

## **Department of Focused Inquiry Shared Curriculum: UNIV 111, 112, and 200**

VCU's general education curriculum seeks to provide a diverse student body with a broad base of knowledge and the intellectual skills to participate actively in a changing world. To those ends, the general education curriculum challenges students to seek creative answers to complex problems, see connections between disciplines and between ideas, and develop an informed perspective on the varieties of human experience.

- VCU Bulletin 2021-2022

### **Department of FI mission**

In accordance with VCU's general education curriculum, the purpose of this faculty and department will be to cultivate in all VCU students the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed for collegiate and lifelong success through learning-centered experiences.

### **Core Curriculum Goals**

The General Education Curriculum requires that all students take 12-13 credits of Foundations of Learning courses, which include UNIV 111, 112, and 200. These courses provide the student with the core competency skills necessary for academic success across all disciplines:

Communicative Fluency

Ethical Reasoning

Global and Cultural Responsiveness

Information Literacy

Problem Solving (Critical and Creative)

Core Curriculum Goals	FI Curriculum Objectives	Course Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Communicative Fluency</b></p> <p>FI courses will provide students with substantive and sustained writing experiences in order to create shared meaning by effectively using language and other communicative practices, purposefully engaging an audience, and skillfully communicating across multiple forms and modes.</p>	<p>In 111, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● generate both informal and formal written and oral products for a variety of purposes, including accurately communicating information and engaging with the ideas of others in order to develop critical thinking</li> <li>● develop and present cogent and coherent written communication with general and targeted audiences</li> <li>● practice consistent reflection to analyze and evaluate their own writing process(es)</li> <li>● begin to explore the importance of interpreting elements of rhetorical situations (e.g., audience, context) and using rhetorical strategies (including but not limited to persuasive strategies) in achieving positive communication outcomes</li> <li>● explore and practice communication skills in collaborative contexts/settings</li> </ul> <p>In 112, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● generate both informal and formal written and oral products for a variety of purposes, including using writing for dialogue, negotiation, persuasion, and to develop shared understanding</li> <li>● practice consistent reflection to analyze and evaluate their own writing process(es)</li> <li>● develop and present cogent, coherent, and evidence-based written communication with general and targeted audiences</li> <li>● accurately communicate information and the arguments of others, synthesize source materials, and practice selecting key pieces of a complex</li> </ul>	<p>After 111, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● effectively summarize and analyze texts</li> <li>● consider audience and purpose in their own writing and the writing of others</li> <li>● use reasons and evidence in written and oral products to support their ideas and communicate with others</li> <li>● begin to interpret rhetorical situations and use appropriate rhetorical strategies in order to achieve positive communication outcomes</li> <li>● engage in process writing (drafting, revision, editing, and reflection) and show an understanding of its value in developing communication skills</li> <li>● practice a variety of writing conventions based on the rhetorical situation</li> <li>● use communication skills in collaborative contexts/settings, including online</li> <li>● generate relevant questions and use inquiry to guide and develop communication skills</li> </ul> <p>After 112, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● effectively analyze, synthesize, and communicate information and the arguments of others from multiple texts</li> <li>● shape writing to serve purpose and audience expectations</li> <li>● transfer considerations of audience, context, and purpose across media and modalities</li> <li>● generate effective questions and continue to use inquiry to guide and develop communication skills</li> <li>● offer effective reasons and evidence in written and oral communication to support one's ideas and claims</li> <li>● use source material appropriate to audience and</li> </ul>

- idea to achieve writing objectives and positive communication outcomes
- choose sources of evidence appropriate to the audience and purpose
- recognize and use other modalities of communication (e.g., digital, expressive, scientific)
- achieve positive outcomes with others through interpreting rhetorical situations (e.g., audience, context) and using rhetorical strategies (including but not limited to persuasive strategies)
- practice and develop communication skills in collaborative contexts/settings

In 200, students will

- generate both informal and formal written products for targeted purposes, including using writing to engage in sustained inquiry, dialogue with research material, and to develop knowledge and shared understanding through argument
- practice consistent reflection to analyze and evaluate their own writing process(es)
- develop and present cogent, coherent, and evidence-based written communication with general and specialized audiences
- critically evaluate and choose evidence from a variety of sources and multiple perspectives appropriate to the audience and purpose; effectively synthesize source material
- become more proficient in communicating the complex ideas and arguments of others; be able to select and use, in various modes, key elements of a complex idea and the writing of others to frame and develop one's own writing
- understand and use rhetorical strategies appropriate for academic, public, and professional writing situations

purpose

- contend with other perspectives when developing communication products
- continue to engage in process writing (drafting, peer review, revision, editing, and reflection) in developing communication skills
- practice standard writing and citation conventions appropriate for the rhetorical situation
- effectively communicate in collaborative contexts/settings, including online

After 200, students should be able to

- engage in sustained inquiry within a select discourse community
- engage in argument as communication in order to develop knowledge, dialogue, and shared understanding
- consider the relationship between purpose and audience, and address an audience appropriate for the rhetorical situation
- understand how rhetorical appeals and strategies relate to purpose, audience, and situation
- articulate a reasonable, cogent, and appropriate claim
- utilize a variety of appropriate sources, source types, and perspectives to support a claim, by
  - effectively synthesizing multiple texts, including scholarly ones
  - communicating complex information and ideas
  - selecting key pieces of evidence
  - using source material (evidence, information, arguments) to advance one's own thinking
- use citation documentation appropriate for the rhetorical situation
- use writing conventions appropriate for the genre and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● understand and use genre conventions, when appropriate, for communication</li> <li>● recognize and use other modalities of communication (e.g., digital, expressive, scientific) effectively and appropriately</li> <li>● practice and exercise a sustained habit of rigorous inquiry within a discourse community focused on a particular topic, and continue to develop communication skills in collaborative contexts/settings</li> </ul>	<p>audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● continue to develop and implement process writing strategies (drafting, peer review, revision, editing, and reflection)</li> <li>● consider the relationship between form and function when communicating in a different modality</li> <li>● understand and justify different media choices for a given rhetorical situation</li> </ul>
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Core Curriculum Goals	FI Curriculum Objectives	Course Learning Outcomes
<p><b>Information Literacy</b></p> <p>FI courses will help students navigate library-related services and the free web, and develop a set of integrated abilities to solve problems and generate new knowledge that encompasses the ability to recognize an information need; critically identify, locate, and evaluate appropriate resources; and responsibly and effectively synthesize, apply, and share information.</p>	<p>In 111, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● critically read and respond to texts in order to begin developing literacy skills for evaluating, synthesizing, applying, and sharing information for specific purposes</li> <li>● identify research resources and service points at VCU Libraries</li> <li>● develop awareness of relevant legal and ethical issues for information use</li> </ul>	<p>After 111, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● demonstrate introductory-level critical reading skills</li> <li>● classify information as relevant or irrelevant, organize information, and prioritize information</li> <li>● identify and access service points in Cabell Library in person and online in order to seek assistance and academic resources</li> <li>● demonstrate a habit of citation in written and oral work, including sources of images and video</li> <li>● demonstrate familiarity with the Honor Code and general ethical concerns regarding information use</li> <li>● identify and employ the basic format and mechanics of citations (in-text and list at end)</li> <li>● consult and utilize <i>VCU Writes!</i> and other trusted online writing resources to resolve citation questions</li> <li>● make informed decisions regarding issues of privacy online</li> </ul>

	<p>In 112, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify and locate appropriate sources and practice information retrieval based on recognizing an information need</li> <li>● critically evaluate information and its sources</li> <li>● effectively synthesize, apply, and share information to accomplish a specific purpose</li> <li>● demonstrate understanding of relevant legal and ethical issues for information use</li> <li>● engage with research resources and service points at VCU Libraries</li> </ul> <p>In 200, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● locate topic-relevant, appropriate information using VCU Libraries resources and the free web</li> <li>● critically evaluate the quality and suitability of information within a specific inquiry scope</li> <li>● effectively synthesize, apply, and share information to accomplish a specific purpose for a specific audience</li> <li>● use sources ethically and responsibly according to the standards within a given discourse community</li> <li>● explore academically rigorous and diverse work in evolving communication platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After 112, students should be able to</li> <li>● demonstrate critical reading skills with increasingly complex source material, to include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ evaluating sources based on credibility and appropriateness</li> <li>○ synthesizing and applying knowledge gained from source material to specific issues and questions</li> <li>○ effectively sharing knowledge gained from source material</li> </ul> </li> <li>● find sources using VCU Libraries Search to advance research goals</li> <li>● understand the role of, and begin to practice, developing effective research questions</li> <li>● distinguish between different formats of information</li> <li>● distinguish between scholarly, substantive, and popular sources</li> <li>● develop habits of citation, understanding citation as part of the writing and research process</li> <li>● show knowledge of MLA and APA citation systems</li> <li>● demonstrate increasing accuracy in format and mechanics of citation (in-text and list at end)</li> </ul> <p>After 200, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● continue to develop critical reading strategies and skills (outlined in 112) and engage with increasingly complex sources, including substantive and scholarly source material within a specific scope of inquiry</li> <li>● demonstrate the ability to effectively synthesize, apply, and share information for a specific purpose and audience</li> <li>● formulate an effective research question that addresses a significant problem</li> <li>● design and implement an effective research strategy</li> <li>● recognize that source material can be found through a variety of communication platforms</li> <li>● locate, assess, and responsibly use source material, from a variety of communication platforms, that</li> </ul>
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		<p>represents multiple perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● use sources ethically and responsibly, to include following proper documentation requirements in a given discourse community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Problem Solving (Critical &amp; Creative)</b></p> <p>FI courses will help students design, evaluate, and implement approaches to open-ended questions in order to achieve a desired outcome or goal, based on both: 1) the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion; and, 2) the synthesis of ideas, images, or expertise; and imaginative thinking characterized by innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.</p>	<p>In 111, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● begin to identify and address complex problems, issues, or questions</li> <li>● consider approaches, information, skills, and relevant resources</li> <li>● work collaboratively on problem-solving activities and projects</li> <li>● explore the value of adding the experiences and beliefs of others to one's own thinking in order to gain a wider and more informed perspective</li> </ul> <p>In 112, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● define complex problems, issues, or questions</li> <li>● evaluate and begin to seek out approaches, information, skills, and relevant resources</li> <li>● consider and propose multiple solutions; begin to be aware of contradictions, competing assumptions, and consideration of context</li> <li>● understand the implications, consequences, and outcomes of solutions</li> <li>● effectively collaborate on problem-solving activities and projects, while incorporating multiple perspectives</li> </ul>	<p>After 111, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● explore problems and issues by generating relevant questions</li> <li>● identify arguments or proposed solutions to problems within a variety of texts</li> <li>● demonstrate an introductory-level ability to analyze and evaluate problems by considering a variety of solutions and evidence</li> <li>● identify and critique assumptions and biases, including their own, and recognize the limitations of their own perspectives and experiences in addressing problems and issues</li> <li>● demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in solving problems</li> <li>● formulate a cogent solution to a problem</li> </ul> <p>In 112, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● explore complex problems and issues by generating relevant questions</li> <li>● demonstrate the ability to address problems by considering and evaluating a variety of approaches, relevant information, skills, and resources</li> <li>● propose a sound, well-supported solution to a problem that also considers alternative solutions</li> <li>● demonstrate an awareness of context, assumptions, contradictions, and the effects of new information</li> <li>● acknowledge the importance of situating and evaluating one's solution to a problem in relation to multiple perspectives</li> <li>● challenge personal and institutionalized assumptions and biases and revise conclusions in light of evidence</li> </ul>

	<p>In 200, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● define complex problems, issues, or questions within a specific inquiry scope</li> <li>● identify and seek out approaches, information, skills, and relevant resources</li> <li>● develop and propose multiple solutions, which demonstrates intellectual risk-taking and tolerance for ambiguity</li> <li>● evaluate potential solutions with awareness of contradictions, competing assumptions, and consideration of context</li> <li>● analyze the implications, consequences, and outcomes of solutions</li> </ul>	<p>After 200, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● address a complex problem through extended and well-designed inquiry</li> <li>● effectively identify and seek out approaches, information, skills, and relevant resources</li> <li>● pose and explore challenging, nuanced, and relevant research inquiry questions</li> <li>● summarize, synthesize, and evaluate competing solutions on the basis of their logic and limitations</li> <li>● demonstrate the ability to reflect on how diverse research and the perspectives of others can inform problem solving</li> </ul>
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<b>Core Curriculum Goals</b>	<b>FI Objectives</b>	<b>Course Learning Objectives</b>
<p><b>Ethical Reasoning</b></p> <p>In FI courses, students will reflect on their own and societal judgments of right and wrong, good and bad, as they relate to human conduct, especially concerning matters of justice, fairness, equity, and social responsibility. They will also consider value systems, both culturally inherited and different from their own experiences, and how they inform deliberations regarding the quality of life and social goods necessary, to employ ethical decision-making.</p>	<p>In 111, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● recognize ethical issues and explore principles of ethical and civic responsibility</li> <li>● Identify their culturally inherited beliefs through self-awareness &amp; civic identity</li> <li>● explore different ethical perspectives/concepts and the diversity of communities and cultures</li> </ul> <p>In 112, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● consider ethical perspectives and be aware of the role of personal beliefs in making ethical judgments</li> </ul>	<p>After 111, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● assess their own ethical values and identify the cultural and community sources of those values</li> <li>● recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings and begin to understand principles of ethical and civic responsibility</li> <li>● identify the social contexts of ethical problems</li> <li>● acknowledge and demonstrate an understanding of alternate viewpoints, values, and lived experiences</li> <li>● recognize and begin to investigate ethical issues related to human conduct and institutions</li> </ul> <p>After 112, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● identify and assess ethical questions, even when the given issue is not overtly ethical</li> <li>● apply a variety of approaches to ethical questions</li> <li>● represent opposing viewpoints accurately and address them fairly</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● apply beliefs and ethical perspectives using principles of ethical and civic responsibility</li> <li>● demonstrate the impact of ethical decision making on civic contexts and structures</li> </ul> <p>In 200, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● consider and apply principles of ethical and/or civic responsibility to inquiry projects and issues raised in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● evaluate the ramifications of potential courses of action</li> <li>● formulate an ethical claim based on evidence and critical reflection</li> </ul> <p>After 200, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● apply principles of ethical and/or civic responsibility to inquiry projects</li> </ul>
<p><b>Global and Cultural Responsiveness</b></p> <p>In FI courses, students will begin to explore how global and cultural responsiveness and agility requires (1) suspension of judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others and (2) empathic and flexible responsiveness to unfamiliar ways of being, recognizing that all actions have correlative intercultural effects. The objective of this exploration is to provide students with a foundational understanding in this competency, which will be developed in later coursework, so that they can advance equity and justice on local and global levels, well informed by historical and political contexts.</p>	<p>In 111, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● be introduced to relevant historical, cultural, and/or political contexts</li> <li>● demonstrate the capacity for suspending value judgments</li> <li>● consider multiple cultural perspectives and values, including one's own, when addressing topics and issues</li> </ul> <p>In 112, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● consider relevant historical, cultural, and political contexts</li> <li>● explore practical and ideological differences among cultures</li> <li>● consider appropriate contexts and methods for assessing value judgments</li> <li>● give further consideration to multiple cultural perspectives and values</li> </ul> <p>In 200, students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● explore and consider relevant historical, cultural, and political contexts within a specific scope of inquiry</li> <li>● Continue to consider appropriate contexts and methods for assessing value judgments</li> </ul>	<p>After 111, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● begin to understand the importance of contexts (historical, cultural, and/or political) when addressing course issues and topics</li> <li>● demonstrate awareness of alternative perspectives and values when addressing course topics and issues</li> </ul> <p>After 112, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● begin to demonstrate an understanding of contexts (historical, cultural, and/or political) when addressing course issues and topics</li> <li>● demonstrate an awareness of cultural perspectives and values when addressing course topics and issues</li> <li>● understand appropriate contexts and methods for assessing value judgments of relevant stakeholders when evaluating a problem or topic</li> <li>● begin to demonstrate consideration of practical and ideological differences when addressing course topics and issues</li> </ul> <p>After 200, students should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● apply an understanding of historical, cultural, political contexts to specific inquiry projects</li> <li>● apply a rhetorically appropriate understanding and consideration of cultural perspectives and values, and practical and ideological differences, to inquiry projects</li> </ul>



**Shared Program Writing and Research Assignments (non-negotiables)**

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|------------|---|
| <b>111</b> | <p><b>UNIT 1:</b> A Reflective and/or Experiential Narrative that may incorporate observational evidence. (750-1000 words)</p> <p><b>UNIT 2:</b> A piece of writing that engages in summary, evaluation, and analysis of textual materials (at least one of which is a written text) and provides context by placing them in conversation. (1000-1250 words)</p> <p><b>UNIT 3:</b> A piece of writing that develops from the student identifying a problem and exploring possible solutions to produce a claim supported by evidence from multiple outside texts. (1000-1500 words)</p>   |
| <b>112</b> | <p><b>UNIT 1:</b> A multimodal composition that situates analysis or experiential narrative in an appropriate context. (If faculty so choose, this assignment may be paired with the oral communication task; the learning objective of cultural and/or global awareness is encouraged.)</p> <p><b>UNIT 2:</b> Analytical writing that summarizes, analyzes, and synthesizes multiple outside sources, addressing multiple perspectives through research. (minimum of 1000 words) <i>Faculty are encouraged to keep the max. length at 1500 words unless the assignment involves extensive quotations from source material.</i></p> <p><b>UNIT 3:</b> An argument that applies an ethical approach to a complex problem, culminating in a claim based on research, evidence, and critical reflection. (1250-1750 words)</p>   |
| <b>200</b> | <p><b>1.</b> A composition of 1400-1750 words (or multimodal equivalent) in which students create an argument (critical analysis, inquiry defense, or similar essay) about a text/topic that will culminate in or lead to formation of a research question and demonstrate an awareness of rhetorical situation and relevant global and cultural contexts. <i>In connection with this assignment, students should analyze and discuss at least three shared class texts and establish a shared vocabulary on argument.</i></p> <p><b>2.</b> Organized evidence of the research process that informs or responds to a research question and concludes in a synthesis assignment (print and/or visual). <i>During the research process, students should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>consult no fewer than 15 sources</i></li><li>● <i>provide further evidence of the research process for no fewer than eight sources</i></li><li>● <i>synthesize eight sources</i></li></ul> <p><b>3.</b> An argumentative, researched essay with a minimum of 3500 words based on the research question established early in the semester. <i>This paper must draw on no fewer than eight sources, and three of those must be scholarly. All students must participate in peer review.</i></p> |

	<p>4. An argument, based on research, that is shared in a public forum and reflects consideration of multiple modes and awareness of the rhetorical situation.</p> <p>5. Reflection is an important writing process strategy and should be a graded component of the course. Graded reflection may take many forms, including, but not limited to, writer’s memos, reflective letters, and self-evaluations.</p>
<b>Shared Program Oral Communication Requirements (non-negotiables)</b>	
<b>111/112</b>	<p><b>In 111:</b> A minimum of two graded instances of oral communication are required; one should be an individual assignment, and one should emphasize collaboration. Timing, format, and stakes of graded oral communications are up to the individual instructor.</p> <p><b>In 112:</b> A minimum of one graded instance of oral communication is required, which may include, but is not limited to, an oral presentation, a round-table discussion, or a pre-recorded multimodal composition. Timing, format, and stakes are up to the individual instructor.</p>
<b>Other Non-negotiables</b>	
<b>111/112</b>	Students should be assigned a minimum of three readings per semester from the Custom Textbook, and course planning should involve the Common Book reading in the fall and the Theme Read in the spring.
<b>111/112 /200</b>	<p>Faculty are not bound to traditional forms of argument (e.g., classical, Rogerian, Toulmin) and are free to explore other ways argument can “develop knowledge, dialogue, and shared understanding.” However, when teaching traditional argumentation, please use the basic terminology outlined in “Grounds for Argument” in the “Skills” section of <a href="#">VCU Writes</a>.</p> <p>When teaching citation systems, please make clear to students that these systems are discipline-specific, and that they will be asked to use different citation systems in future classes. For APA and MLA style guidelines, see the <a href="#">Citation Guide</a> in VCU Writes.</p>

### Definitions

**Mission:** A mission statement should explain why your organization exists and what it hopes to achieve in the future. It articulates the organization’s essential nature, its values and its work.

**Goals:** Program learning goals are general statements about knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values expected in graduates of the program. Goals are written to align with the holistic vision of the mission. Typically, multiple goals are drawn from the mission statement.

**Objectives:** Curriculum objectives are statements that outline expectations for students by the end of a course.

**Learning Outcomes:** Program learning outcomes are clear, concise statements that describe how students can demonstrate their mastery of program goals. Learning outcomes should be thoughtfully developed in consideration of the mission and the goals of the program. Outcomes are more specific than goals, and there are usually multiple learning outcomes for each goal. They are statements of the knowledge, skills, and abilities the individual student possesses and can demonstrate upon completion of a learning experience or sequence of learning experiences (e.g., course, program, degree). Click here for more information on VCU's [assessment of student learning outcomes](#).

### Key Shared Curriculum Terms

Composition is said to fall into four basic types or categories (sometimes called modes): **expository** (informative), **descriptive** (records observation, sets a scene), **argumentative** (makes an explicit case, seeks to persuade the reader), and **narrative** (tells a story). Often these modes appear together by turns in a single piece of writing; the **essay** is a genre especially well-suited to accommodating all at once.

The tradition of the **essay** includes both **informal** (tends to personal topics, usually in narrative mode) and **formal** (tends to impersonal topics, usually in expository and/or argumentative/persuasive mode) structures. The **formal essay** leans toward the classic argument, with a thesis, evidence, and analysis of the significance of one to the other. **Informal essays** are less concerned with this sort of explicitly structured argument, though they frequently do contain arguments—implicit *and* explicit. Except in the case of the Ethical Reasoning Argument at the end of UNIV 112, and the Inquiry Defense/Critical Analysis and Argumentative Researched essays in UNIV 200, your Shared Program Writing Assignments *may or may not take the shape of an essay, but they should conform to parameters noted in the Shared Curriculum document and outlined here*.

**Multimodal compositions**, as defined by Selfe and Takayoshi, are “texts that exceed the alphabetic and may include still and moving images, animations, color, words, music and sound.” For our purposes multimodal compositions must include written or verbal language and at least one other communicative mode. Students engaged in multimodal work will develop the understanding that meaning is not constructed solely through language.

**Exposition** is essentially what they teach in the younger grades—hence the 4th grade book report on Arkansas that relates the state bird and principal exports. Often research-based writing, even in the academy, is called “expository,” though it is often, in fact, argumentative in the sense that it presents a hypothesis or thesis and proceeds to prove (or disprove) it.

We should take “**Experiential Narrative**” to mean a composition based on the student’s experience and/or observation (**descriptive**) that tells a nonfiction story (**narrative**), one where students select meaningful and significant information about their experience/observation that is, interesting to the reader and structured in an intentional and appropriate manner (i.e., the story has a

beginning, middle, and end). Similarly, a “**Reflective Narrative**” would consider the larger context, meaning, and implications of an experience (see Branch below). A “**Narrative**” does not necessarily take the shape of an essay, but it does take the shape of a story. Included in this category could be the case history, the feature article, the observational analysis, or the personal essay.

We should understand “**Ethical Reasoning Argument**” (UNIV 112) as a formal essay that employs ethical reasoning and a synthesis of reliable sources to make an argument. Likewise, the “**Argumentative Researched Essay**” (UNIV 200) draws on a synthesis and analysis of research material to make an explicit, structured argument.

According to the FI Shared Curriculum, faculty should design writing assignments to involve students in applying the skills of Analysis, Evaluation, Synthesis, and/or Ethical Reasoning (depending on the course and unit or focus). After surveying the faculty and participating in its own discussions, the Curriculum Committee suggests the following definitions for these terms: **Analysis** entails the ability to break down material into its constituent parts and to understand the interplay among the parts; **Evaluation** is the making of judgments using a set of criteria or against a designated standard; **Synthesis** involves making an observation or taking a position based on analysis and evaluation of multiple sources (possible examples of writing assignments focusing on synthesis: a literature review, a rhetorical analysis, or an annotated bibliography with an introduction, conclusion, or argument proposal). **Ethical Reasoning** interrogates and evaluates human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own values and the social context of problems, to identify ethical issues in a variety of settings, to apply different approaches to ethical questions, and to consider the ramifications of potential courses of action.

Finally, “**Critical Reading Skills**” are activities and processes applied to texts in order to enhance comprehension and lead to critical thinking about the ideas and arguments presented. These activities and processes include annotating texts, defining unfamiliar vocabulary, summarizing ideas, identifying main claims, audience, and purpose, evaluating evidence, identifying assumptions, identifying counterarguments and rebuttals, etc.

#### **Key Terms Sources:**

Branch, W.T., Jr., and A. Paranjape. “Feedback and Reflection: Teaching Methods for Clinical Settings,” *Academic Medicine*, 77.12 (December 2002): 1185. “Ethical Reasoning.” AACU Ethical Reasoning Value Rubric. AACU.ORG

<http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/pdf/ethicalreasoning.pdf> Holman, C. Hugh, and William Harmon, eds. *A Handbook to Literature*. New York: Macmillan, 1992.

Selfe, Cynthia and Pamela Takayoshi. “Thinking about Multimodality” from *Multimodal Composition: Resources for Teachers*. Cynthia Selfe, ed. New York: Bedford St. Martin, 2007.