First-Year Writing Course Offerings

Writing is an integral part of Oxford College’s liberal arts curriculum, both as a focus in itself and as part of how learning happens in a wide range of courses. An important step in your journey as a writer at Oxford will be to take a First-Year Writing (FYW) course sometime within your first year. This course will introduce you to the wide range of writing and inquiry you will encounter throughout your liberal arts education as well as the important role of writing in the intellectual lives of those who are liberally educated.

First-Year Writing courses introduce you to,
- Writing and inquiry across a range of disciplines and purposes.
- How to ask good questions about new writing situations and unfamiliar genres.
- How to make purposeful choices about multiple dimensions of writing such as argument, organization, evidence, language, and design.
- Reading strategies for a diverse range of texts.
- Resources and strategies for college-level library research and research-based writing.
- Strategies and tools for developing, revising, and editing writing and working with other writers.

Many of our sections are designed around themes. For fall 2018, we will be offering the themes described below. In courses designated “no theme,” students will be free to pursue topics of their own choosing in their research, reading, and writing.

English 185: Writing & Inquiry in the Liberal Arts

Section 1: No Theme
Instructor: Christine Loflin
In this section of English 185, we will examine the connection between writing and inquiry across a range of disciplines, including disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Beyond core readings on writing, students will be free to pursue topics of their own choosing in their research, reading, and writing.

Section 2: Madness Across the Disciplines
Instructor: Adriane Ivey
The primary objective in this course is to help you build on your knowledge about writing, to be able to recognize and adapt to different rhetorical situations and the conventions of writing in different disciplines. Our theme, "madness," provides a framework for this learning about writing because through it, we will be able to look at the ways different disciplines approach similar issues. How is mental illness represented in Literature? How is "madness" defined in legal terms? By psychologists? In the
medical field? How does writing about mental illness reflect different ways of inquiry in each of these fields? We'll explore how writing, in different disciplines and genres, is essential for discovery and for the search for answers to questions that matter.

Sections 3, 4, 6: Visual Literacy Across the Disciplines  
_Instructor: Brad Hawley_  
In this section of English 185, we will consider the ways in which academic writing is designed to meet the expectations of different academic fields within the broader disciplines of natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Along with this multidisciplinary approach to writing, we will look at multi-modal texts such as comics and graphic novels to consider the importance of visual expression in academic discourse. To achieve these goals, we will try to determine the roles played by visual communication and visual literacy in an academic environment.

Section 7: Why iWrite: Identity and Intersectionality  
_Instructor: Eric Solomon_  
In this section of English 185, we will pull from a range of readings on the theme of intersectionality across disciplines—including legal scholarship, sociological analysis, and work in new media studies, bioethics, and literary studies—in our exploration of intersectionality as a useful tool for understanding _what, how, and why we write_. Furthermore, we will enact novelist Margaret Atwood’s assertion that all “good writing takes place at the intersections, at what you might call knots, at places where the society is snarled or knotted up.” As we explore various snarled, knotted up intersections through class discussions and readings, we will compose responses designed to enter existing conversations on intersectionality, engage with a variety of academic discourse communities, and develop research methods and pathways of inquiry.

Section 8: No Theme  
_Instructor: Staff_  
In this section of English 185, we will examine the connection between writing and inquiry across a range of disciplines, including disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Beyond core readings on writing, students will be free to pursue topics of their own choosing in their research, reading, and writing.

Section 9: Human Rights and Human Dignity  
_Instructor: Sarah Higinbotham_  
In the last 220 years, the Supreme Court has invoked the word “dignity” in more than nine hundred opinions, including the landmark 2011 case mandating prison population reduction in California (_Brown v Plata_). The concept of dignity undergirds mandates to respect people’s legal personhood, their equality, their liberty, and their personal integrity. The way we understand human dignity informs social debates about justice and human rights: How do we punish people? How do we distribute goods and
services? How do we treat those with limited political, cultural, or socioeconomic power? This course will examine how human dignity -- the fundamental and innate value of a person -- is contested in political, legal, literary, and economic rhetoric. We will read across disciplines about human rights, food justice, housing justice, and criminal justice reform, including law review articles, literary texts (*King Lear, Unflattening*, and Kafka’s *The Trial*), sociological studies, and political ethics.

**English 186: Writing & Inquiry in the Liberal Arts for Multilingual Students**

**Sections 1, 2, 3: From “Build the Wall!” to #BlackLivesMatter: Big Topics in American Discourse**

*Instructor: Stacy Bell*

In this section of English 186, we will read *The Hate U Give*, about the aftermath of a police shooting of an unarmed black teenager, and *The Best We Could Do*, an illustrated memoir about one immigrant family in the US. Using these core texts, we'll examine the rhetorical implications of contemporary political discourse about what sociologists call “public issues,” and we’ll explore the ways scholars talk about these public issues across academic disciplines.

**Sections 4, 5: No Theme**

*Instructor: Gwendolynne Reid*

In this section of English 186, we will examine the connection between writing and inquiry across a range of disciplines, including disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Beyond core readings on writing, students will be free to pursue topics of their own choosing in their research, reading, and writing.