

Examples of General Education Outcomes Statements and Course Criteria

We have gathered some examples of General Education outcomes statements and course criteria that are already in use at individual colleges and universities, in Oregon and elsewhere, or statewide in Colorado. We have collected only examples that correspond to the 6 General Education subdivisions within the AA/OT (Associate of Arts/Oregon Transfer) degree and OTM (Oregon Transfer Module), and have organized them according to those subdivisions:

Writing
Oral Communication
Mathematics
Arts and Letters
Social Science
Science

What do we mean by “outcomes” and “criteria”?

Outcomes statements are broad. They describe the habits of mind, skills, or kinds of insight that we want students to acquire, and be able to use, as a result of taking courses in a particular area.

Criteria identify the characteristics of courses that we think have the best chance of producing the desired outcomes for students.

This packet contains: **Course Criteria**

Writing

Oregon State University: Writing I courses shall

- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Focus on the writing process, invention strategies, drafting and revision techniques, and the forms and conventions of writing;
- Emphasize the ability to analyze content and reader response;
- Require significant student practice coupled with evaluation;
- Encourage appreciation and understanding of language, form and style; and develop increasingly sophisticated and efficient writing strategies.

Writing II and Writing III courses shall

- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Focus on relevant theory, concepts, and techniques for understanding the form of communication involved and for improving skills;
- Provide concepts and guidelines for determining effective communication within a specific area or discipline, including conventions of that field;
- Require significant student practice or performance coupled with evaluation; and encourage appreciation and understanding of language, form, and style.

Colorado State System: A communication course shall be designed to:

1. Develop rhetorical knowledge, including:
 - a) Focus on a purpose.
 - b) Use voice, tone, format and structure appropriately.
 - c) Write and read texts written in several genres and for multiple discourse communities.
2. Experience in writing processes:
 - a) Use multiple drafts.
 - b) Develop strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading.
 - c) Learn to critique own and other's work.
 - d) Use a variety of technologies (writing and research tools).
3. Develop mastery of writing conventions
 - a) Select appropriate format for different writing tasks.
 - b) Apply genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics.
 - c) Use specialized vocabulary, format and documentation appropriately.
 - d) Control features such as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
4. Demonstrate student's comprehension of content knowledge through effective communication strategies, including:
 - a) Ability to compose messages for specific purposes (e.g., expository, persuasive, technical, etc.).
 - b) Ability to communicate to a variety of audiences.
 - c) Ability to adapt content and style to respond to the needs of different audiences and different rhetorical situations.

Oral Communication

Oregon State University: Speech courses shall

- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Focus on relevant theory, concepts, and techniques for understanding the form of communication involved and for improving skills;
- Provide concepts and guidelines for determining effective communication within a specific area or discipline, including conventions of that field;
- Require significant student practice or performance coupled with evaluation; and
- Encourage appreciation and understanding of language, form, and style.

Mathematics

Linn-Benton Community College: Mathematics courses shall emphasize

- Elements of critical thinking
- The solution and graphing of linear equations and systems of linear equations
- Elementary linear programming
- Descriptive statistics, understanding and interpretation of statistical statements, elementary probability and applications
- Problem solving
- Display and analysis of quantitative information in graphical form
- Examples of major mathematical ideas and models in the real world (e.g. planetary motion, statistical correlations, and exponential growth).

Oregon State University: Mathematics courses shall

- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Develop problem solving strategies; and
- Include at least one significant mathematical model.

Arts and Letters

Lane Community College: Arts and Letters courses shall

- Have as their main focus the broad exploration of traditional liberal arts.
- Build upon already established basic skills
- Be grounded in theory, which in forms practice
- Develop critical thinking or creative application of ideas
- Emphasize the value of artistic expression and human creativity
- Incorporate interactive learning activities, including performance or studio experiences
- Require learning at the level of: analysis, synthesis, evaluation
- Require substantial out-of-class learning, related to course content, on the student's part
- Require readings and research within experiential courses
- Develop students' information literacy skills (use of library, internet, etc.)
- Connect course skills to other disciplinary learning
- Foster recognition of diverse humanity and build respect for human diversity

Oregon State University: Arts and Letters courses shall

- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Place the subject(s) in historical context;
- Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas;
- Focus primarily on literature or the arts;
- Actively engage students in significant works of literature or art;
- Explore the conventions and techniques of the form(s) under consideration;
- Address the role of literature or art in society; and
- Encourage appreciation and understanding of the form(s) under consideration.

University of Oregon: Group-satisfying courses in arts and letters must create meaningful opportunities for students to engage actively in the modes of inquiry that define a discipline. Proposed courses must be demonstrably liberal in nature and broad in scope. Though some courses may focus on specialized subjects or approaches, there must be a substantial course content locating that subject in the broader context of the major issues of the discipline. Qualifying courses will not focus on teaching basic skills but will require the application or engagement of those skills through analysis and interpretation.

Colorado State System: Humanities courses shall provide students experiences to

- Respond analytically and critically to cultural artifacts, including literature, music, and works of art by:
 - a. Describing the basic elements and their effects on meaning in a work of art.
 - b. Relating the effects of geography, economics, politics, religion, philosophy and science on the values of a culture and stylistic features of its arts.
 - c. Determining how a work reflects or rejects the major values or concerns of a historical era or culture.

d. Interpreting themes or major concepts.

OR

- Compare and contrast attitudes and values of specific eras (e.g. the past to the present), or cultures (e.g. non-Western to Western culture).

OR

- Understand ways of thinking, including logic and ethics, or obtain a broad understanding of the different questions dealt with by leading philosophers and their positions on those questions.

Social Sciences

Lane Community College: Social Science courses shall

- Have as a main focus the exploration of a social science department discipline.
- Provide opportunities to develop information literacy in the social sciences (the ability to critically analyze, synthesize, and evaluate various forms of information including written texts and other media)
- Encourage the use of effective communication skills, such as active listening and the clear expression of ideas in speaking and writing
- Raise awareness of diversity issues and encourage respectful communication across cultural differences
- Use multiple theoretical approaches of a social science discipline to critically analyze problems and to develop recommendations for problem solving.
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- Encourage students to examine individual experiences and perspectives in relationship to course material
- Encourage multidisciplinary thinking.

Oregon State University: Social Science courses shall

- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Place the subject(s) in historical context;
- Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas;
- Focus on methods, concepts, and theories for understanding the structure and change of major social institutions, and for understanding individual behavior as part of a social dynamic;
- Examine the nature, value, and limitations of the basic methods of the social sciences, and discuss the interaction of the social sciences and society; and
- Provide a perspective on the evolution of the theories and ideas emphasized in the course.

University of Oregon: Group-satisfying courses in the Social Sciences must be liberal in nature rather than being professionally oriented or limited to the performance of professional skills. They must cover a representative cross-section of key issues, perspectives, and modes of analysis employed by scholars working on the subject matter addressed by the course. The subject matter of the course will be relatively broad, e.g. involving more than one issue, place, or time. Courses with an emphasis on methods and skills will satisfy the requirement only if there is also a substantial and coherent theoretical component.

Colorado state System: Social or behavioral science courses shall provide content knowledge in

- Historical frameworks exploring important aspects of U.S. culture, society, politics, economics or its position in the world; or historical frameworks that

explore and compare achievements, issues, and characteristics of the world and its cultures. The objective of the requirement that students take a course that provides content knowledge in history is to engage students in an analytical, chronological study of significant human experiences. Courses designed to achieve this objective should develop students': (1) knowledge of a chronological structured analysis of significant human experiences; (2) understanding of the interpretive and analytical methods that are necessary to build accounts of the past; and (3) understanding that alternative analytical perspectives can create different narratives of the past.

OR

- Understanding of economic or political systems

OR

- Understanding how geography creates a sense of identity, shapes a culture, and influences the economics of a region.

OR

- Knowledge of human behavior, including learning, cognition, and human development or cultural or social frameworks that explore and compare achievements, issues, and characteristics of the world and its different cultures.

Science/Math/Computer Science

Lane Community College: Science/Math/Computer Science courses shall

- Be a minimum of three credits, regularly numbered offerings (not temporary or independent study).
- Have the main focus be the systematic study of a branch of science, math or the discipline of computer science.
- Build upon and apply a systematized body of knowledge or principles (through observation and experimentation for science.)
- Build a foundation to connect skills and knowledge to other disciplinary learning, thus meeting the needs of other programs and degree requirements.
- Develop ability to symbolically express relationships between figures, forms, and/or quantities.
- Communicate precisely, technically, quantitatively, and symbolically within a structured system.
- Use multiple approaches to develop critical analytical thinking that includes synthesis, evaluation, and creative insight.
- Require inductive and deductive reasoning.
- Provide exposure to both theory and practical applications.
- Require critical thinking and problem solving.

Oregon State University: Science courses shall

- Emphasize elements of critical thinking;
- Focus on the meaning of the fundamental concepts and theories that broadly characterize basic (rather than applied) physical or biological science;
- Illustrate, demonstrate, and analyze natural phenomena and systems;
- Provide historical perspectives and context on the evolution of major theories and ideas;
- Demonstrate interrelationships or connections with other subject areas; and
- Examine the nature, value, and limitations of scientific methods and the interaction of science with society. Science seeks to develop a fundamental description and understanding of the natural world, from elementary particles to the cosmos, including the realm of living systems. Students should have opportunity to explore the insights of science, to view science as a human achievement, and to participate in scientific inquiry. This experience includes the challenge of drawing conclusions based on observation, analysis, and synthesis.

University of Oregon: Group-satisfying courses in the Sciences should introduce students to the foundations of one or more scientific disciplines, or should provide an introduction to fundamental methods (such as mathematics) that are widely used in scientific disciplines. Courses should introduce students to the process of scientific reasoning. Although laboratory courses are not automatically excluded from Group-satisfying status in the sciences, to acquire this status, the courses must not focus primarily on techniques or data collection.

Colorado State System: Lecture content of science course shall

- Develop foundational knowledge in specific field(s) of science.
- Develop an understanding of and ability to use the scientific method.
- Recognize that science as a process involves the interplay of observation, experimentation and theory.
- Develop quantitative approaches to study natural phenomena.
- Identify, highlight interconnections between specific science courses being taught & larger areas of scientific endeavor.
- Distinguish among scientific, nonscientific, and pseudoscientific presentations, arguments and conclusions.

Laboratory content shall:

- Develop concepts of accuracy, precision, and the role of repeatability in the acquisition of scientific data.
- Be predominately hands-on and inquiry-based with demonstration components playing a secondary role.
- Emphasize a student's formulation and testing of hypotheses with scientific rigor.
- Stress student generation and analysis of actual data, the use of abstract reasoning to interpret these data, and communication of the results of experimentation.
- Develop modern laboratory skills.
- Emphasize procedures for laboratory safety.

OWEAC Composition Recommendations (Final Draft)

The college first year English Composition sequence prepares students for the writing, reading, and critical thinking they will do in college, in their careers, and in their lives as citizens.

The sequence introduces and develops the following:

Rhetoric: The art of presenting specific material to a specific audience in order to achieve a specific purpose in both informal and formal contexts; including the analysis of writing and speaking situations by subject, purpose, intended audience, and tone; as well as the use of strategies such as comparison, definition, description, process, etc. both as ways to think and as ways to organize material.

Writing as Process: The use of planning, drafting, revising, and editing in order to produce texts.

Critical Thinking and Reading: The exercise of analysis, evaluation, and judgment to determine quality and trustworthiness of source material, validity and strength of reasons, and the form and presentation of materials used and produced by students.

Reflection: Self-assessment of writing processes and rhetorical choices made in the contexts of personal and public writings.

The sequence is divided into the following three courses:

- WR 121: This course teaches rhetoric, the writing process, critical thinking and reading at the college level while focusing on academic writing such as the essay and critical summary.
- WR 122: This course continues the focus of WR 121 with the added emphasis of persuasion and argument supported by external research.
- WR 123: This course continues the focus of WR 121 and 122 and emphasizes research: framing a research question, formulating a research strategy, finding and evaluating sources, and relating sources to each other and to the student's own ideas on the topic. This course also emphasizes citing, documenting, and integrating source material into the student's own text.

Learning about writing, like writing itself, is a recursive process. Students will continually need to revisit ideas and skills learned throughout the course sequence. This overview and the specific recommendations that follow do not exhaustively describe the courses. Rather, this document articulates guidelines and minimum curricular expectations for three first-year English Composition courses. Learning to write is a complex, individualized process which takes place over time with continued practice.

Undergraduate writing education provides the basis for the development of a literate citizenry and work force capable of reflective and critical inquiry.

WR 121

Writing Process	Purpose and Audience	Thesis	Organization	Rhetorical Methods	Development and Support	Critical Thinking and Reading	Conventions and Format
<p>Students will use the writing process: inventing, drafting, revising, and editing toward a final draft. At the invention stage, students will find a topic and develop and write on that topic from their own perspective. During drafting, students will employ processes and strategies which fit purpose, context, and audience. In revision, students will evaluate the effectiveness of their work with peer responders, tutors, and/or instructors, demonstrating a focused process of improvement from early to final drafts. Finally, students will edit for correctness and clarity.</p>	<p>Students will write expository essays to accomplish a clear purpose by adopting appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality as well as organizational pattern(s). Students will produce academic writing addressed to an audience broader than the student writer or the instructor.</p>	<p>Students will develop a controlling idea in each completed essay. The thesis must be clear and specific in order to express a focused approach to ideas, insights, and/or applications.</p>	<p>Students will organize their essays with an introduction, logically arranged body paragraphs that develop the thesis, and a conclusion. Connections between sections, paragraphs, and sentences will be clear. Organization will reflect the scope and nature of the thesis.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate control of a variety of sentence types to achieve clear and fluent writing. Students will develop paragraphs and make transitions aimed at making their writing more accessible to readers.</p>	<p>Students will provide adequate explanatory details and reasons to develop the thesis. Students will select and use appropriate techniques and materials to support their thesis, which may include rhetorical strategies, concrete detail, sensory and narrative detail, dialogue, summary of outside sources, synthesis of information from sources, and a conclusion.</p>	<p>Students will look analytically at a text or situation as part of forming their own interpretation, supporting it with rational and logical thinking. Students will demonstrate critical reading skills such as inference, judgment, and conclusion.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate the ability to use standard academic English in order to address an academic audience. Sentence structures will be correct and chosen for effectiveness. Students will demonstrate an appropriate variety of sentence structures. A few fragments may appear when stylistically appropriate. There will be few clichés; most idiomatic expressions will be used correctly. Students will be able to use basic sentence punctuation correctly. There will be few mistakes in spelling or in the use of homonyms. Final drafts of essays will be typed, will be double spaced, and will include an appropriate heading and a title. Students will demonstrate the ability to summarize, paraphrase, and quote passages from sources. Students will be introduced to MLA (or APA or Chicago) format, citation, and documentation.</p>
<p>Workload:</p>		<p>Students will write 4-5 polished essays of more than 2 pages each. For each essay, students will submit evidence of using a writing process. The last essay should be at least 4 pages.</p>					

WR 122

Writing Process	Purpose and Audience	Thesis	Organization	Rhetorical Methods	Development and Support	Critical Thinking and Reading	Conventions and Format
In working through the writing process, students will generate ideas from texts and demonstrate the ability to evaluate those texts they choose to include in their final drafts for sound reasoning and validity of evidence.	Students will write persuasive or argumentative essays to accomplish a clear purpose by adopting appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality as well as organizational pattern(s). Students will anticipate and prepare for reactions to their text by an audience outside the classroom.	Students will include a thesis or claim in each completed essay that identifies the essay as a form of argument or analysis.	Students will use patterns of reasoning and formal logic in organizing their essays with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Students will organize support for a particular audience and for a particular purpose, such as argument, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation.	Students will use appropriate rhetorical strategies and reasons to support the thesis or claim. Students will employ rhetorical strategies for their own purposes, such as analysis, persuasion, argument, evaluation, and synthesis for a variety of audiences in order to develop the thesis and effectively organize the essay.	Students will use resources for their own purposes. These may include, but are not limited to, using appropriate outside sources, presenting good reasons, showing logical relationships, clarifying inferences, choosing appropriate language and using the most convincing evidence for the target audience.	Students will critically analyze texts and/or situations and not accept at face value what they see. Students will adopt the habit of looking closely and questioning not only the reliability of opinions and statements from sources, but also their own assumptions and opinions. Students will identify, evaluate, and use the elements of argument. Students will distinguish between observation, fact, inference, etc. Students will demonstrate practical application of concepts and skills.	Same as WR 121 but with more control. Students will effectively cite and document a variety of sources.
Workload:	Students will write 4-5 polished essays of more than 3 pages each. For each essay, students will submit evidence of using a writing process. The last essay should be at least 5 pages.						

WR123

Writing Process	Purpose and Audience	Thesis	Organization	Rhetorical Methods	Development and Support	Critical Thinking and Reading	Conventions and Format
<p>Students will demonstrate successful use of the research process: writing research proposals, formulating incisive questions, conducting library and/or field research, taking careful notes, and compiling an annotated bibliography or review of literature. Students will evaluate the quality of information gained through primary and/or secondary research reliability, validity, and soundness of reasoning. Students will work through the writing process to produce a final draft that includes in-text citations and a bibliography.</p>	<p>Students will write a research paper which will attempt to persuade an informed and educated reader or assert a position taken by the writer. Students will use appropriate voice, tone, and formality. Students will select the appropriate documentation style (MLA, APA, or Chicago) for the topics they have chosen.</p>	<p>Students will write a research-based project with a clear thesis or claim that is arguable, unified, and sufficiently narrow.</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate the ability to organize longer research papers with an introduction, logically arranged body paragraphs that develop the thesis and synthesize information from a variety of sources, and a conclusion. Connections between sections, paragraphs, and sentences will be clear. Organization will reflect the scope and nature of the thesis.</p>	<p>Students will use appropriate rhetorical strategies as needed to support an argumentative or position-based thesis or claim in a research-based paper.</p>	<p>Students will develop a thesis or claim based on the evaluation and synthesis of primary and secondary sources. Students will thoroughly develop and support the thesis with a balanced and insightful presentation of evidence. Using quotations, summaries, and/or paraphrases, students will integrate their ideas and source material, being careful to differentiate source materials from their own ideas and carefully credit sources.</p>	<p>Students will research and synthesize disparate sources. Students will weigh various conclusions based on the evidence presented in order to build a credible research-based discussion of their own. Students' writing will evaluate not only the reliability but also the adequacy of sources and information.</p>	<p>Same as WR 122 but with more control. Students will demonstrate mastery of citation and documentation. Students will include index, pagination, and appropriately integrated visuals in their projects.</p>
<p>Workload:</p>	<p>Students will write at least 15 pages of polished research-based writing. Students will submit evidence of using a writing process.</p>						