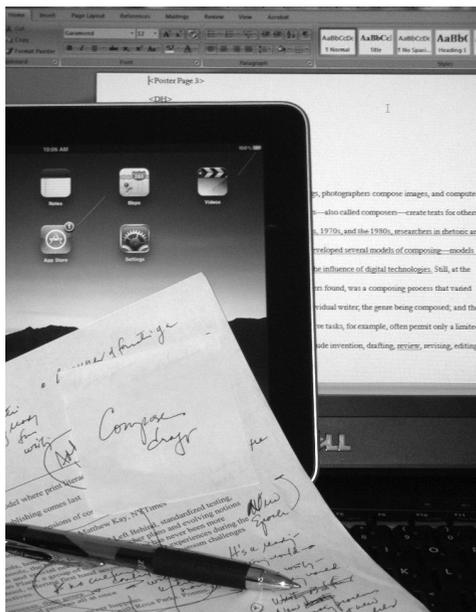


# Writing Studies



## Definition

Writing studies, also called rhetoric and composition, is an academic discipline that was formed in the second half of the twentieth century. It developed in response to new students attending college, including soldiers returning from World War II taking classes on the GI Bill; it also developed as community colleges grew and as colleges and universities began admitting more students, especially women and students of color. The discipline has always expressed a commitment to helping all students develop as writers. In fact, writing studies takes the teaching of writing so seriously that some scholars consider it the central focus of the field, especially the teaching of first-year

composition. Over time, other writing programs have developed, including programs in technical writing; minors and majors in writing studies; and graduate programs with both MA and PhD degrees. Likewise, scholars in this field also study other topics, among them the history of writing; the development of writing internationally; the role of writing in other disciplines; the role of writing in the workplace and the civic sphere; personal writing; and the role of technologies in the development of writing and its teaching.

## Significance

One value of having writing studies as a disciplinary background for writing courses is that we have considerable research that teachers can draw on as they help student writers excel, research supporting the activities you'll be engaging in—developing elaborated writing processes, choosing appropriate materials for a given purpose, and writing reflectively for a specific purpose and audience within the conventions of a given genre.

## Resources

- Adler-Kassner, Linda, and Elizabeth Wardle, eds. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts and Composition Studies*. Logan: Utah State UP, forthcoming 2015. Print.
- Connors, Robert J. "Composition History and Disciplinary." *History, Reflection, and Narrative: The Professionalization of Composition, 1963–1983*. Ed. Mary Rosner, Beth Boehm, and Debra Journet. Greenwich: Ablex, 1998. 3–22. Print.
- Council of Writing Program Administrators. "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition (v3.0)." 17 July 2014. Web.
- Hairston, Maxine. "Breaking Our Bonds and Reaffirming Our Connections." *College Composition and Communication* 36.3 (1985): 272–82. Print.

