

RHET 103 and the WRITING FOUNDATIONAL REQUIREMENT: FAQ

2019-2020

Q: What is the Writing Foundational Requirement?

A: The Writing Foundational Requirement is one of the general education requirements mandated by Trinity's faculty. No single factor affects academic achievement more than the ability of students to "write prose that is correct, clear, convincing, and appropriate to their audience and purpose" (*Trinity College Bulletin*). Based on the results of the online Guided Writing Assessment, students who self-select or are directed to take RHET 103 College Writing will see the word "Required" next to "Writing Proficiency" on their transcript. These students are automatically enrolled in a section of RHET 103 College Writing by the Registrar's Office. Earning a C- or better in RHET 103 College Writing fulfills the Writing Foundational Requirement.

Q: How are students placed in RHET 103 College Writing?

A: Student responses to the Guided Writing Assessment (GWA) will help the Writing Placement Committee match first-year students to a suitable writing class. The GWA is an online writing placement tool that invites students to participate in determining their writing needs. The GWA first guides students through a consideration of general academic experiences and preparation and then helps students to weigh their confidence and skill level in academic writing. Students are then presented with options for introductory and advanced writing courses and invited to self-select an appropriate writing course. In some cases, even if a student does not self-select RHET 103 College Writing, the GWA algorithm may still require students to take RHET 103 College Writing.

The Writing Placement Committee considers all student responses and course self-selections in order to determine writing placement in an introductory or advanced academic writing course alongside the First-Year Seminar. The faculty committee may also review student application materials and transcripts provided by the Trinity College Admissions Office.

Students who self-select or are placed into RHET 103 College Writing will see the results on their transcript page under "Guided Writing Assessment" and are automatically enrolled by the Registrar's Office. RHET 103 College Writing cannot be dropped from a student's schedule.

Q: Who takes RHET 103 College Writing?

A: The majority of students taking RHET 103 College Writing self-select the course and many students report in student evaluations that it was one of their best classes or favorite teaches of the semester. The results of the Guided Writing Assessment (GWA) may require some students to take RHET 103 College Writing. All students can request a writing course in addition to their First-Year Seminar or Gateway course. While the GWA algorithm does take into consideration your self-placement, seats in writing courses are limited. Students selecting or placed into RHET 103 College Writing will take the course in the fall semester (and a few may be required to take the course in the spring depending on seat demand). If a student selects or is approved to take an advanced writing course, the advanced writing course will likely be taken in the spring semester.

Because Trinity is a writing intensive college, some students will be more successful if they take a course in direct writing instruction alongside their First-Year Seminar. If the additional writing course is RHET 103 College Writing, that course will fulfill the Writing Foundational Requirement. The results of the GWA determine if a student will be more successful at Trinity by taking RHET 103 College Writing.

If the GWA and Writing Placement Committee conclude that an advanced writing course or only a FYS course is the determination, the student will not be placed in RHET 103 College Writing. Instead, the transcript will indicate that the student should enroll in a RHET prefix course above RHET 103.

Students who do not earn a C- or better in RHET 103 College Writing are required to enroll in RHET 103 College Writing in the following semester.

Q: Is RHET 103 College Writing a remedial course?

A: No, RHET 103 College Writing is not a remedial course. RHET 103 College Writing provides an introduction to college writing and carries full academic credit for graduation. The course is a rigorous and challenging introduction to the art of expository writing and rhetorical analysis, with attention to analytical reading and critical thinking. Assignments offer students opportunities to read and write about diverse subjects, and the overall goal of the course is to help students develop their individual writing skills. Enrollment in each section is limited to 15 students in order to provide individualized feedback and extensive interaction with the professor in a seminar setting.

Q: Can A Student Self-select to Enroll in RHET 103 College Writing?

A: Yes. The Guided Writing Assessment (GWA) will allow students to self-select RHET 103 College Writing. Some students who do not select RHET 103 College Writing during the GWA may still be placed in RHET 103 College Writing as a result of the GWA algorithm. Even if a student self-selects the course, the transcript will still state: "Required."

Q: Can students who are required to take RHET 103 College Writing defer the course to the spring semester?

A: No. The majority of the sections of RHET 103 College Writing are offered in the fall semester, and only a few sections are available in the spring. There are limited seats in the spring with seats reserved for J-Start students, transfer students, some self-selectors, and students who do not pass RHET 103 College Writing in the fall with a C- or better.

Q: What other writing courses can a student take while at Trinity College?

Besides determining if students should take an introductory writing course at the same time as their First-Year Seminar, the Guided Writing Assessment (GWA) invites students to explore other advanced writing courses offered at Trinity College. Students are encouraged to enroll in other writing courses offered by the Allan K. Smith Center for Writing and Rhetoric in their first or subsequent years, such as other 100-level writing courses, RHET 202 Writing in the Disciplines, or RHET 208 Argument and Research Writing. These courses in particular are geared toward improving academic writing. Additionally, the Rhetoric, Writing and Media Studies minor (<http://www.trincoll.edu/Academics/centers/Writing/minor/Pages/default.aspx>) offers students the opportunity to develop expertise in writing for academic, professional, community, and personal purposes. Core courses provide students with extensive opportunities to develop their writing in various genres and examine rhetorical theories and practices. Elective courses explore social, cultural and field-specific topics in language, logic, persuasion and multimedia modes of communication.

For questions or more information, contact Dr. Tennyson O'Donnell, Director of the Allan K. Smith Center for Writing and Rhetoric, at tennyson.odonnell@trincoll.edu.