

Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement

CI-HW Description & Criteria for Faculty and Instructors/Departments and Administrators

Students will be CI-HW required when they meet two conditions upon arriving at MIT:

- (i) If their first CI-H subject were a standard CI-H, then their background in writing would not prepare them to engage with the content of the subject.
- (ii) They will be better placed to engage with the content of their second CI-H subject by first taking a subject whose primary focus is writing, than by first taking a standard CI-H subject.

General Description

- CI-HW (Communication Intensive in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences–Writing Focused) subjects are a subset of CI-H (Communication Intensive in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences) subjects concentrating more particularly on the writing process and the rhetorical dimensions of writing. CI-HW subjects are required for some freshmen and appropriate for all freshmen and sophomores.
- In CI-HW subjects the primary focus is on writing, and the reading and discussion serve the purposes of students' writing.
- Students for whom English is a second language and who need instruction in writing may be placed in a specially designed class, 21G.222 Expository Writing for Bilingual Students. 21G.222 is a CI-HW subject specifically tailored for students who need instruction that takes into account the linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical differences among English as a second language and bilingual students.
- CI-H and CI-HW subjects should provide students with instruction, practice, and feedback in communication skills with the goals of achieving: clarity in writing; greater facility in oral communication; the ability to structure a persuasive argument; an understanding of the use of sources and scholarly materials.

Desired Outcomes

In addition to the outcomes specified for CI-H subjects, CI-HW subjects have the following desired outcomes:

- Students demonstrate the ability to address effective paragraph construction and major trouble spots in grammar, mechanics, and style.
- Students demonstrate the proper use of research materials and sources, including strategies for effective paraphrasing.
- Students required to complete 21G.222 Expository Writing for Bilingual Students demonstrate an understanding of the role, as well as the conventional form and style, of the essay in American academic life.

Mechanical Criteria

- CI-HW subjects conform to the CI-H mechanical criteria.
- Given how important revision is to composition, most, if not all, assignments will be revised.
 - All revisions will be made on the basis of timely feedback.

- At least one assignment will be revised and resubmitted. This revision will not count toward the total word count. Separate grades will be given for the paper and the revised paper. Both grades will count towards the final grade. Instructors will determine the weighting of the grades.
- In order to guarantee sufficient attention to student writing and ample opportunity for oral expression, all sections of CI-HW subjects must be capped at 18.

Recommended Practices

- Students receive careful, thoughtful, and thorough response to work in progress—from the instructor as well as other readers in the class—to guide them in revision.
 - Peer review often allows students to develop a critical vocabulary and become better readers not only of other students' writing, but also of their own.
 - Instructors may offer response in a variety of ways, from marginal comments, to evaluative letters, to one-on-one meetings or conferences.
 - Many CI-HW subjects require students to revise each assignment after receiving timely feedback from the instructor and/or their peers.
 - Some CI-HW subjects require students to follow an iterative model, requiring many stages of writing that build upon one another and culminate in a paper.
- Students will receive feedback on their oral communication.
 - Instructors may offer feedback in a variety of ways, from email, to evaluative letters, to conferences.
 - Guided peer feedback on oral presentations helps students to become better communicators themselves. Asking students to complete a rubric or checklist may guide their feedback.

Support

Instructors interested in teaching CI-HW subjects are strongly encouraged to consult with experienced instructors as they develop their subjects. The Office of the Communication Requirement is pleased to help facilitate such contact. Please contact Kathleen MacArthur, Associate Dean for Curriculum and Faculty Support, at 617-253-2783 or kmacarth@mit.edu.

All CI-HW instructors are strongly encouraged to attend workshops before the start of each term to discuss writing pedagogy. Instructors will have the opportunity to share syllabi, assignments, and best practices. This workshop will be administered by the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement via the Office of the Communication Requirement, coordinating with relevant instructors in Comparative Media Studies/Writing, Literature, Global Studies and Languages, and elsewhere. Instructors may also choose to meet regularly throughout the term.

Proposing or modifying a CI-HW subject

- CI-HW subjects are reviewed and designated by the Subcommittee on the Communication Requirement. A list of current CI-HW subjects is available online.
- Faculty members wishing to propose new CI-HW subjects or substantial revisions to existing ones should contact their department head and the Office of the Communication Requirement.
- CI-HW subjects are typically approved for a term of 3 years.
 - New subjects are often approved for an initial term of 1-3 years.
 - As instructors change, SOCR expects the subject will continue to meet the criteria for CI-HW subjects.