

## Directed Self-Placement

### *Choosing the Writing Course That is Right for You*

#### **What are my options for first-year composition?**

The University of Southern Indiana University Core Curriculum (UCC) requires every student to complete ENG 101 and ENG 201. These two courses are commonly referred to as the “first-year composition sequence” because students are encouraged to take them early in their college careers, to help them develop as academic writers.

The Rhetoric and Composition faculty at USI believe that communication, critical thinking and creativity are essential skills for all college students to develop, and the first-year composition sequence is designed to provide you with a foundation in each of these three areas. In order to succeed in these fundamental courses, it is important for each student to begin the sequence with the course that best fits her or his needs.

This pamphlet will help you decide which course would be best for you as you begin your first-year composition sequence at USI.

#### **Placement Options**

You may enter the first-year composition sequence at USI at one of these three points:

**ENG 101. *Rhetoric and Composition I: Literacy and the Self.* (3)** A course in the critical arts of reading, writing, reflection and discussion, with an introduction to rhetoric and informal logic. Contributes 3 credits towards the 9 required for UCC Goal A1 Composition/Speech.

**ENG 100. *Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition.* (3)** A portfolio-based, preparatory course in reading, writing, reflection and discussion, emphasizing rhetorical analysis and strategies for focusing, developing, and organizing writing. Special attention is also given to strategies for revising and editing writing. Credits apply as electives toward graduation, but students must still complete ENG 101.

**GENS 098. *Strategies for Writers.* (0)** Three-hour, non-credit course provides opportunities to learn and practice strategies for responding to college writing assignments. Students will practice strategies for focusing, organizing, developing and revising their work, with special attention to learning editing strategies for standard grammar, usage and expression.

## **Writing Placement**

Students are automatically enrolled in ENG 101 if they meet 2 of these three criteria:

- High school rank: 51% or above
- ACT/SAT Verbal: 450 or above
- ACT/SAT Writing: 450 or above

Students who do not meet these criteria compose a Writing Placement Essay. This essay is completed during a 45-minute period at USI and is scored by instructors from the USI English Department. Based on the placement essay score, students are enrolled in either ENG 101, ENG 100 or GENS 098.

## **Selecting the Best Course for You**

Some students who meet the criteria for placement in ENG 101 may feel that they would be better served by either ENG 100 or GENS 098. If you are concerned about your readiness for ENG 101, you are encouraged to confer with your academic advisor, who can help you decide which course would be most appropriate for you.

In some instances, instructors of ENG 101, ENG 100 or GENS 098 may feel that a student has been improperly placed. Usually, this decision is made based on the in-class diagnostic essay all first-year composition instructors are encouraged to conduct during the first week of classes. If your instructor believes you would be better served by entering the first-year composition sequence at a different point, she or he may speak with you about placement options. It is then your choice to remain in your current

course or to enroll in the course your instructor recommends.

Sometimes, students are reluctant to enroll in ENG 100 or GENS 098 because these courses do not satisfy the first-year composition requirement. Nevertheless, the most important factor in designing your program of study should be long-term academic success. Entering the first-year composition sequence at the appropriate point will help you get off to the right start in developing those crucial skills of communication, critical thinking and creativity.

## **Persons to Contact with Questions Regarding Placement**

Dr. Patrick Shaw, Director of Composition  
USI English Department  
Phone: 812-461-5258  
Office: Liberal Arts 3031  
Email: pjshaw@usi.edu

Dr. Evon Hawkins, Assistant Director of Composition  
USI English Department  
Phone: 812-465-7144  
Office: Liberal Arts 3050  
Email: rehawkins@usi.edu