Introductory Writing Courses

RHW 101 and RHW 102 are designed to introduce students to college-level academic writing. The courses help you make the transition from more simple forms of writing such as the five-paragraph theme or a quick research paper that is primarily informative in purpose to more complex analysis or arguments that depend on your setting forth a contestable claim (not everyone agrees with it) and then providing the evidence to support the claim in an organized essay. Many of your college professors will be interested in your ability to analyze, interpret, and draw conclusions from the materials you read, observe, or research. The aim of the first-year writing courses is to help you learn how to do this effectively. The courses are also focused on helping you understand your own process of writing and the value of revision, of understanding that being willing to rethink and make multiple changes to a draft so it is stronger makes you a more effective writer.

RHW 101 focuses heavily on the basic skills of developing an effective analytical or argumentative essay. You will work intensively on such basics as thesis statements, topic sentences and paragraph development, transitions, using evidence effectively, basic source usage, introductions and conclusions, and so forth. RHW101 is an optional course that carries 4 hours of academic credit toward graduation and is designed for those of you who, after responding to the self-placement questionnaire, think you might like to be better prepared for RHW102.

RHW 102 assumes some familiarity with the qualities of an effective academic essay and adds more complex skill development including but not limited to more sophisticated ways to develop theses and paragraphs; understanding the rhetorical appeals of logos, ethos, and pathos for specific audiences; and gaining greater experience at finding, reading, evaluating, and using sources effectively to help you construct your own academic essays. The course will be organized around a central theme and will engage you with multiple perspectives on that theme. RHW102 is a 4-hour course required of all first-year and transfer students with fewer than 30 credits, and all transfer students who have not earned transfer credit for a comparable course. You should enroll in this course by your second term at Berry and once you have enrolled at Berry, you must take RHW102 here; in other words, you can't take it over the summer at another institution. You must earn a grade of C- or better to pass out of this course.