

Physics Department Writing Requirement

May 2009

The Physics Department's portion of the College Writing Requirement¹ can be satisfied with a passing evaluation of a student portfolio. The portfolio will consist of four items: two laboratory reports from *Modern Physics* (Physics 240) and/or *Advanced Laboratory* (Physics 315/316), and two research reports from *Junior Physics Seminar* (Physics 390/391). Students are encouraged to revise these reports before submitting the portfolio. Typical formats for the required writings will be presented in the related courses. The writing is expected to be clear, precise, and intelligible to someone who has completed the Physics Foundation. Proper spelling, grammar, and organization are essential.

A student may submit a portfolio only once. The portfolio will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis by a departmental committee which will meet each semester to consider portfolios received by the last day of classes. Failing students may fulfill the departmental writing requirement by obtaining a grade of C or better in English Writing 401, *Writing Across the Curriculum*. Students who would like to improve their writing skills in advance of taking Physics 240, 315, 316, 390 or 391 may elect to take English Writing 401 in their Junior or Senior year; a grade of C or better will satisfy the Physics Department's portion of the College Writing Requirement.

The portfolio is normally submitted at the end of the semester when the student completes the second semester of 390/391. The *latest* students can submit a passing portfolio is the last day of classes in their penultimate semester. Students who fail to do so *must* enroll in English Writing 401 in their final semester and pass with a grade of C or better. Thus students completing Physics 390/391 in their final semester may not submit a portfolio and must complete the writing requirement by completing English Writing 401, as outlined above.

If English Writing 401 is not offered in the student's final semester, another English Writing course may be substituted with the approval of the department.

¹From the Occidental College Catalog: "*Proficiency in writing is a requirement for graduation*. Students meet this requirement in two stages, the first of which is passing the Writing Proficiency evaluation in the first-year Cultural Studies Seminar. Completion of the Cultural Studies courses does not by itself satisfy the writing requirement. Those who do not pass the Cultural Studies Writing evaluation will be asked to pass with a C or better a course in the Department of English Writing (201) or another course designated by the Instruction Committee. The second stage of the requirement will be met in the student's major department. Each department at the college has specified its own writing requirement in the major; students should consult the Director of Writing Programs for further information."