

2024

WRITING COURSE FINDER: INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE



MarymountManhattan

INTRODUCTION

Dear Griffins,

Welcome to the Writing Course Finder!

All first-year students, regardless of their majors, enroll in a writing course during their first semester. Most first-year students do this by completing two Writing Seminars (WRIT 101 in the Fall and WRIT 102 in the Spring). Some first-year students take other writing classes before enrolling in these seminars in order to be better prepared for them. Other first-year students complete this requirement by taking one advanced writing seminar (WRIT 201). Transfer students may also be required to take writing courses depending on the classes for which they receive transfer credit.

First-Year writing courses are an important part of your educational journey here at MMC. Your writing classes will teach you how to approach writing in your other classes, including those in your major, and will build skills for your future professional success.

Depending on your previous experience with writing, you may take different numbers and types of writing courses from your classmates. Our goal is to help you determine the best individual pathway to fulfill this college-wide requirement. Research shows that students who carefully consider their options and place themselves in the appropriate courses for their skill level, are more likely to succeed in those courses.

The goal of the Writing Course Finder Questionnaire you will complete is to help identify the first-semester writing course right for you. To do so, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your writing history, strengths as a writer, reader, and thinker, and areas in which you would like to improve.

Student Success Advising (SSA) will review your responses and course selection before registration, and will reach out to you if needed.

Please review the following information and options carefully before beginning the Questionnaire. You may return to this Informational Brochure for guidance at any point as you complete the Questionnaire.

ONE NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Please set aside about one hour of uninterrupted time to first review this brochure and then to fill out the “Writing Course Finder Questionnaire.” Your response must be completed in one sitting and cannot be saved over multiple days.

COURSE SELECTION OPTIONS

Please read the descriptions of MMC's writing classes and the selection guidance for each course option carefully. As you reflect and review, please think about which option [1-4] seems to best match your current abilities as a critical reader and writer.

You feel like you could use an extra foundation or support in active reading and writing skills, for any reason. You have written mostly very short essays (3 pages or less).

Option 1

WRIT-010: Effective Thinking &
WRIT-009: Lab

You feel generally ready for WRIT-101, but you could benefit from lab time set aside each week to produce drafts for WRIT-101 and build concrete writing skills.

Option 2

WRIT-101: Writing Seminar I &
WRIT-011: Lab

You have written average-length school essays (4-5 pages), have experience with other types of writing, have a fair understanding of your writing process, and/or feel relatively confident in your writing.

Option 3

WRIT-101:
Writing Seminar I

You have written longer school essays (5-7 pages), have strong experience with other types of academic writing and/or research, have a good understanding of your writing process, and/or feel very confident in your writing.

Option 4

WRIT-201:
Advanced Writing Seminar

OPTION 1

WRIT-010: Effective Thinking & WRIT-009: Effective Thinking Lab

WRIT-010: Effective Thinking

This course introduces students to a variety of active reading, thinking, writing, and reflective strategies. Emphasis will be given to thinking through writing—and especially approaches for invention, drafting, and revision—and to understanding organizational structures and thinking patterns used in academic writing. Students learn their individual writing processes while composing a series of essays that build toward those in WRIT 101. Students enrolled in this course also enroll in WRIT 009: Effective Thinking Lab.

In this course, students produce between 8–11 pages of formal writing, with more pages of drafts and low-stakes assignments. This course requires an oral presentation and one to two individual conferences.

WRIT-009: Effective Thinking Lab

This course is designed to meet student needs as they arise, providing skills-centered support for WRIT 010. In this once-a-week lab, WRIT 010's academic essays are scaffolded, as instructors aid students in the development of their individual writing processes. In-class time is allotted for essay drafting and revision, as well as for grammar, style, peer workshops, writing lessons, critical thinking and rhetorical exercises, reflective practice, and skills transfer. There is no additional outside work in this lab, but attendance is mandatory.

This course requires two individual conferences.

Guidance:

- Students who choose this course pair often feel that they could use an extra foundation or support in active reading and writing skills, for any reason.
- Students enrolled in this course pair receive lots of individual attention to their writing and build skill in a supportive cohort as they prepare for Writ 101 in the following semester.

If you have written mostly very short school essays (up to 3 pages), have minimal experience with other types of writing, do not often draft or revise, would like support in reading comprehension or written analysis, and/or feel not as confident as you would like to in your writing and reading skills, you might choose this option.

OPTION 2

WRIT-101: Writing Seminar I &

WRIT-011: Writing Lab

WRIT-101: Writing Seminar I

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the MMC academic community, while practicing the critical thinking, reading, writing, and oral presentation skills necessary for their academic and professional lives. Students will explore a selected topic from several disciplinary perspectives in an intimate classroom environment. Through a series of written essays and presentation assignments, students will engage in the recursive process of professional-level composition, including invention, drafting, revision, peer-feedback, and editing. WRIT-101 is followed by our research-based course, WRIT-102, in the Spring semester of the student's first year.

In this course, students produce 12-16 pages of formal writing, with more pages of drafts and low-stakes assignments. This course requires an oral presentation and at least one individual conference.

WRIT-011: Writing Lab

This is a flexibly-designed support lab for WRIT-101. Students receive supplemental skills instruction and further practice with professional-level composition as they invent, draft, and revise WRIT-101's academic essays. Once-a-week writing lab reinforces strategies for active reading, thinking through writing, and ethical engagement with sources, allotting in-class time for student needs as they arise, and emphasizing skills transfer and reflective practice. There is no additional outside work in this lab, but attendance is mandatory.

This course requires two individual conferences.

Guidance:

- Students who choose this course pair generally feel ready for WRIT-101, but feel that they could use some extra support with their individual writing process, especially drafting and revision. Students who choose this pair often feel that they could benefit from lab time set aside each week to produce their drafts for WRIT-101 and build concrete writing skills.
- Students enrolled in this course pair receive lots of individual attention to their writing and build skill in a supportive cohort as they progress through WRIT-101.

If you have written average-length school essays (at least 4-5 pages) and have some experience with other types of writing, but would like additional skills or process support, and/or feel that you would like to gain confidence in your writing, you might choose this option.

OPTION 3

WRIT-101: Writing Seminar I

WRIT-101: Writing Seminar I

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the MMC academic community, while practicing the critical thinking, reading, writing, and oral presentation skills necessary for their academic and professional lives. Students will explore a selected topic from several disciplinary perspectives in an intimate classroom environment. Through a series of written essays and presentation assignments, students will engage in the recursive process of professional-level composition, including invention, drafting, revision, peer-feedback, and editing. WRIT-101 is followed by our research-based course, WRIT-102, in the Spring semester of the student's first year.

In this course, students produce 12–16 pages of formal writing, with more pages of drafts and low-stakes assignments. This course requires an oral presentation and at least one individual conference.

Guidance:

- Students who choose to enroll in the stand-alone Writ 101 course feel fairly confident in their ability to produce average-length school essays (4–5 pages) and write analytically. Students who choose this course feel fairly confident in their ability to generate ideas, organize their writing, use textual evidence, write complex sentences, draft, and revise. Students may or may not have experience with research skills fundamentals.
- Students enrolled in this course receive lots of individual attention to their writing skill and their writing process.

If you have written average-length school essays (at least 4–5 pages), have experience with other types of writing, have a fair understanding of your writing process, and/or feel relatively confident in your writing, you might choose this option.

OPTION 4

WRIT-201: Advanced Writing Seminar

WRIT-201: Advanced Writing Seminar

This course introduces students to the MMC academic community while continuing to strengthen the critical reading, writing, research, and oral presentation skills necessary for both their scholarly and professional lives. Students explore a topic from several disciplinary perspectives, conduct extensive research, and learn to appreciate the advantages of interdisciplinary study. Through a series of advanced written assignments, students engage in the recursive process of professional-level composition, including invention, drafting, revision, peer feedback, and editing. Students learn how to propose, formulate, develop and present an original academic project, based on extensive independent research.

In this course, students produce 15–20 pages of formal writing, with many more pages of drafts and low-stakes assignments. A final research paper is 8–10 pages. This course requires an oral presentation and at least one individual conference.

Guidance:

- Students who choose to enroll in the advanced course feel very confident in their ability to produce longer school essays (5–7 pages) and write analytically. Students who choose this course feel very confident in their reading comprehension and in their command of the academic essay (including generating ideas, organizing writing, using textual evidence, and writing complex sentences). Students come to this course with a writing process that includes drafting and revision, and have some research skills fundamentals.
- Students enrolled in this course receive individual attention to their writing skill and their writing process, but are expected to be self-directed learners.

If you have written longer school essays (5–7 pages), have strong experience with other types of writing and/or academic research, have a good understanding of your writing process, and/or feel very confident in your writing, you might choose this option.

WHAT ARE EACH OPTION'S COURSE REQUIREMENTS?

	Option 1: WRIT-010 & WRIT-009	Option 2: WRIT-101 & Lab	Option 3: WRIT-101	Option 4: WRIT-201
Formal Writing	8-11 pages	12-16 pages	12-16 pages	15-20 pages
Informal Writing	Multiple drafts, low-stakes assignments	Multiple drafts, low-stakes assignments	Multiple drafts, low-stakes assignments	Multiple drafts, low-stakes assignments
Oral Presentation	One formal presentation	One formal presentation	One formal presentation	One formal presentation
Individual Writing Conferences	3-4 required conferences	2-4 required conferences	1-2 required conferences	1-2 required conferences
Research Paper	None	None	None	8-10 page final research paper

WHAT WILL MY FIRST SEMESTERS LOOK LIKE?

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Semester 1	WRIT-010 & WRIT-009	WRIT-101 & WRIT-011	WRIT-101	WRIT-201
Semester 2	WRIT-101 & WRIT-011	WRIT-102	WRIT-102	
Semester 3	WRIT-102			

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: STUDENTS & PARENTS

Why the Writing Course Finder?

- The Writing Course Finder privileges student autonomy, agency, and reflection. MMC students are independent, introspective, and innovative. Entrusting you with the direction of your education from the moment you enter the college aligns with, and enacts, our mission of “fostering intellectual achievement and personal growth.”
- Research shows that self-placement is on par with, and often outperforms, conventional placement systems, and that student confidence in their decision builds classroom environments on which students reflect positively (Royer and Gilles, *Directed Self-Placement: Principles and Practices*, 2003).
- Self-placement is a more equitable system of placement, and equity is central to MMC’s mission. Students who were previously tracked because of language ability, learning disabilities, poor test-taking, or any other number of “disadvantages” in the context of educational standardization, have the unique opportunity to evaluate how this tracking factored into their academic journeys at the critical impasse of entering college—what Kylie Kenner calls the “social justice implications” of self-placement (“Student Rationale for Self-Placement,” 2016).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: STUDENTS

What if I make the wrong choice?

You will have until the first week of classes to switch into another course option if you feel that the course you are enrolled in is not at your level.

Why would I choose to take three semesters of writing, rather than two semesters?

We believe that you know yourself best, and that you will choose the course or course pair that best meets your needs at this point in your educational journey. Your selection should reflect your assessment of the preparation you need for writing and thinking required at the college level.

Why would I choose to take more classes (the labs), when I could take fewer?

Our labs give you class time to work on drafts and revisions for your main class. You will build skills and develop and refine a writing process that works better for you--with hands-on support from your instructor. If you feel that you could use this additional support, we encourage you to take advantage of our lab option!

Are there restrictions on my registration if I choose to take the Effective Thinking course pair (WRIT-010 and WRIT-009)?

No. You must register for the matching section pairs, but there are no other restrictions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: STUDENTS . . . CONTINUED

If I register for the Effective Thinking course pair (WRIT-010 and WRIT-009) in my first semester, and one of my major classes requires a pre-requisite or co-requisite WRIT-101, what do I do?

In this case, you will be able to apply for a pre-requisite waiver in order to register for your major class.

Do all options count towards graduation?

Yes. The labs are 0 credits (WRIT-009: Effective Thinking Lab) and 1 credit (WRIT-011: Writing Lab), respectively, but all credits count towards your total credit load for graduation.

Will my graduation be delayed if I take more courses?

No. All students complete 120 credits. You have ample time to fulfill all of your major and minor credits, even if you take an additional semester of writing classes. Writing classes in the course pairs will factor into your elective credits.

Will it cost more to take more courses?

No. You are still working towards your graduation credits, and taking the same number of courses per semester for full-time student status. The 1-credit Writ 011 Lab has no additional cost.

Will all the credits count equally?

Yes.