

## Writing and Oral Communication

Writing and oral communication skills are a set of abilities enabling individuals to become confident and competent communicators by the time they graduate. These skills equip students to effectively critique and analyze information, communicate clearly and persuasively, and express ideas. The student who is a proficient communicator can:

- demonstrate the basic principles for organizing ideas appropriately for accomplishing informative and persuasive communication objectives;
- demonstrate critical thinking skills when examining arguments, sources, processes, etc.
- locate, use, and correctly cite appropriate evidence to support their claims;
- communicate effectively in a variety of rhetorical situations.

The first-year of study is an ideal time to intentionally focus on the development of these communication skills. Students will have a solid foundation to build upon in upper level classes.

**Allegheny College** currently utilizes two first-year seminar courses, and a sophomore course, to teach written and oral communication.

### FS 101 Descriptive Communication and Inquiry

All first-year students take Descriptive Communication and Inquiry during the fall semester; the seminar instructor serves as the student's first academic advisor. The seminar contains both a significant academic component focused on developing oral and written communication skills and an integral advising component that assists students in exploring their interests and possible academic paths. The topical material covered in the seminar varies from section to section and year to year, and students select a seminar from a wide range of sections organized around different topics and taught by faculty from different departments.

### FS 102 Persuasive Communication

All first-year students take Persuasive Communication during the spring semester. This course builds on the work completed in Descriptive Communication and Inquiry and emphasizes written and oral communication with a focus on persuasion. The topical material covered in the seminar varies from section to section and year to year, and students select a seminar from a wide range of sections organized around different topics and taught by faculty from different departments.

### FS 201 Communication in a Discipline

Taken during the sophomore year, this seminar explores speaking and writing skills with attention to expectations for compelling speech and writing within a specific academic field. Students investigate what counts as persuasive evidence in the discipline and why, the conventions of communications in the discipline, and the methods by which practitioners position their work within the larger disciplinary context. In practice, most students elect to take FS 201 in a department in which they expect to major or minor; however, this is not required.

**Simpson College**

**LPWG—draft 28 May, 2008**