First-Year Writing Program
Annual Report
Academic Year 2016

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<u>Introduction</u>
The First-Year Writing program at Montclair State is a nationally recognized program that provides general education writing instruction to the undergraduate population. We offer three process-based, academic argument-focused writing courses—ENWR 100/Introduction to College Writing, ENWR 105/College Writing I, and ENWR 106/College Writing II—which are delivered by a faculty of about 80-85 full and part-time instructors each semester. Fuller descriptions of our course offerings, programming (special events, professional development workshops, faculty accomplishments, etc), and assessment initiatives (from student writing to the larger program) can be found in our via our website. [1]

AY 16 was a challenging and highly unique year: by the close of the year the program learned from the Dean's office that it would split from English and constitute a new department, the Department of Writing Studies, effective January 2017. One more anomaly: program director Jessica Restaino was on sabbatical for the Fall 2015 semester; her leave was covered expertly by Caroline Dadas. Given the unusual nature of AY 16 (especially the split from English announced at the close of the year), much change continues to be underway, making this summary of AY 16 somewhat incomplete. Still, this report attempts to capture the shape and goals of the program during its last year in the English department while casting forward expectations for the transition into an emergent new department. First-Year Writing will continue to serve as the general education core of this new department and the tributary into new undergraduate programs as the department takes shape.

<u>Mission Statement</u>
The mission of the First-Year Writing program is to provide all undergraduate students with process-based instruction in argument-driven academic writing that will support their continued growth and development as writers and thinkers throughout their undergraduate education and beyond. Our three courses—"Introduction to College Writing," "Writing and Intellectual Prose," and "Writing About Literature"—are designed to connect writing, intellectual inquiry, and learning across the contexts of school, work, relationships, and community.

The mission of the first-year writing program is supported by standardized criteria for assessment of student writing, written collaboratively by full-time writing faculty. [2]

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[1] Report: (https://www.montclair.edu/media/montclairedu/chss/departments/english/firstyearwriting/FYW-Annual-Report_AY-15.pdf); FYW website (https://www.montclair.edu/chss/english/first-year-writing/)

[2] http://www.montclair.edu/chss/english/first-year-writing/first-year-writing-program-faculty/grading-benchmarks/

Students: Instruction, Services, and Support

Enrollments

A key highlight of our program is its size. The need across our demographic is significant and shapes much else in terms of program events, professional development, curricular initiatives, and staffing. The table below outlines recent enrollment numbers:

	100 sections	100 seats	105 sections	105 seats	106 sections	106 seats	Total sections	Total seats
Su 2015	8	120	2	38	5	95	15	253
FA 2015	20	300	155	2985	30	570	205	3,855
Win 2016	0		0		0		0	0
SP 2016	3	45	29	551	150	2888	183	3,484
							403	7,592

*one section added late as part of a pilot for the Red Hawk Freshman Advantage program
****twenty sections of Studio had cap raised to 21

Advising

First-year students seek advisement for several issues, including: evaluation of courses taken at other universities, concern about an instructor, appeal of a plagiarism charge, grade grievances, and placement in writing courses. The FYW administration maintains office hours each week: the associate director is available on a standard professional staff schedule and the faculty director keeps weekly office hours and appointments by request of students and faculty. Both correspond with students via email to meet the extensive demand. The associate and assistant directors take primary responsibility for review of transfer evaluations, consulting the director in more controversial cases, many of which require additional document collection and evaluation (syllabi and sample papers) and a few of which require an in-house essay assessment. Course waiver records are maintained in an online database designed to enable tracking and report-generation.

Grade grievances and disciplinary issues (most often plagiarism) demand time and attention from both the director and associate director. The program works regularly with the University conduct officer (Jerry Collins) to enforce the University and program plagiarism policies, and partners with the Dean's office (CHSS Asst. Dean Yolanda Alvarez) on grade appeal issues as needed. The program insists that students follow a process that involves first a faculty meeting before progressing through administrative appeals; most issues are resolved on the programmatic level and do not require Dean-level involvement. The faculty director also works regularly with the Dean of Students office, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and the Director of the Disability Resource Center to address struggling students and their resource and support needs.

Faculty: Hiring, Retention, and Development

Staffing Structure
Teaching in the FYW program falls almost exclusively to contingent, non-tenure track instructors. At present, the FYW program retains 25 full-time contingent instructors (either "Instructional Specialist" (IS) or one-year/temporary) and employs another 50+ part-time adjunct faculty. English department tenure-line teaching in the FYW program was (and has been) severely limited due to constraints of the major, minors, graduate program, and other administrative responsibilities of tenure-line faculty. The program does not employ graduate students to teach. The table below illustrates the Fall '15 structure, indicating the number of individuals, sections taught, and percentage of coverage across each faculty type.

For AY 17 program requested 35 full-time Instructional Specialist faculty in an effort to reduce the reliance on part-time faculty, secure more consistent employment for our strongest teachers (IS contracts, though contingent, are continuously renewable), and to align our program with MLA recommendations of 70% full-time teaching across an undergraduate program. We did not achieve these numbers of specialist faculty, but were able to increase our full-time numbers to 28 for AY 17. The program conducted a search process via committee that would stretch into the summer 2016 months. Reliance on adjunct labor also creates instability in the program, as the program hires 25-30 new adjuncts and loses approximately 20-30 adjuncts per academic year. We continue to work towards MLA standards for full-time instructional coverage. Though we have not yet hit this objective, the upper administration has consistently demonstrated support in general, increasing our numbers incrementally each year.

FYW Staffing AY16					
Fall 15 coverage	**Number/Percentage of Sections Taught By**				
	IS/One Year Faculty (12/13)	**Tenure-Line Faculty**	**3/4 Line Faculty**	**Adj. Faculty**	**Total**
Sections Taught	99[3]	1	9	92	**205**
Individuals	25	1	3	57	86
Sections/Percentage	**48%**	**<1%**	**4.3%**	**45%**	**100 %**

Leadership
Jessica Restaino continues to serve as faculty program director, elected for a second three-year term effective July 1, 2015. The faculty director carries primary responsibility for all aspects of the program, including faculty hiring, training, and evaluation. The

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[3] Bonnie Dowd, Assistant Director of FYW and Instructional Specialist receives three credits reassigned for necessary administrative work.

director (tenured faculty; 6 TCH per semester) receives support from one associate director (Jennifer Holly-Wells; full-time professional staff) and one assistant director (Bonnie Dowd; FT NTT faculty; 3 TCH per semester). Additional support comes from two English department administrative office staff professionals, who split responsibilities between the writing program and larger English department. The associate director position was a new addition in AY 15, providing essential support to our large program particularly around scheduling, data collection, and student issues. The director chairs and additionally receives support from the department's first-year writing committee, which consists of both tenure-line and contingent faculty representatives who review policy, curricular changes, and hiring proposals and advise the director.

Faculty: Staffing Structure and Type, Hiring, Reappointment
The First-Year Writing Program at Montclair State enjoys high national and regional regard among scholars and teachers of college composition. Teaching positions in the program attract a high volume of applications from talented and well-qualified candidates. Measures of teaching evaluation and student performance, from student grade and survey data to classroom observations, indicate faculty deliver engaging, rigorous, high quality writing instruction.

Faculty Retention, Evaluation, and Development Activities
New faculty members—however extensive their previous training—are introduced to the FYW Program through a mandatory two-day orientation that takes place in August. The orientation curriculum requires that faculty engage with foundational scholarship in composition theory and best practice, both as a means to orient them to the philosophical stance of our program and to ensure that they have a solid grounding in this pedagogical and research area. The workshop also reviews grading criteria, benchmark papers, program policies, and gives new faculty the opportunity to apply a variety of assessment and instructional techniques. Finally, the workshop introduces faculty to a variety of materials for their use and experimentation. New faculty are compensated for this time commitment. A more comprehensive description of professional development for both new and continuing faculty is outlined later in this report.

Faculty Assessment: Grading, Course Evaluations, Observations, Reappointment

Grading
Standardized grading practices across the program is a major and demanding priority area in a program of our size. The program philosophy around grading emphasizes and values revision, and faculty are expected to assign grades that are aligned with the program assessment criteria and grading benchmarks. The letter grades students receive at the end of the semester are predominantly reflective of the quality of their academic writing rather than other components of the course, such as participation, attendance, and the completion of low-stakes assignments.

The director requests grade data from the Office of Institutional Research at the close of each semester. This data indicates averages per course type across the program, as well as grade frequencies (As, Bs, Cs…) per instructor per course. Typically the director, in

consultation with the associate and assistant director, identifies outlier faculty who have assigned a prevalence of either notably high or notably low grades. The director typically indicates the trend in writing and meets with the instructor; as a program, we target assessment as an instructional tool and aim to work with faculty towards alignment with program standards. We also pursue talk about grading trends as an opportunity to learn about our instructors' needs and approaches, their experiences in the classroom, and the needs they see among students. We recognize that each section is a unique group with strengths and particularities.

As part of the standard professional development offered in the program, each fall semester we offer multiple "grade norming" workshops, essential particularly for newer faculty, facilitated by either the director or associate director. In the spring, we tend to target struggling faculty on a case-by-case basis. In particular, adjunct faculty teaching at more than one institution face the steepest challenge in aligning their grading practices with our program.

Faculty Observations and Course Evaluations
All faculty teaching in the program receive consistent course evaluations and are observed with regularity. Course evaluations are completed in two of the lecturers' four classes per semester, and in all of the courses taught by part-time faculty. These course evaluations are reviewed by the Director, Associate Director, and Assistant Director, and are distributed to faculty. Summaries of each faculty member's evaluations each semester are also entered into a master database that is regularly reviewed by the Director. Notably weak course evaluations are flagged in this database and the instructor in this case is usually invited to discuss the class with the Director for some assistance in improving the situation. In rare cases, consistently weak course evaluations, coupled with weak class observations, can result in termination of employment or non-renewal.

All FYW faculty are observed on a rotating basis, with new faculty the "top priority." Full-time instructors are observed by either the faculty director or another English department tenure or tenure-track faculty member; the faculty director tries to observe all new full-time instructors personally during their first year. All other FYW faculty (part-time/adjuncts) are observed by either the Director or full-time FYW faculty. Observation reports are submitted to the Director for review and of course shared with individual instructors. These observation reports are an essential component of the Program's evaluation of faculty.

Reappointment
Faculty on full-time contracts require reappointment review at the close of each contract year for renewal. Faculty submit an application for review which documents their performance as writing instructors and the faculty director reviews all files and writes recommendations, as appropriate, for each faculty member under review. As our full-time numbers have continued to increase, this work is of particular importance and is of course notably time consuming.

Historically, the faculty director submits all recommendations to the English department chair for final approval and submission to the Dean's office. In light of the break from English and the emergent new department, announced at the close of AY 16, the program is researching new models for faculty evaluation and reappointment that involve peer review and committee participation, rather than the program director working directly with the department chair.

Curriculum and Programming
Achievement of the program's educational goals hinges upon systemic and foundational professional development across our diverse faculty body, as well as rigorous and engaging curricula, consistent assessment practices (from the classroom to the larger program), and ongoing, sustained faculty involvement in the life of the program. A series of committees, made up primarily of both full and part-time fyw faculty volunteers, which are overseen by and report to the faculty director, help drive forward, inform, and advance the larger goals of the program in focused ways.

Pedagogical Foundations and Delivery
The FYW program takes a process-based approach to writing instruction, with an emphasis on multiple drafts, peer review, and one-on-one conferencing. All courses end with students' submission of cumulative portfolios to demonstrate improvement over time. The central focus of each course is academic argument and analytical writing, though the content can vary by course number and as per instructor discretion. Students produce three essays in ENWR 100 and four essays in ENWR 105 and 106, respectively; all essays in each course undergo a three-draft process that includes peer and instructor feedback.[4] Instructors choose among textbooks selected by faculty committee, but have the option of drawing on materials outside of the recommended texts (including increasingly the design of textbook-free courses) in consultation with the program director.

Curriculum
The FYW program offers three courses:

1) ENWR 100, Introduction to College Writing
   This course, capped at 15 students, is offered only in the summer for Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) students. This marks a change in AY 16, as the course used to be offered for about 12-15% of the incoming first-year class in the first semester.

2) ENWR 105, College Writing I
   The first of two required general education writing courses, ENWR 105 (capped at 19 students) takes a broad, interdisciplinary focus across issues related to gender, race, culture, sexuality, and ethnicity with an emphasis on academic

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[4] The close of AY 16 would mark a revision to the four-essay requirement; the program determined to move to a three-essay requirement (with slightly extended length) for Fa '16).

argument and analytical writing. Sample materials can be found on the website.[5]

3) ENWR 106, College Writing II
The second of two required general education writing courses, ENWR 106 (capped at 19 students) currently engages students in critical reading of poetry, drama, fiction, and creative non-fiction while continuing the emphasis on academic argument and analytical writing. At the close of AY 16 with the FYW's program's split from the English department (details later in this report), the thematic possibilities for ENWR 106 expand in AY 17. Experimentation with the thematic foci of the course to reach colleges across the university are likely in Sp '17 though formal changes will take time. Sample materials for extant 106 courses can be found on the website.[6]

Delivery Formats (from program website)

Traditional

Traditional First-Year Writing courses offer a structured approach to the curriculum. Classes are taught by one professor, and meet twice a week at the same time in a regularly-scheduled classroom. Class time is a mixture of small group discussion, lecture, and in-class reading and writing. Traditional course models make up the bulk of the program's offerings. Like all first-year writing courses, they are designed to advance the standard learning goals of the program, teaching students to be more effective writers of academic, analytical argument. Students are encouraged to email their professors, visit office hours, and/or make appointments if they need individual attention.

Studio (three-year pilot ending May 2016)

The Writing Studio is a course redesign for ENWR courses that combines collaborative teaching, student-directed learning, on and off-site class-based activities, and a range of technological tools to accomplish the learning outcomes and course objectives established by the First-Year Writing Program. The course involves a four-instructor faculty team that "shares" thirteen sections in a Studio space with an open work floor and attached classrooms. Class is organized around three major, required parts—studio attendance (featuring discussion sessions and workshops), studio tasks (both online and face-to-face), and the submission of a writing portfolio. The Studio is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30am-5:30pm. Students are required to attend once a

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[5] https://www.montclair.edu/chss/english/first-year-writing/first-year-writing-program-faculty/enwr105-intellectual-prose/
[6] https://www.montclair.edu/chss/english/first-year-writing/first-year-writing-program-faculty/enwr106-writing-literary-study/

week, but they can come at any time during those open hours. While offering more flexibility for the student, the Studio necessitates students be self-disciplined and motivated with the increased independence and group-work.

Spring 16 Studio Stats: 19 sections (note cap increased in studio to 21 per section=399 seats), 8 instructors (3 full-time; 5 adjuncts), and 5 student assistants.

A full report on our Studio pilot, prepared by Emily Isaacs, is available on the program's website. Iterations of the pilot continue to influence creative approaches in the program and encourage our experimentation and growth. Faculty have presented at national conferences on the studio experiment (CCCC and WPA) and continue to work collaboratively around innovation.

Hybrid & Online[7]

Hybrid and online courses in the First-Year Writing Program are rigorous. More writing is required than in traditional courses—at least 1,000-2,000 words per week in addition to regular required essays via online discussions and online collaborative work. Students in hybrid sections are expected to engage in the online classroom environment regularly and therefore, although the course meets *in person* only one day per week, it is not a one-day-per-week course. Similarly, students in online sections have class activities and assignments due twice a week. The "online day/s" for the individual classes are listed in WESS. See below for a report on online instruction in FYW.

Program Assessment

Under the direction and facilitation of its leadership, the FYW program maintains a rigorous agenda of program assessment. These assessments include routine faculty class observations, student evaluations, program grade data reports by semester, and period surveys of faculty opinion on topics related to program materials (ie handbooks, textbooks) and their own classroom experiences (new teaching approaches, professional development needs, assessment of students' strengths and weaknesses outside of grade performance).

On the student level, as a program we track performance of our EOF (Educational Opportunity Fund) students, identify and target late-stage undergraduates in first-year writing (for example, we have offered sections of first-year writing exclusively for juniors/seniors) to move these students more effectively through the program, and periodically conduct performance assessments in relation to courses (ENWR 100, for example, our lowest level course), our placement process, and other relevant needs as they arise.

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[7] Online courses are currently offered as part of a pilot period, just a couple sections per semester; we have yet to decide on how fully to integrate online courses into our program offerings and welcome suggestions. Currently we are also in a process of re-evaluating enrollment in our hybrid sections as we have found that the course format attracts our weakest students who ultimately perform far worse in this format than in the traditional.

Further explanations are available online and detailed reports can be provided upon request.

Program Location
Following the break from English, announced at the close of AY 16, FYW program administration planned to move to the first floor of Dickson Hall; the new department office is DI 120. The President's office has allotted additional space for the program in Schmitt Hall effective January 2017; plans for space usage are ongoing.

Faculty Development, Collaboration, and Program Initiatives
As a program, we have historically collaborated on expectations around service and involvement: drafting, approving, and revising a document that outlined these expectations. During AY 16 the English department chair intervened in this process and invalidated previous agreements. Service did continue as voluntary during the year but, as we look ahead to the separation from English, we will revisit and reassess the needs of both the program and emerging new department, and work together to outline reasonable expectations for involvement as well as to identify resource needs necessary to supporting this work.

Below please find brief summaries of initiatives that continued through AY 16.

Peer Observation Program
Faculty are encouraged to visit each other's courses for peer observation, particularly to target specific instructional areas. Often these observations happen between senior and novice faculty, though not exclusively. The program leadership often plays a role in pairing faculty, though often too these collaborations emerge organically as an extension of faculty collaboration and support.

Mentoring
Chaired by Tatum Petrich, the mentoring program pairs incoming faculty with more experienced instructors who serve as resources on teaching strategies, program policy, grading criteria, and University systems and resources. Mentor faculty report to the director with updates and troubleshooting or need areas regarding mentees; often feedback from mentor faculty helps to drive professional development needs into the following semester. The program concludes with a dinner each spring.

Blog
The "Deep Down in the Classroom" blog, coordinated by full-time instructor Shil Sen, is a collection of practice-based posts, written by first-year writing faculty (and, on one occasion so far, a guest blogger), that engage a national and international audience on issues relevant to the college composition classroom. Readers are welcome to comment on blog posts and the blog is updated regularly throughout the academic year.

Professional Development Workshops
The program offers regular professional development workshops each semester. While many of these workshops are offered by experts among our faculty, we routinely invite

accomplished visitors external to Montclair. In AY 16, we were honored to host Jason Palmeri (Miami University), Anne Geller (St. John's University), and Stephanie Kerschbaum (University of Delaware). Offerings are listed below.

FALL 2015

- Thursday, September 17th 4:00-5:15pm, Cohen Lounge "**What We Talk About When We Talk About Values: Navigating Discussions of Privilege and Justice in the First Year Writing Classroom**" offered by Leslie Doyle and Carrie O'Dell

- Monday, September 21st 4:00-5:15pm, Cohen Lounge "**Essay Norming**" offered by Caroline Dadas, Director of First-Year Writing

- Friday, October 2nd 10:00-11:30am, UN 1120 "**Moving Beyond the Page: Designing and Assessing Multimodal Composition Assignments**." Jason Palmeri, Director of Composition, Miami University

- Tuesday, October 6th, 5:30-6:45pm, UN 1142 "**Multimodality in the MSU Classroom**" offered by Dayna Arcurio, Henry Margenau, and Maria Montaperto

- Thursday, October 15th, 2:30-3:45pm, UN 1121 "**Essay Norming**" offered by Rick Reid and Laura Field

- Tuesday, October 27th 11:00-12:30, Cohen Lounge "**The Meaningful Writing Project**" Anne Geller, Director Writing Across the Curriculum, St. John's University
-
- SPRING 2016

- **Tuesday, February 16th, 2:30-3:45pm, ADP Center 1120/University Hall,** Commenting Beyond the Written Word offered by Ben Delloiacono, Sarah Ghoshal, Liz Martin and Carrie O'Dell

- **Wednesday, February 17th, 5:30-6:45pm,** School of Business 140, Lions and Tigers and Poems, Oh My!: Lions and Tigers and Poems, Oh My! offered by Claudia Cortese

- **Monday, February 22nd, 4:00-5:15pm, Cohen Lounge,** Multimodality and Writing: Integrating Digital and Video Composition in the Classroom offered by Dayna Arcurio and Jen Degregorio

- **Monday, February 29th, 5:30-6:45pm, Cohen Lounge,** From High School to College: Roundtable Discussion on Teaching Writing offered by Shelagh Patterson

- **Thursday, March 31st, 4:00-5:15pm, Cohen Lounge,** Disability, Identity, and Teaching: A Workshop on Engaging Disability Productively in the Classroom offered by Stephanie Kerschbaum from The University of Delaware

- **BROWN BAG WORKSHOP**
- *This workshop series brings faculty together for conversation and collaboration about a variety of teaching writing topics. Come prepared to discuss and share.

- **Tuesday, February 23rd, 4:00-5:00pm, Location: TBA**, FYW and the Disability Resource Center; discussion with Linda Smith, Director of the DRC

Creative Writing for FYW
The "CW for FYW" committee represents the widespread interest and talent among first-year writing faculty in creative writing. The committee works to bridge instruction in academic writing with pedagogical practices in creative writing, and to explore the ways in which each medium can inform the other. The committee additionally works to foster a community of creative writers among FYW faculty, supporting accomplishments and writing projects through peer support.

Committee accomplishments in AY 16 were driven by the following outline of goals:
a. We would like to do 12+ student creative writing workshops in fall/2015, spring 2016
- "Uncreative fiction" workshops (Jen Russo)
- Nonfiction workshops (Erica Dolson)
- Fiction workshops (Sasha, Henry, Robin)
- Screenwriting or playwriting workshop (ask adjuncts and other faculty to lead)

b. We would like to offer faculty development workshops on how to utilize creative writing in the FYW classroom. The goal would be to give faculty a few lesson ideas to work with. We could also have a follow-up meeting to discuss how faculty implemented these lessons.

c. We would like to continue the 75 Minute Club for faculty, with the goal to meet once or twice a month.

d. We would like to organize an Academic Writing Group. This group would meet (online or in person) regularly to talk about ongoing academic projects. Ideally, we would share our work – whether conference paper proposals or book proposals, or fully realized essays or book chapters – and give each other feedback

e. We will continue to add to the creative writing resource database on Canvas, including essays about the intersection of composition and creative writing pedagogy.
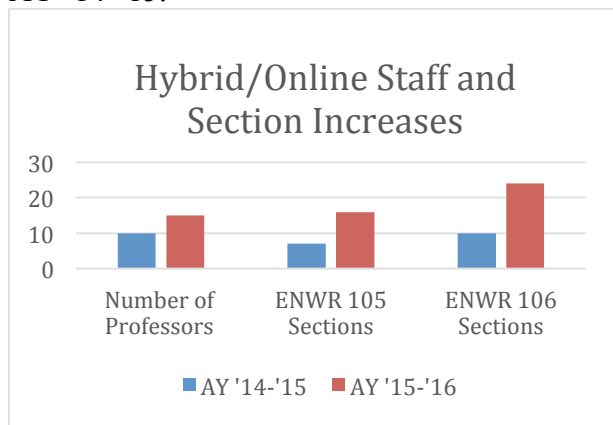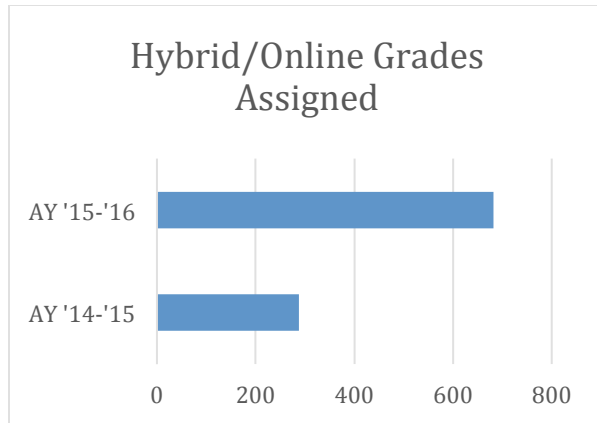
Exemplary Essay Awards

The Exemplary Essay Awards competition for students enrolled in FYW courses is judged by a committee of program faculty at the close of each academic year and seeks to identify the strongest paper written in each of our courses during the academic year. Submissions are received in each of the three courses in the FYW Program and a winner is determined in each course category. Students' essays are judged on the following criteria: Originality/Creativity; Focus; Development; Organization; Critical Thinking/Analysis; Clarity of Prose. Student award recipients receive a $100 MSU Red Hawk Dollars award and all winning essays are published on the FYW Program website and are often used for faculty training and instructional purposes.

Hybrid/Online Teaching Committee

Overview
During the AY '15-'16, the Hybrid/Online Teaching Committee, chaired by full-time Instructional Specialist Sarah Ghoshal, continued the exploration and practice of hybrid and online teaching and learning in First Year Writing courses at Montclair State University. In academic year 2015-2016, 15 professors taught 16 ENWR 105 sections and 24 sections of ENWR 106, many while simultaneously teaching 30 sections of FYW traditional face-to-face courses. These numbers are more than doubled from the previous academic year. In addition, a total of 682 students received grades in a hybrid course in AY '15-'16, 368 students in the Fall and 314 in the Spring, an over 200% increase from AY '14-'15.

Hybrid/Online Grades Assigned

(Bar chart showing grades assigned for AY '15-'16 (approximately 680) and AY '14-'15 (approximately 290), with x-axis from 0 to 800 in increments of 200.)

During the year, the committee pursued the development of FYW hybrid pedagogy by: 1) Discussing practices for online class days, ensuring that any given instructor is confident that his/her online days are equivalent to an in-person, 75 minute class;   2) Revising observation procedures for hybrid and online courses to promote effective evaluation of both online and classroom practices; 3) Assessing readiness on the part of incoming freshmen to take hybrid composition courses and opening up a candid and ongoing discussion with the Advising Department about how best to place incoming students in such courses (This has resulted in a suspension of hybrid 105 sections in Fall '16 in order to best serve our students until a system for placement into hybrid/online has been put in place, hopefully by Fall '17.); and 4) Sharing effective and innovative digital grading methods, such as Canvas Learning System tools and Screencastify through Google. In addition, there is always an ongoing and open discussion and evaluation of hybrid student populations and community.

Of particular note this semester was the focus on effective online and digital feedback, as mentioned above. Sarah Ghoshal, Liz Martin and Carrie O'Dell all spoke at a workshop on the subject and Professor Martin and Professor O'Dell also shared their methods at the opening day meeting for all of First Year Writing.

Finally, online courses were taught both semesters, two in the Fall and four in the Spring, by Sarah Ghoshal and Christine Giancatarino. Professors Ghoshal and Giancatarino worked and continue to work closely to analyze grade data and student performance in order to make the fully online offerings of the First Year Writing Program effective, innovate and engaging. Both professors used online texts, held online conferences (both group and one-on-one), and used multimedia and multimodal assignments, further broadening the scope of varied modes in First Year Writing Program instruction at MSU. In addition, the two online courses were offered exclusively to First Year students in an effort to gauge effectiveness. Below is a report that summarizes their findings.

Evaluation of Effectiveness of Online FYW Classes – AY 2015-2016
Sarah Ghoshal and Christine Giancatarino

In AY 2015-2016, six fully online ENWR courses were taught in the First Year Writing Program, two in the Fall semester (by Professor Sarah Ghoshal) and four in the Spring semester (by Professor Sarah Ghoshal and Professor Christine Giancatarino). All six courses were ENWR 106.

Students
At the start of the Fall 2015 semester, there was a total of 19 students in each section, totaling 38 students. By the end of the semester, there were 14 students in section 29 and 15 students in section 30 for a total of 29 students.

At the start of the Spring semester, there was a total of 19 students in each section, totaling 74 students. By the end of the semester, there were 16 students in section BT, 16 students in section BU, 18 students in section BV and 17 students in section BW for a total of 65 students.

Methods/Modalities
Modalities used to teach writing and encourage collaboration in the courses included:
- Weekly discussions revolving around the readings assigned in class and the mechanics and process of writing.
  - These discussions counted as attendance in all four classes, with Professor Ghoshal taking attendance once per week and Professor Giancatarino taking attendance twice per week.
  - After collaboration between Ghoshal and Giancatarino, the only online courses being offered in our current semester of Fall 2016 have attendance taken twice per week.
  - For Professor Giancatarino, to pace the courses, discussion boards took place twice a week. For each discussion board, students were required to submit an initial 400-word response to a designated prompt. This response counted for attendance for that class day. In addition, students were required to respond to two of their peers' in a 200-word post for each peer. These posts were factored into the class citizenship grade. Giancatarino chose to utilize the discussion boards in lieu of Wiki-pages, Twitter, or Process-Blogs (though aspects of the process blogs were often factored into the discussion boards). The discussion boards alone resulted in a minimum of 1200 words per week.
  - As students became comfortable with the course format, they were permitted to submit video responses for both the initial and peer responses in lieu of a written response to the discussion board prompts. If students chose this option, they were required to submit a 4-minute video (initial response) and two 2-minute video for peer responses.
  - Discussion boards covered a range of topics from discussions on the readings, to writing skills, and writing process. The discussion boards also

employed multimodalities, sometimes asking students to utilize video, images, or sound as part of their responses to a prompt.

- o For Professor Ghoshal, students posted an initial response each week of at least 500 words and three 250 word responses throughout the week.

Process Blogs or Outlines/Drafts

- Ghoshal – Process Blogs - Blog entries that took the place of first drafts of essays and involved students receiving feedback from both the professor and their peers
- Giancatarino – Outlines/Drafts - In lieu of a process blog, Giancatarino permitted students to submit either a detailed outline; a traditional first draft; or a combination outline/draft. Students were free to choose which option worked best for them and to tailor their drafting process to their strengths. All formats were given minimum page requirements.
- Wiki Pages – Students would contribute credible sources that directly connected to class readings to these pages. The idea was for them to take the place of small group work in class where students might do research and share resources.
- Twitter "conversations" in which students participated as part of their collaboration and participation grades.
  - o Since then, this has been revised. Twitter is now only a voluntary medium in the courses that Professor Ghoshal is currently teaching; key concepts from each week are tweeted using a specific hashtag and voluntary Twitter information sessions are held biweekly. This revision was based on student feedback.
- Essay Work – Drafts were submitted and feedback disseminated using Canvas
  - o Feedback was also offered in audio format by both Professor Ghoshal and Professor Giancatarino using Screencastify, a Google Chrome add-on that allows you to view the essay as you offer spoken feedback.
  - o Detailed rubrics were included for all final grades.
- Peer Review using the peer review feature on Canvas - Ghoshal
- Peer Review using the Discussion Board "group" feature in groups of 3. Students were given the option to provide a video-response to peers. Peer-review feedback was graded using a rubric. - Giancatarino
- Reading Responses and Writing Workshops – basic analytical homework responses to the readings
- On days that students were in the drafting process (typically on the day a Revised Draft was due) Giancatarino conducted "Writing Workshops" assignments in which students were required to complete skill-based writing and reflective work on the writing process. Responses were graded using a rubric.
- Weekly Emails/Announcements – sent out via Canvas, these will be required of all online professors moving forward. Each weekly announcement details the work and due dates for the week, with that week from the syllabus copied and pasted. In addition, where applicable, active hyperlinks are included throughout. The goal is to make it so students can do all of the week's work and find all resources by clicking on the links in these announcements. In addition, the use of video messages were sometimes included in the weekly announcements, if a particular conversation was essential for understanding that week's work.

- ePortfolio – Students submitted their final portfolios using the ePortfolio function in Canvas, eliminating the hard copy completely.
- Online office hours: Every other Tuesday from 2:30-3:30, Giancatarino held "drop in office hours" for the students using the "Chat" feature on Canvas. Ghoshal did this every other Thursday. These "office hours" were offered in addition to the traditional office hours; this gave students another format and opportunity to communicate their needs. In addition, Giancatarino was available for individual meetings at a student's request, and conducting these using the "Conferences" feature on Canvas
- Required 1-on-1 in person meetings: For the Revised Draft of the Documented Essay, Giancatarino required students to meet with her *in-person* for a 20 minute, 1-on-1 meeting. Giancatarino found this in-person meeting extremely valuable to gain information about a student that was not always apparent in the online format. To be fair, all of the students in Sections BV and BW were traditional students, so this in-person meeting was doable. (Only 1 student didn't attend). Giancatarino received no complaints, but had their been concerns, she would have accommodated with an online meeting. Perhaps this component is not fair to incorporate into a completely online class, but it proved to be extremely helpful to the professor.
- Group Conferences: Ghoshal required students to sign up for group conferences, which took place in the Chat Room on Canvas, to go over feedback for middle drafts.
- Live Lit!: In keeping with 106 curricular tradition, students were required to attend a cultural event on campus and write a Reflection Paper. We did not designate the event but provided students a list of potential events, including the formal LiveLit! program, the Kasser Theater, and performances within the School of the Arts, to name a few. Students had the entire semester to complete their LiveLit! component. The Reflection Paper was graded using a rubric.

How did the class work?

- Professor Ghoshal
  - Each week on Sunday evening, students were sent the weekly email/announcement (see above). "Class work" was to be completed every Monday and Thursday by 11:59 pm. Any homework assigned on those days was due the night before the next "class." For instance, if homework was assigned on a Monday, it was due on Wednesday by 11:59 pm. If it was assigned on Thursday, it was due Sunday by 11:59 pm. This essentially allowed students to continue having a two day/week class while allowing them the flexibility that comes with an online course.
  - In the interest of pacing and timely feedback, some assignments (such as the process blogs or peer review) had different due dates/times, and this was always clearly labeled on the syllabus, in the weekly emails and in the unit pages.
- Professor Giancatarino

- o Each week on Sunday evening, students were sent the weekly email/announcement (refer to Goshal above) for the work to be completed that week. All work for the course had a consistent deadline of Monday or Thursday so that students would associate those two days with their ENWR 106 course (mimicking, in rhythm, a traditional face-to-face routine). To make the pacing clearer for students, work "assigned" on Mondays was due on Thursdays at 11:59 pm; work "assigned" on Thursdays was due by Mondays at 11:59 pm each week. There was one exception to this rule: Exploratory and Revised Drafts were due by 10:00 am on the designated date (either Monday or Thursday).
- o To give students flexibility while still maintaining a specific course pace, all assignments were "released" one week in advance. This allowed students to work ahead if they chose, but no more than one week ahead.

Grides

Fall 2015
A: 2
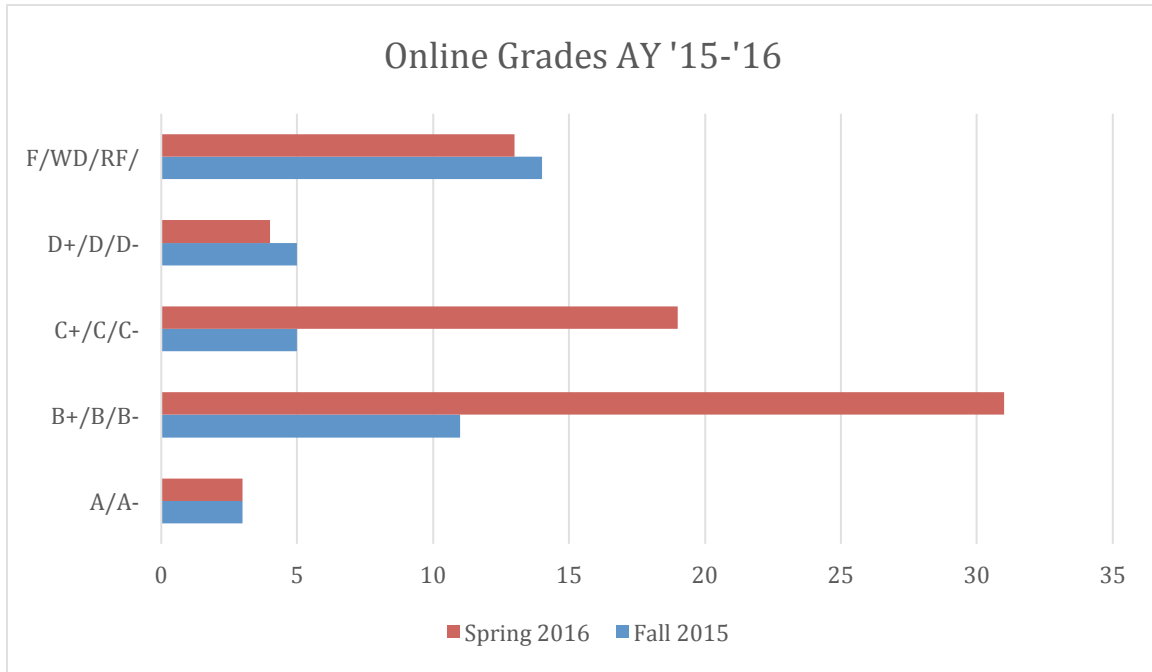A-:   1
B+:   7
B: 3
B-:   1
C+:   1
C: 2
C-:   2
D+:   3
D: 2
D-:   0
F: 4
RF: 1
WD: 9

Spring 2016
A: 3
A-:   1
B+:   6
B: 14
B-:   11
C+:   7
C: 5
C-:   7
D+:   2
D: 1
D-:   1

F: 4
RF: 0
WD: 8
WD/F: 1

Online Grades AY '15-'16

F/WD/RF/	Spring 2016: ~13	Fall 2015: ~14
D+/D/D-	Spring 2016: ~4	Fall 2015: ~5
C+/C/C-	Spring 2016: ~19	Fall 2015: ~5
B+/B/B-	Spring 2016: ~31	Fall 2015: ~11
A/A-	Spring 2016: ~3	Fall 2015: ~3

Legend: ■ Spring 2016 ■ Fall 2015

Clearly, although a number of student did withdraw from the course, student performance was on par with overall FYWP numbers. Withdrawals can be viewed positively, as they show that instructors were clear enough about course expectations that many students were able to withdraw without failing the course.

Performance and Participation

Students understood from the start that their participation played a key role in both their grades and in their understanding of the material. Many students embraced the opportunity to participate passively, reveling in the fact that they did not have to be "put on the spot" in a traditional classroom. Others rebelled against the online format, claiming that it was "too much writing" and that I expected too much of them for a General Education course.

I took much of this as the usual complaints that accompany a rigorous First Year Writing course. A common misconception among students is that online and hybrid courses are "easier" than traditional courses because they do not meet in person. However, I strive to make it very clear from the beginning that this course is rigorous and often involves more writing than a traditional course because writing takes the place of face to face conversation.

Once students got into the swing of it and understood the schedule, it was smooth sailing for many of them. Most of the lower grades came from the writing itself, not an inability to take part in the online activities expected in the course. Many also came from a lack of time management skills, something to be addressed by instructors and hopefully, by FYW as a whole.

Student Feedback

Based on the online evaluations filled out by students at the end of the semester, it seems they were overall satisfied with the course.

Positive comments that came up most often:
- Students appreciated having the ability to meet with the professor both in person and online.
- Students valued the in-person 1-on-1 meeting and quite a few commented that there should be more than one required in-person meeting throughout the semester.
- Students thought the pace of the course was workable and the course itself was easy to navigate. In addition, students valued the flexibility that the online course offered
- Students appreciated not having to attend a face to face class.
- Students enjoyed assignments like process blogs and discussions, as it helped them to analyze the literature further before writing about it in a formal essay.
- Students liked the option of responding to discussion posts and to peers via video
- Students appreciated audio/Screencastify feedback on their essays.
- Students found that they started to understand what it means to analyze text
- Some students realized more about their work ethic and learning style, and many discovered that "online courses are not for me."

Negative comments that came up most often:
- Students felt there was too much work/writing/reading.
- Students wanted to be able to submit work early (although I did not allow them to submit anything more than 24 hours early because it negates the pace of the course and the chance for students to revise their papers based on timely feedback).
- Students had trouble managing their assignments and time.
- Students felt the paper grading was too hard.

Conclusions
Overall, teaching First Year Writing as a fully online course can be effective – just as effective as face-to-face or hybrid. That said, it will depend on the instructor.

It takes A LOT of work to keep this course running and to give the students the feedback, time and attention they often need to succeed. A lot of time is spent writing reminder announcements and making sure they included links to materials students might need, in order to make navigation easier. This is necessary. **The instructors teaching these**

courses will need to engage in the online classroom on a daily basis and should have previous online teaching experience.

As we move forward, there are portions of the course that will need to be standardized, such as counting weekly discussion posts as attendance and holding (at least) bi-weekly sessions during which students can ask questions and interact with the instructor. In addition, all instructors must sent out weekly announcements detailing that week's work. It can also be argued that they should summarize key concepts at the end of each week and disseminate somehow, through an announcement, in a final post in that week's discussion forum or on Twitter.

Revisions, as noted in places above, have been made to what were weaker parts of the course. So far this semester, it seems things are more streamlined and understandable.

Final Recommendation: With experienced instructors who are willing to put in the time and effort, these courses can be effective. These students learned how to write, which is the most important outcome of any FYW course. Those of them that passed with a C or higher are prepared for subsequent courses that require writing, analysis, online prowess and studenting skills.

Goals for AY '16-'17
For the coming academic year, the hybrid/online committee will focus on the following:
- Address hybrid and online 105 preparedness for the Fall by working closely with Advising - hopefully have something in place for Fall '17
- Collection of social media/multimodal projects from current hybrid/online instructors, as well as most recent syllabi to keep current needs met
- A full report on the effectiveness of fully online courses over the past four semesters
- Pairing new hybrid instructors with veteran hybrid instructors in mentor/mentee pairings
- Add possibly customized Week 5 to OIT's "Empowering Online Teaching and Learning" course that focuses on FYW specifically
- Standard rubric development for essays, discussion responses and homework responses

Submitted by the Hybrid/Online Committee AY '15-'16,

Sarah Ghoshal
Donna Phillips
Robin Caine
Christa Verem
Jennifer Guercio
Christine Giancatarino
Carrie O'Dell
Gerrie Logan

Liz Martin
Mary Sullivan
Michael Bross
Maria Calhoun
Patricia Haefeli
Robert Hyers
Dayna Arcurio

Live Lit! Reading Series
The Live Lit program continued to be a rich presence in the program through AY 16, bringing working and prolific writers to campus and exposing our students to both live readings and the opportunity to talk with writers about their processes. A listing of Spring 2016 readings as well a past readers can be found via the program site.

Textbook Review Committee

In the FA15 semester, FYW moved from a custom edition of *A Writer's Reference*, which had been used across the program for many years, to *A Pocket Style Manual*, a compact edition of the handbook, in the interest of better serving students as regards cost. Additionally full-time instructors piloted *Writer's Help*, an online writing resource, as an enhancement to the compact print handbook. Informal surveys of full-time instructors revealed that many preferred the more comprehensive handbook and most did not like the online resource. The committee does not rule out an online handbook in the future.

During the SP16 semester, in an effort to prepare for the FA16 incoming FYW students, who, in the absence of a foundational ENWR100 course, would be automatically placed into ENWR105 without undergoing a placement process or using SAT scores as an indicator, it was decided that all faculty teaching ENWR105 would use a single textbook and a uniform syllabus. This would enable the supplemental workshop track to be synched to the larger ENWR105 course. Dayna Arcurio, Bonnie Dowd, Dr. Laura Field, and Dr. Jennifer Holly-Wells considered a number of texts, deciding on *Everyone's an Author* as an appropriate choice for this unusual semester. Additionally, Leslie Doyle contributed feedback on the text in a preliminary review. The text offers a substantial rhetorical apparatus, support for multimodal writing, and appropriate readings. A large percentage of full-time instructors volunteered to create the skeleton of a syllabus in the last days of May 2016; this work continued into the summer months with a centralized group of instructors.

Individual Faculty Accomplishments
FYW faculty are accomplished writers and scholars, publishing their work in a variety of impressive venues and actively presenting work at conferences and public readings. Announcements of faculty achievements are maintained and updated on the FYW website (under "News and Events" to the right of the page).

AY 17 Initiatives

As noted in the Introduction to this report, the close of AY 16 would bring the announcement from the Dean's office that the FYW program would be split off from English and part of a new department of Writing Studies effective AY 17. Accordingly, as we close out the year, we outline the following goals for AY 17 and beyond:

- Expansion of FYW curricula to reach interest areas represented by the many disciplines and colleges we search across the institution
- Exploration of and initiatives towards shared governance between tenure-track and contingent faculty, as our new department will consist of a higher number of full-time contingent faculty than tenure-line
- Initiatives to better integrate and support part-time faculty in program offerings, from governance to professional development to committee work
- As the gateway to the new department, increased continuity between FYW courses and undergraduate programming (currently we offer a Public and Professional Writing minor, but plans going forward include the development of an undergraduate major and graduate programs)

Report prepared by Jessica Restaino, with contributions from Jennifer Holly-Wells, Bonnie Dowd, and FYW Faculty