

**COVER SHEET  
FOR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE PROPOSAL**

**To Submit:** Please place all documents (i.e., cover sheet, proposal form, syllabus, and supporting documents) into a folder named with course subject and number (e.g., PSYC 101) and put in the folder at <http://tiny.utk.edu/VolCoreProposalDrop>. If you have any problems, please contact the chair of the General Education Committee.

**Contact Information (please print or type):**

Name: Heather Hirschfeld  
Department: English  
Email: [hhirschf@utk.edu](mailto:hhirschf@utk.edu)  
Phone: 4-5401

Commented [RJM1]: Include your contact information.

**Course information:**

**Provide full catalog entry for the course** including course subject, number, suffix (if any), course title, credit hours, course description, prerequisites/corequisites, credit restrictions, etc.

**NOTES:**

- *Courses in WC category **must** have the following prerequisite:* (RE) Prerequisite(s): English 102, 132, 290, or 298 (*plus any others for this course*).
- *Courses in AOC category: We **strongly encourage** the oral communication general education requirement used in your program serve as a prerequisite for this course* (e.g., CMST 210, 240; CE 205; Phil 244).
- Courses may apply for either OC or AOC but not both categories.

**Catalog entry for course:**

ENGL 255 - Public Writing  
3 Credit Hours  
Rhetorical strategies for effective communication about public issues. Students will learn to write for multiple audiences and may be asked to participate in collaborative writing projects with business, academic, or political organizations.  
Satisfies General Education Requirement: (WC)  
(RE) Prerequisite(s): 102, 118, 132, 290, or 298.

Commented [RJM2]: Remember to include the exact catalog copy, which you can copy and paste from catalog.utk.edu.

**Note to GenEd Committee:** All 200-level courses in the English Department can be taken by students who have completed English 118, so the pre-requisite list above includes 118 in addition to 102, 132, 290, and 298.

**Frequency of Course Offering** (e.g., fall only, spring only):

- **Every semester, including summer**

**Course Capacity per Semester** (*per course & total if multiple sections*):

- **550 students (approximately 20 sections of 25 students in the fall and spring, 2 sections in the summer)**

**Course format** (e.g., lecture, discussion, lab):

- **Lecture**

How is this class to be staffed (i.e., instructor, GTAs, graders etc.)?

- **This course is primarily taught by full- and part-time lecturers, with the occasional PhD GTA teaching a section.**

**COVER SHEET  
FOR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE APPROVAL**

**Please check all that apply:**

	Areas in which this course is already approved	Applying for inclusion in these categories for General Education through the 2020-2021 catalog	Applying for inclusion in these categories for Volunteer Core (starting with the 2021-2022 catalog)
Written Communication (WC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Verbal Communication (OC)			
Applied Oral Communication (AOC)		N/A	
Arts & Humanities (AH)			
Applied Arts and Humanities (AAH)		N/A	
Natural Sciences (NS) – Lab			
Natural Sciences (NS) – Non-lab			
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)			
Social Sciences (SS)			
Global Citizenship-International (GCI)		N/A	
Global Citizenship-US (GCUS)		N/A	
Engaged Inquiries (EI)		N/A	
Cultures & Civilization (CC)			N/A

Commented [RJM3]: Check the appropriate boxes.

*Please attach proposal forms and materials appropriate to the categories checked above.*

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (WC)

### PROPOSAL FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AND/OR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE APPROVAL

**To Submit:** Please place all documents (i.e., cover sheet, proposal form, syllabus, and supporting documents) into a folder named with course subject and number (e.g., PSYC 101) and put in the folder at <http://tiny.utk.edu/VolCoreProposalDrop>. If you have any problems, please contact the chair of the General Education Committee.

**Example form:** For an example completed proposal form, see the [Vol Core AH website](#).

**Course department, number, suffix (S [service], R [research], N [internship]) and title:**

ENGL 255 – Public Writing

#### NOTES:

- Courses in WC category **must** have the following prerequisite:  
(RE) Prerequisite(s): English 102, 132, 290, or 298 (*plus any others for this course*):
- Courses with an S (service), R (research), or N (internship) designation will be equivalent to their base course for the Effective Communication and Expanded Perspectives Volunteer Core categories. The base course and suffix courses will be considered as different courses for Engaged Inquiries.

**Please check yes or no on each line:**

Yes  No  Course is currently approved as a WC course.

Yes  No  Applying for inclusion in WC for Gen Ed **through the 2020-2021 catalog**.

Yes  No  Applying for inclusion in WC for Volunteer Core, which **starts with the 2021-2022 catalog**.

Yes  No  This is a new course. (Approval for Volunteer Core will be contingent on curricular approval.)

Commented [RJM4]: Check the appropriate responses.

**Contact Information (please print or type):**

Name: Heather Hirschfeld  
Department: English  
Email: [hhirschf@utk.edu](mailto:hhirschf@utk.edu)  
Phone: 4-5401

#### Written Communication

Good writing skills enable students to create and share ideas, investigate and describe values, and record and explain discoveries – all skills that are necessary for professional success and personal fulfillment. Students must also be able to write correctly and engage in a productive writing process that includes drafting, feedback, and revision. They also must be able to locate relevant information, evaluate its usefulness and quality, and incorporate it logically and ethically to support ideas and claims for different audiences and purposes.

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (WC)

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Courses in this area are expected to produce the **following outcomes** for students:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to write correctly, employing appropriate conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to focus material to convey a clear, unified point or effect.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to shape content, organization, style, and/or documentation conventions to correspond with appropriate disciplinary expectations and rhetorical contexts, including audience and purpose.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to locate and use relevant, credible evidence to support ideas.

Answer all the following questions with respect to the description and learning outcomes given below.

- I. Please describe how the proposed course meets the four Written Communication Volunteer Core student learning outcomes. How will this course support students' achievements of the Volunteer Core outcomes for this area?

**Outcome 1:** Students will demonstrate the ability to write correctly, employing appropriate conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

*How does the course meet this learning outcome?*

Students in English 255 compose a range of genres for public audiences such as op-eds, editorials, blog posts, websites, and social media campaigns. Students also write rhetorical analyses of public genres. Whether writing public or academic genres, in order to succeed students must be able to demonstrate that they are able to write correctly and appropriately for the genre and discourse community in question. This instruction is often couched in the language of ethos or credibility: students can establish an effective ethos by producing writing that meets audience and genre expectations regarding appropriate conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Toward that end, instructors provide feedback related to such concerns on student writing and often assess students' final drafts in terms of how well students are able to employ conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics appropriate for the genre in question.

**Outcome 2:** Students will demonstrate the ability to focus material to convey a clear, unified point or effect.

*How does the course meet this learning outcome?*

The majority of writing that students produce in ENGL 255 is persuasive or analytical and thus thesis driven. To succeed in the course, students must be able to make a focused claim and support it with appropriate evidence.

**Commented [RJM5]:** Some version of these outcomes will need to be listed on the representative syllabus you include with your proposal.

**Commented [RJM6]:** Note how the response to Outcome 1 foregrounds what students will write and how that writing will be used to demonstrate their ability to write correctly, employing appropriate conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics. That's where the focus in your response should be—on what students will write that shows they have met this outcome.

**Commented [RJM7]:** If students in your course produce thesis-based writing or develop and explore a research question in their writing, that would be the information to foreground here.

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**Outcome 3:** Students will demonstrate the ability to shape content, organization, style, and/or documentation conventions to correspond with appropriate disciplinary expectations and rhetorical contexts, including audience and purpose.

*How does the course meet this learning outcome?*

Students in English 255 will be writing analyses aimed at an academic audience and public genres aimed at a public audience. As such, they will be asked to shape content, organization, style, and documentation in ways that correspond with conventions of academic writing and public writing. To succeed in the course, students must be able to write in ways that achieve their rhetorical purpose (e.g., persuading or informing) and correspond with the expectations of academic and public audiences.

**Commented [RJM8]:** Different genres require different conventions of writing, and so commenting on the genres students are writing, the audiences they're writing for, and the disciplines or discourse communities in which they're writing is appropriate here.

In many cases, students may be expected to produce academic writing suitable for an audience of scholars in a particular field or discipline. The rhetorical purpose in such instances may be to argue for a position or synthesize extant research findings.

In other situations, students may be writing reports, memos, executive summaries, or performance critiques for different audiences. Purposes for those genres might include informing, reporting, persuading, or critiquing, among others.

**Outcome 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to locate and use relevant, credible evidence to support ideas.

*How does the course meet this learning outcome?*

Much of the formal writing assignments that students complete in ENGL 255 require students to make and support a claim. As such, they must be able to locate and use relevant, credible evidence to support their arguments, and they must do so in ways that correspond with the expectations for public or academic genres and audiences.

**Commented [RJM9]:** Note that "course assessment" does not refer to how you will grade students in the course. Rather, it refers to how a course will be assessed in terms of how well it is meeting the WC Course Outcomes. In this case, grading and assessment are separate concerns.

#### II. Course Assessment

According to the revised General Education guidelines, all approved Volunteer Core courses must be assessed according to the guidelines and timeline set by the General Education Committee. For the review, this course will need to provide quantifiable data and results regarding the assessment above. With that in mind, please be as specific as possible in your plan to measure each of the learning outcomes below. (You can refer to the Volunteer Core assessment document and rubrics on the [Volunteer Core website](#).)

Assessment plans for WC courses should feature direct assessment of student writing using the [WC Course Rubric](#) to answer the question, "How well are students meeting the four WC Course Outcomes?"

**Commented [RJM10]:** Please note the requirements of the assessment plan here: it must use student writing from the course, and it must use the WC Course Rubric to score that writing.

**To answer the question below, please include:**

- a. A **description of the student work** that will be used to assess each learning objective. The student work may be an exam, an essay, a lab report, a reaction paper, a set of homework problems, a short-answer response provided on a mid-term exam, selected multiple-choice questions from a quiz, etc. More than one learning outcome can be assessed by the same student work. The assignment/exam/paper/etc. does not have to be made specifically for the purpose of this assessment. In fact, it is *preferable* that the student work be an assignment or test that is a normal part of the course.

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- b. **The sampling method to be used for the assessment.** If it is expected that there will be multiple sections of the course, you may choose to sample 20% of the sections of the course or 20% of the students in each section. This 20% should be at least 50 students. If the course is expected to have one section or a total of 50 students or less, you should collect work from all students.
- c. **Who will be involved in the assessment.**

*Please describe how your program or department will go about assessing the proposed course.*

Direct assessment will be coordinated by the English Department's Director of Undergraduate Studies. Instructors teaching this multi-sectioned course will use the WC Course Rubric to score a random sample of 20% of the writing produced for one of the assignments from this course. The assignment will be one that asks students to produce analytical writing best suited to the criteria in the rubric. The scoring will take place independently from grading. The Director of Undergraduate Studies will collect and analyze the results, prepare an action plan if needed, and submit assessment reports.

**Commented [RJM11]:** English 255 is a large multisection course, and so we were able to go with a random sampling of 20% of students across all sections. That sampling would net us more than the minimum of 50. If the class had been smaller, we might have revised this to read "a random sample of 50 pieces of student writing for one assignment." If the total course population enrolls fewer than 50 students, state that you will collect all of the writing for one assignment.

### III. 5000-Word Requirement

Please demonstrate that the course will meet or exceed the 5,000-word requirement. List all of the writing assignments the course will feature and include word-length requirements for each. Also clearly designate each one as formal (e.g., polished, graded writing) or informal (e.g., ungraded writing such as drafts, freewrites, field notes, etc.) writing. At least 3500 of the 5000 words should be devoted to formal writing. See the [WC Course Guidelines](#) for more detailed definitions about formal and informal writing.

*How will the course meet or exceed the 5000-word requirement?*

While English 255 is taught in a variety of ways—different instructors require different assignments of varying lengths—all sections meet or exceed the 5000-word requirement.

According to the attached representative syllabus, this course asks students to write the following **formal writing assignments**, which amount to a minimum total of **4500 words** (not counting the variable length components of the assignment):

- Social media comparative analysis (paper 1): 1200-1400 words
- Website analysis (paper 2): 1300-600words
- Final project: Hypothetical event and marketing campaign (paper 3)
  - Paper 3 Proposal: 800-1000 words
  - 20 sample social media posts: variable length
  - Flyer and brochure for hypothetical event: variable length
  - Rhetorical analysis: 1200-1500 words

This course also asks students to write the following **informal writing assignments**, which amount to a total of **3150 words** (not counting the variable length components of the assignment):

- Draft of paper 1: 1200 words
- Draft of paper 2: 750 words minimum
- Draft of flyer & brochure: variable length
- Draft of social media posts: variable length
- Draft of paper 3 rhetorical analysis: 1200 words

**Commented [RJM12]:** Note that the plan identifies the *kind* of assignment that will be collected (one that asks for analytical writing), but that it stops short of naming the specific assignment. Two points to glean here:  
1. The WC Course Rubric assumes writing that is broadly academic. As such, assignments that call for analytical, research-based, thesis-driven, or informational is best suited to the rubric. Creative writing does not fit well.  
2. The assessments will take place on a ten-year cycle, and so build in some flexibility so that future iterations of the course are not linked to an assignment that is no longer taught or that is taught differently.

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Thus the total minimum word count for the course (not counting the variable length components of the assignment) is **7650 words**.

**Commented [RJM13]:** Notice that this section categorizes writing into two broad categories: **formal writing**, which is polished, graded, finished, revised writing, and **informal writing**, which can include drafts, proposals, in-class writing, and other assignments leading up to formal writing. Notice, too, that this section tallies up the totals for each, and then includes an overall course total. Please do the same.

#### IV. Writing as a Vital Component

Please answer the following questions about how writing will be integrated as a vital component of the course.

1. Explicit writing instruction should be integrated into the course and should focus on teaching students how to write according to the criteria for successful performance on the formal, graded writing assignments.

If you use page ranges instead of word counts for your assignments, assume 250 words per page and translate into word counts for us. So, six pages would amount to 1500 words.

*How much class time will be devoted to explicit writing instruction, and how will that instruction be distributed over the semester?*

If you stipulate a range (e.g., 1000-1500 words), please use the minimum when adding up the total word count.

Almost every class session in English 255 involves explicit writing instruction. While not every version of English 255 features the same class schedule, the attached representative syllabus devotes the following days to explicit writing instruction:

- August 23: Key concepts and vocabulary
- August 26: Paper 1 and rhetorical situation
- August 30: Paper 1: Concepts and approaches
- September 6: Style: Excerpts from *They Say/I Say*
- September 9: How to write a blog
- September 11: Writing blogs—style and rhetorical situation
- September 13: Thesis statements, introductions, and conclusions
- September 16: Citation, paraphrasing, and plagiarism
- September 18: Revising and editing essays
- September 23: Discuss paper 2
- October 4: Designing for your target audience
- October 9: Citation, grammar, thesis statements
- October 14: Discuss final project
- October 23: Multimodal composing
- October 25: Finding and citing images
- October 30: Discussion of sample projects
- November 4: Rhetorical situation, layout, and color
- November 6: Social media writing
- November 20: In-class writing and design
- November 22: In-class writing and design

The remaining class sessions include conference sessions, peer review, and discussion of topics related to the major writing assignments.

**Commented [RJM14]:** This list of class sessions and topics devoted to explicit writing instruction may be more detail than is needed, but the point here is that you should *prove* that the course meets the guidelines. Whatever you can do to show that the course does so is helpful.

2. Writing for the course should be distributed throughout the semester over several assignments rather than concentrated in one assignment at the end of the semester.

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*How will writing assignments be distributed throughout the semester?*

Writing assignments in English 255 are distributed throughout the semester. While not every version of English 255 features the same assignments and due dates, the attached representative syllabus lists the following due dates for writing assignments:

- September 20: Paper 1 draft due
- September 25: Paper 1 due
- October 7-11: Paper 2 draft due
- October 16: Paper 2 due
- November 8: Final project proposal due
- November 25: Draft of flyer and brochure
- December 2: Draft of social media posts
- December 4: Draft of rhetorical analysis
- December 11-12: Final project due

**Commented [RJM15]:** These dates correspond with the dates on the sample syllabus. Please don't tell us to look at the sample syllabus to get the dates—do the work for us and list those dates in the proposal.

3. Providing feedback on writing and opportunities for revision are key features of WC courses. Instructor feedback can take the form of written comments, individual conferences, in-class workshops, and/or class lessons on writing conventions. This emphasis on writing processes—drafting and revising with individual feedback from the instructor—should be clearly reflected in the course syllabus.

*How and when will the instructor provide ALL students with feedback and an opportunity for revision?*

Instructors of English 255 provide feedback on student work via written comments and/or by conferencing with students. Instructors also often facilitate peer review of student writing as part of the course schedule.

While not every version of English 255 features the same class schedule or syllabus, the attached representative syllabus makes it clear that mandatory conferences with students will take place during the week of November 11. The syllabus also states the following about feedback and revision:

5. Using the instructor's written feedback, as well as the information learned in a required meeting with the instructor, students will significantly revise one of their course papers. This revision will show the student's understanding of the revision process as well as the student's ability to develop his/her own ideas beyond the comments provided by the instructor. Students will also participate in multiple peer review sessions with their classmates wherein they will provide developed and useful feedback on their classmate's papers;

Additionally, the syllabus includes the following revision policy:

Students may revise Paper 1 for a new grade and Paper 2 for an averaged grade.

- Schedule an appointment with me to discuss your plans for revision within 2 class periods receiving feedback.

**Commented [RJM16]:** Notice that this question asks about two things: feedback and revision opportunities. Please discuss both in your response.

**Commented [RJM17]:** Notice the way this language signals that a multisection course can be taught in different ways, but that they all still meet the WC guidelines.

**Commented [RJM18]:** Notice how this proposal cites the syllabus to prove that the course meets the WC guidelines in terms of feedback and revision.

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### PROPOSAL FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AND/OR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE APPROVAL

- Resubmit your assignment in a folder with all of your previous drafts including my original comments and comment sheet.
- Submit a Revision Memo--a 200-300 word explanation of how & why you revised the paper. This explanation must go beyond simply saying that the paper was revised because it got an unacceptable grade.
- Revisions must go beyond simple surface/grammar corrections.
- Revisions are due on the date given on the grade sheet you receive when I return papers.

The course schedule also makes it clear that students will peer review Paper 1 on September 20, Paper 2 during the week of October 7, and the final project materials during the weeks of November 25 and December 2. Feedback, drafting, and revision are thus built into the class.

4. Writing should constitute a major component of the course grade (50% or more). Also, if the work in this course is graded by someone other than the instructor or is shared by instructor and teaching assistant, please explain how written work will be evaluated.

*Please explain how much of the course grade will be based on writing and how written work graded by someone other than the instructor will be evaluated.*

Almost all of the course grade constitutes writing assignments. While instructors teaching English 255 teach a variety of assignments that are weighted differently, the attached representative syllabus makes it clear that **90%** of the course grade constitutes writing:

- 10% Paper 1 (Social Media Comparative Analysis)
- 20% Paper 2 (Website Analysis)
- 5% Final Project Proposal
- 15% Final Project Social Media Posts
- 10% Final Project Flyer and Brochure
- 30% Final Project Rhetorical Analysis

Total: **90%**

**Commented [RJM19]:** Notice that this section tallies up the total grade due to writing and includes in a bulleted list only those assignments that comprise that total. Please omit from your list any assignments that are not part of the overall writing grade.

#### V. Multi-section courses

If multiple sections of this course are taught by different instructors, please describe the process used to monitor all sections to ensure they are meeting the WC-course criteria and learning objectives and to ensure consistency from semester to semester.

*How will multiple sections of a course be monitored?*

The expectations of English 255 as a WC course will be communicated to instructors teaching the course both during the English Department's August teaching workshops and via email or individual meetings. Syllabi for all sections of 255 will also be collected each semester by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Instructors new to teaching 255 also often work from an existing syllabus like the one attached.

**Commented [RJM20]:** If the course you are teaching is taught only by one instructor, feel free to write "N/A" here.

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (WC)

### PROPOSAL FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AND/OR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE APPROVAL

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#### VI. Attachments

Include the materials listed below with your proposal. Please make sure that all materials are consistent with each other and with your proposal responses before submitting them. Any discrepancies across documents will slow down the review process significantly.

- A representative **course syllabus** that includes the following:
  - *Course description*. It should be the same as the catalog course description listed above.
  - *(RE) Prerequisite(s)*. All WC courses must list English 102, 132, 290, or 298 as prereqs. Other department- or program-specific prerequisites may also be added.
  - *WC GenEd Statement*. Include a statement that identifies the course as a Written Communication course that fulfills part of the WC Volunteer Core requirement.
  - *WC Course Outcomes*. List the four WC student learning outcomes listed above.
  - *WC Course Features*: The emphasis on writing processes—drafting and revising with individual feedback from the instructor—should be clearly reflected in the course syllabus. Also, if a detailed daily schedule is provided, any writing-focused classroom lessons should be included in that schedule.
- A sample of at least one of the **formal writing assignments**. This can be an assignment sheet that details what students will write, a piece of student writing composed for the course, or both.

**Commented [RJM21]:** Please be sure to include a current syllabus that meets all of these guidelines. The syllabus should include a course schedule with dates and assignments reflective of what you discussed in the proposal.

**Commented [RJM22]:** Please also include a sample assignment or assignment sheet that reflects what is discussed in the proposal.