading): making connections among arguments and recognizing contextual constraints
- Critical (deliberative evaluation)
- Evidence-based
- Flexible
- Fluid and multiple competencies
- Focused
- In depth (rather than skimming)
- Interpretive
- Multi-modal: expressive of ideas in multiple formats (blogs, presentations, spoken word, writing, social networks, etc.)
- Self-reflexive

Section #2: DESIRED WRITING ABILITIES **: With which writing abilities should students in this unit's majors graduate?

- Apply the principles of rhetoric and logic.
- Recognize the rules and responsibilities of different genres.
- Code switch: appropriately address multiple audiences at different levels of formality and in different discursive arenas.
- Use code switching to help reshape academic and other discourses.
- Take a position and support it with accurate information.
- Display a strong sense of agency by taking a personal position (e.g., can use "I") instead of only reporting others' positions.
- Demonstrate critical thinking: identify key assumptions and conceptual frameworks, make a reasoned argument, and defend that argument against the best opposing arguments.
- Demonstrate understanding of the matrix of domination and strategies for resistance to domination.
- Identify key concepts in the fields that contribute to African American and African Studies.
- Display consciousness of the ways of knowing in the discipline of African American and African Studies.
- Critique myths and stereotypes about African American and African peoples, histories, and cultures.

*Adjectives, or adjectival phrases are typically most useful here, for example, "transparent to logic," (Nursing); "Analytic (versus journalistic) and argumentative" (Political Science).

**Verbs or verbal phrases are typically most useful here, for example, "Take a principled, not arbitrary position" (Geography); "Visually represent designs and explain salient features of a part or concept" (Mechanical Engineering).

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, structural plans does this unit have for changing the way that writing and writing instruction are sequenced across its course offerings? With what rationales are changes proposed and what indicators will signify their impact?

Currently there is no systematic writing instruction conducted in AA&AS, other than in the AFRO 4991W Senior Seminar. The Senior Seminar is taught by the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS), who meets with students weekly during the fall semester to address the mechanics of writing; students meet with a faculty mentor about the research process itself. In all other classes writing instruction is left to the discretion of the faculty member.

One of the challenges of the department's major is that the majority of AA&AS majors do not decide that they want to enroll in the major until after they've taken several 3000 level classes. Once students declare the major, then they have to complete additional required coursework, including going back and taking one of the gateway introductory classes, such as AFRO 1012 Black "Worlds in Global Perspective: Challenges and Changes." Non-major students taking AA&AS classes are predominantly College of Liberal Arts majors, but many students come from other colleges.

A typical AA&AS class may have seniors enrolled as well as freshmen, and will include advanced English speakers and writers, as well as those who require remedial attention (such as some English Language Learners). Given that it is extremely difficult to build abilities from class to class since students' movements through courses are so unpredictable and there exists a wide variance in students' communicative proficiencies, the department developed a 'toolkit' of assignments that reveal where the students in each class are in terms of our articulated writing abilities, and procedures that instructors could use to address gaps. Some of the assignments have an explicit diagnostic component to first determine students' writing capabilities given a specific writing characteristic, whereas others assume that all students have little experience with a specific writing ability so they go directly into skill-building procedures. The toolkit currently contains 16 'tools' that instructors can use to address student writing; both in and out of class tools were designed, for early- and/or mid- semester implementation. The toolkit also contains a list of resources instructors can use to engage concerns with the mechanics of writing (punctuation, citation format, spelling, grammar, etc.). The toolkit's table of contents is provided at the end of this narrative; please see the complete AA&AS toolkit for additional information.

As noted above, the Senior Seminar is the only course that has a systematic engagement with writing. (Indeed, while our Writing Intensive courses meet the guidelines for Writing Intensive courses, the process of communicating expectations and evaluating student work is left to the discretion of individual faculty; only the Senior Seminar has a set departmental format). In the fall of 2008 the Senior Seminar was converted from a two-semester course sequence to a one semester, one course process due to low student completion rates and concerns with the quality of student writing. We are pleased with the initial improvement in writing shown in the new system, but much work remains to be done given the mix of writing proficiencies of students in this capstone course. During the summer of 2011 the DUGS is working with our WEC Graduate Research Assistant to further revise the Senior Seminar for its fall 2011 offering. The fall 2011 class will use (a) tools from the AA&AS toolkit, and (b) best practices used in other WEC units that have senior seminars. Three best practices that will definitely be implemented: (1) the development of a contract of expectations and obligations between students and faculty members who are advising the senior papers, (2) establishing course participation milestones that have grade implications (e.g., 10% of final grade determined by an annotated bibliography submitted in week 5), and (3) revising course grading to incorporate both the senior paper (grade given by the advisor) and course participation (grade given by the DUGS).

We believe that more widely and explicitly sharing writing expectations with students and employing devices to become more intentional in writing instruction will create efficiencies based on the instructor's goals for the course. Such a class-by-class approach fits with the department's philosophy of meeting students where they are. In sum, the toolkit (a) helps students better understand the instructor's objectives and goals, and (b)

helps instructors design classroom procedures and assessments that more accurately reflect the students' interests and abilities.

Section #4: ASSESSMENT of STUDENT WRITING : How does this unit currently communicate writing expectations (see sections #1 and #2) to undergraduate students? What do these expectations look like when they are translated into ratable criteria? How satisfied is the unit faculty that students are adequately familiar with these expectations? What, if any, plans are proposed for disseminating content from this Writing Plan to students?

During the academic year of the first edition of the Writing Plan (fall 2010 and spring 2011) our RA developed the toolkit and pilot tested some of the tools with two faculty in two of their spring 2011 classes: AFRO 1012 Black "Worlds in Global Perspective: Challenges and Changes," and AFRO 3910 "Digital Storytelling." She also consulted with a third faculty member and the DUGS about how they could use the toolkit in their classes. Over the summer of 2011 the RA will continue to work with the initial four faculty members, and also meet with the other six faculty members to introduce each faculty member to the toolkit materials and to strategize about tool deployment in specific courses.

The department has not yet undergone the process of translating rating writing expectations into ratable criteria, as toolkit construction revealed that our writing characteristics and abilities are not yet as precisely defined as we would like. The characteristics and abilities will be reevaluated during the 2011-2012 academic year, as the toolkit is put into wider use in the department. We expect to participate in the writing rating process in the summer of 2012.

In general, the faculty are currently only moderately satisfied with students' knowledge of writing expectations and fulfillment of writing abilities. We are optimistic that using the toolkit will be a powerful way of addressing these deficiencies. Indeed, the two faculty who pilot tested tools in their spring 2011 classes were pleased with improvement in student writing.

The AA&AS toolkit is currently available as a pdf file. Over the summer of 2011 we will create an online version of the toolkit so that students will have easy access. Additionally, other WEC units will be able to review and use the online AA&AS toolkit.

Section #5: SUMMARY of IMPLEMENTATION PLANS and REQUESTED SUPPORT: Based on above discussions, 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? What kinds of assessment support does this unit request to help assess the efficacy of this Writing Plan? What are the expected outcomes of this support?

As discussed in section 4, during the current first edition of the Writing Plan the Graduate Research Assistant developed the AA&AS writing toolkit and is working individually with each of the department's ten faculty members about deploying the toolkit in our classes. During the implementation of the second edition of the Writing Plan the department expects that each faculty member will try at least one tool from the toolkit during the fall 2011 semester, and in spring 2012 each faculty member will either reuse that tool, or select a second tool to deploy. At the end of spring 2012 the faculty will meet to assess the results and decide on next steps. The department does not expect any implementation issues given this low stakes and gradual rollout of the toolkit. As noted earlier, the AA&AS WEC RA is working with WEC staff to develop specific assessments of the efficacy of the Writing Plan: we envision the creation of a survey that faculty will complete after deploying a tool, and a survey that students will use after completing an assignment.

What will success look like? In the short term, we believe that the Writing Plan will be successful if the toolkit is widely adopted by instructors and students. A longer-term measure of success will be if a majority of students enter the Senior Seminar capstone with advanced writing proficiencies, instead of the current mix of beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Although we can not predict the exact path students will take to get to the Senior Seminar, after complete integration of the new Writing Plan students will take several classes that employ the toolkit, and thus, will have developed many of the writing abilities needed to successfully complete the Senior Seminar.

We are not requesting any additional financial support, given that the toolkit was successfully developed and pilot tested during the initial edition of the Writing Plan. During the second edition of the Writing Plan the WEC Liaison and the Director of Undergraduate Studies will share responsibility for helping faculty use the AA&AS toolkit. (We designate these two faculty members as the primary contacts for the Writing Plan to help promote faculty ownership of the plan and process.) The Liaison and DUGS may develop additional tools for the toolkit during the second edition of the Writing Plan, as we regard the toolkit as a “living” document that is subject to continual evaluation and revision.

Section #6: PROCESS USED TO CREATE THIS WRITING PLAN: How, and to what degree, were stakeholders in this unit (faculty members, instructors, affiliates, teaching assistants, undergraduates, others) engaged in providing, revising, and approving the content of this Writing Plan?

Content for the initial edition of the Writing Plan was generated during the 2009-2010 academic year through the WEC process: initial and four follow-up meetings with faculty and staff, online surveys, and student writing sample collection. The faculty at the May 12, 2010 faculty meeting approved the general structure of the AA&AS Writing Plan. Drafts of the specifics of the Writing Plan were circulated in May and June 2010. During the 2010-2011 academic year the Liaison provided updates to the faculty on progress in the development and pilot testing of the AA&AS toolkit. During faculty meetings of late spring 2011 the Liaison obtained consensus about the general elements of the second edition of the Writing Plan.

Section #7: Briefly, please describe the ways that the ideas contained in this Undergraduate Writing Plan address the University's Student Learning Outcomes (<http://www.slo.umn>).

Each of the seven Student Learning Outcomes is addressed in the AA&AS curriculum. While no one course meets all seven SLOs, most address SLOs 1-5. The AA&AS Undergraduate Writing Plan will enable all AA&AS courses to more effectively meet SLO 5 (“Can communicate effectively”), and will enable instructors to better articulate any other SLOs they desire to engage.

Appendix: AA&AS Toolkit Table of Contents (Summer 2011)

INTRODUCTION
SUMMARY DIAGNOSTIC
IN-TEXT CITATION DIAGNOSTIC
IDENTIFYING CONTENT-BASED & AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES
CRITICAL READING AND PARAPHRASING
WRITING AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES
WORKING WITH VISUAL TEXTS
CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 1
CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 2

CRITICAL READING JOURNAL 3
DISCUSSING AUTHOR-CENTERED SUMMARIES
“WHO CARES?” IDENTIFYING AUDIENCE & ASSUMPTIONS
AUDIENCE-SPECIFIC ARGUMENTS
IDENTIFYING HISTORICAL AND DISCIPLINARY CONTEXTS
WORKING WITH TEXTUAL EVIDENCE
CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS WITH CLAIMS
WORKING WITH RESEARCH PAPERS
WORKING WITH REVERSE OUTLINES
MECHANICAL CONCERNS RESOURCES

5. WEC Writing Plan Requests

Unit Name: **African American & African Studies**

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

Semester 1:		Semester 2:		Semester 3:	
Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
N/A		N/A		N/A	
Semester 1 Total:		Semester 2 Total:		Semester 3 Total:	
\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	

Rationale for costs and their schedule of distribution

We are not requesting any additional funding.

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

Semester 1:		Semester 2:		Semester 3:	
Service	Qty	Service	Qty	Service	Qty
Consultation	1	Consultation	1	Consultation	1

Description and rationale for services

We would like to consult with WEC staff once a semester about on-going implementation and assessment issues.

Semester 4:		Semester 5:		Semester 6:	
Item	Cost	Item	Cost	Item	Cost
N/A		N/A		N/A	
Semester 4 Total:		Semester 5 Total:		Semester 6 Total:	
\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00	

Semester 4:		Semester 5:		Semester 6:	
Service	Qty	Service	Qty	Service	Qty
Consultation	1	Consultation	1	Consultation	1

African American and African Studies

7/14/2011 Writing Plan approved by the Campus Writing Board

8/18/2011 Writing Plan fiscal requests approved by Office of the Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education

	Cost	Item	Term	Fiscal Year
\$	0.00	No funds requested.	N/A	N/A
\$	0.00	TOTAL		