**Writing Emphasis Courses**

The Essential Competencies Curriculum

Courses submitted for Writing Emphasis must already exist and/or have been approved by the Undergraduate Council.

---

**Course title:** Media Images: Drug and Alcohol Abuse  
**Department and Course Number:** SOCI 40443  
**Instructor:** M.A. Katovich

Please indicate below the *Learning Outcomes* and *Student Action Steps* that are appropriate for your course. Using the bulleted instructions on page 2 of this form, please provide examples that explain how students will, through the use of *Student Action Steps*, achieve the *Learning Outcomes* in your course.

---

**Competency:**  
TCU Graduates will demonstrate the ability to use writing as a means for learning and communicating in a specific discipline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Learning Outcomes:</strong> Indicate which of the following are appropriate to your course.</th>
<th><strong>Student Action Steps:</strong> Indicate which are to be used in your course or add others you will use to reach the selected <em>Learning Outcome(s)</em>.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of the rhetorical conventions of the target discipline. [x] | Students will discuss and employ, in writing, conventions of the discipline. [x]  
Other: |
| Students will exhibit the ability to use writing as a means of gaining and expressing an understanding of discipline-specific content. [x] | Students will use writing as a learning strategy to explore knowledge about a specific subject. [x]  
Students will use writing to conduct inquiry into an appropriate discipline-specific topic. [ ]  
Students will express through writing an understanding of disciplinary content. [ ]  
Other: Students will discuss and evaluate, in writing, the rhetorical strategies used by others in society (e.g., Government officials) to depict the content and images of drugs and alcohol |
| Students will show the ability to employ writing strategies and rhetorical practices learned in lower division writing courses (i.e. Written Communication 1 and 2). [ ] | In two or more writing assignments, students will employ diverse writing strategies. [x]  
Students will revise at least one major writing project. [x]  
Other: |
| Students will produce writing that demonstrates clarity and precision of thought. [x] | Students will write persuasively for a discipline-specific audience [x].  
Other: |

*The *Learning Outcomes* are statements of what we expect our students to know or be able to do upon completion of a course in that category.  
**The *Student Action Steps* identify the process(es) that will lead to the intended *Learning Outcome*. As such, *Student Action Steps* must specify an action(s) to be taken by a student to fulfill a specific *Learning Outcome* and be reasonable within the context and time frame of the course. The *Student Action Steps* above are provided as examples of how students might achieve the *Learning Outcomes*.  

---
Student Action Step 1: Students will discuss and employ, in writing, conventions of the discipline.

At the onset of the course, students will learn the key mechanisms by which to communicate (in writing and other forms of discourse) a sociological way of viewing the world. Understanding patterns of action in regard to situational constraints (versus internal and personal dispositions), awareness of social structure (i.e., institutionalization of behavioral patterns), and internalization of institutionalized norms (i.e., taking on the generalized "attitude of society") comprise the three key mechanisms relevant to such a perspective. In specific regard to the content of the course (drugs and alcohol), students will demonstrate an understanding of how such substances gain definition from situational, structural, and societal perspectives; students will use such an understanding to evaluate, in writing, the meanings of drugs and alcohol and, hopefully, establish novel perspectives that could be useful for them as consumers and as creators of innovative policies.

Student Action Step 2: Students will use writing as a learning strategy to explore knowledge about a specific subject.

One of the writing assignments will pertain to a specific Schedule I substance (as defined by the Controlled Substance Act of 1970—including heroin, LSD, marijuana, ecstasy, and methamphetamine). Students will provide detailed assessments of one of the Schedule I substances. The students will view the substances as reasoned analysts who establish independent views. The students will exhibit awareness of how government agencies, justice systems, media outlets, and educational institutions view such substances, but also will demonstrate their own perspectives, based on attention to factual details supported by systematic investigation. In communicating their understandings in writing, students will demonstrate appeals to logic as separate from other appeals to authority, emotion, and belief. Students will also use their independent understandings to provide a critical assessment of institutionalized practices and policies that uniformly ban the use of such substances. In this vein, and as included above (as an other action step), students will discuss and evaluate, in writing, the rhetorical strategies used by others in society (e.g., Government officials) to depict the content and images of drugs and alcohol.

Student Action Step 3: In two or more writing assignments, students will employ diverse writing strategies.

Students will employ two general writing strategies in two separate assignments. In the first assignment (outlined above) students will wear the "sociological thinking cap" and provide appeals to logic and data (derived from systematic studies) to assess official standpoints regarding Schedule I substances. The basic strategy involved in such an approach conforms to social scientific (peer reviewed) journal writing. The organizational structure of such writing provides a tightly focused introduction that advances a core thesis, an elaborate middle that details the composite dimensions of such a thesis, and a conclusion that summarizes the strengths, and deals with key implications of the thesis. The second strategy conforms to a narrative account of specific imbibing. In this assignment, students wear a "humanistic thinking cap" and explore the behaviors and consequences associated with substance abuse (e.g., alcoholism). This approach does not abandon sociological analysis or generalized appeals to logic, but it emphasizes the human drama associated with identifying oneself (or being identified) as an alcoholic.
Student Action Step 4: Students will revise at least one major writing project.

The first assignment (outlined above) will be composed of an "initial submission" and a "resubmission." Steering away from the implied meanings of "draft" students will learn that any submission (initial or otherwise) is an extension of themselves and specifically, their selves as thinking and reasoning people. The initial submission calls upon students to provide a complete paper, with the aforementioned beginning, middle, and end. The instructor will provide detailed commentary of the drafts, including marginal notes, editorial suggestions within the text, and concluding evaluation and analysis at the end of the paper. Upon turning back the initial submission assignment, the instructor will also provide a general statement of expectations regarding the completion of their resubmission. The main goal associated with this step impresses students that writing is essentially rewriting. The corollary goals are to encourage students to become proactive editors of their own work, to view their work as another would, and to develop the ability to see their work from the point-of-view of intelligent and sympathetic readers.

Student Action Step 5: Students will write persuasively for a discipline-specific audience.

As mentioned above, one of the assignments involves students wearing "sociological thinking caps" and taking the perspective of the discipline (as they understand it) to evaluate policies and interpret societal meanings (of substances). In effect, students will be imagining themselves as writers communicating with a generalized sociological community. The goal of such a step is to allow students to not only see the subject matter in a novel light, but to see themselves as informed analysts rather than as simply people with ordinary opinions. Implicitly, distinguishing between opinions based on perceived certainty and critical analysis (assessing the logic of any argument) becomes an overarching theme of their assignments.