

**University of Dayton
Basic Course Division
Program of Excellence Award Recipient
2014**

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1. Please describe your program.

- a. What is the content of the course (public speaking, hybrid, interpersonal, other)? What is the format of your course (large-lecture, small intact class, other)?**

The University of Dayton has a unique basic course that focuses on explanation, dialogue and persuasion. It is not a public speaking course, nor is it a hybrid in the truest sense of the word. The course is delivered through small self-contained courses.

- b. How many sections are offered each semester? How many students are in each section?**

Each semester we offer between 45-50 sections with 25 students in each section.

- c. Is your course part of general education at your institution? Which students at your institution are required to take the course?**

This course is a required course for all students at UD. It is also exceptionally difficult to transfer the course from another institution.

- d. Who teaches the course? What are their credentials?**

All three of the basic courses are primarily staffed by a combination of visiting instructors, master's level graduate students and qualified part-time instructors who report to the Basic Course Director. Occasionally, ranked faculty teach the course.

- e. What training opportunities are provided to your instructors? What content is covered in training?**

The basic course at UD contains a regimented and detailed training program for instructors. Training begins several weeks before the start of the semester when all instructors receive a copy of the department's *Teaching Manual for the Basic Course* and the textbook and ancillary package for their respective course. They are asked to review the materials in time for the start of the four-day orientation schedule which begins the week prior to the start of the semester. The second component of the training program is the required Fall course for all first year GTAs, COM 504: Principles of Communication Education. Thirdly, all instructors are encouraged to attend weekly staff meetings where additional training modules occur. Finally, all instructors are encouraged to participate in the workshops offered through the university's Learning and Teaching Center.

The teaching manual contains all the information necessary for teaching CMM 100, including guidelines for grading and requirements and responsibilities for all

teachers in the program. At the four-day orientation the staff unpacks this manual with the BCD as well as explores a variety of other issues pertinent to their job, the department and the university. These include guest presentations by the Center for International Programs on assisting international students in the classroom, Student Development on Threat Level Assessment in the course for student conduct, and the Office of Learning Resources on procedures for students with disabilities.

Additionally, the staff is introduced to the Communication Coaches program. This program allows for students who have successfully completed CMM 100 to serve as tutors for content and coaches on presentations for students in the course. At orientation all instructors also participate in grading exercises designed to help streamline the grading practices and expectations within the basic course program.

All GTAs also must take and pass CMM 504: Principles of Communication Education during their first semester. This class serves two purposes. First, it is a business meeting where students can discuss issues that arise in their classes, and where the BCD can remind them of certain responsibilities and deadlines associated with instruction. Secondly, it exposes new GTAs to both practical and theoretical elements associated with teaching. In 2013 one graduate student won “Top Four Student Paper” honors in the Basic Course Division at NCA for a term paper produced in fulfillment of this class.

2. Please describe the goals and outcomes of your program.

Course Goals:

All sections of the basic course at UD have the following four student learning objectives:

- 1) Understand and engage in civil dialogue with other individuals or groups about controversial issues.
- 2) Effectively explain complex ideas to non-experts.
- 3) Advocate a position using use logic and credible evidence.
- 4) Critically analyze and evaluate oral messages presented to public audiences by others.

University Goals:

The University’s new Common Academic Program contains seven Student Learning Outcomes, and CMM 100 meets four of these:

- 1) Scholarship: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate advanced

habits of academic inquiry and creativity through the production of a body of artistic, scholarly or community-based work intended for public presentation and defense.

2) Diversity: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate intellectually informed, appreciative, and critical understanding of the cultures, histories, times and places of multiple others, as marked by class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, and other manifestations of difference. Students' understanding will reflect scholarly inquiry, experiential immersion, and disciplined reflection.

3) Community: All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate understanding of and practice in the values and skills necessary for learning, living, and working in communities of support and challenge. These values and skills include accepting difference, resolving conflicts peacefully, and promoting reconciliation; they encompass productive, discerning, creative and respectful collaboration with persons from diverse backgrounds and perspectives for the common purpose of learning, service and leadership that aim at just social transformation. Students will demonstrate these values and skills on campus and in the Dayton region as part of their preparation for global citizenship.

4) Critical Evaluation of Our Times: Through multidisciplinary study, all undergraduates will develop and demonstrate habits of inquiry and reflection, informed by familiarity with Catholic Social Teaching, that equip them to evaluate critically and imaginatively the ethical, historical, social political, technological, economic, and ecological challenges of their times in light of the past.

Mapping the Course Goals to the University Goals:

University SLOs

CMM 100 SLOs

Scholarship

2) Effectively explain complex ideas to non-experts.

3) Advocate a position using use logic and credible evidence

Diversity

1) Understand and engage in civil dialogue with other individuals or groups about controversial issues.

Community	1) Understand and engage in civil dialogue with other individuals or groups about controversial issues. 4) Critically analyze and evaluate oral messages presented to public audiences by others.
Critical Evaluation of Our Times	4) Critically analyze and evaluate oral messages presented to public audiences by others.

3. How is your course assessed?

- a. Please list and briefly describe any assessment projects conducted in the last few years.**

Each semester CMM 100 uses a pre/posttest, to assess content knowledge acquisition in the course. We also employ open ended surveys for students to report their affective experiences with components of the course. Finally, the dialogue assignment, which is the last in the course, is used to assess student achievement of university learning outcomes. Based upon these data, the course is then revised for the next semester. The course has yet to be taught in exactly the same fashion in two consecutive semesters.

4. Why do you think your application stood out to the review committee?

- a. In other words, what makes your program distinct? You may want to refer to the rational of your full application for this answer.**

The uniqueness of several components of CMM 100 likely stood out to the review committee. These components include the content of the class, which is neither public speaking nor interpersonal in nature; the use of the method inter-teaching in instruction; the robust involvement of the campus through the Basic Course Advisory Board; the integration of themed assignments; the use of assessment data to change the course for the better and the outcomes oriented approach of the class.

- b. What new initiatives have you implemented since your award?**

We have created an honors version of the course since the time we were awarded the POE. We also have changed the explanatory assignment to be more dyadic in nature, adjusted the rubrics for evaluating courses, reduced the number of SLOs the course aimed to achieve by no longer committing the course to focusing on community as an SLO; and have tested the use of online quizzes and test delivery.

5. What insights or advice do you have for future applicants as they prepare their materials for this award?

Be creative and think outside the box with regard to the course. Do not feel constrained to simply offer a public speaking or hybrid course. Engage your client departments and students to see what they believe the oral communication needs are so you can create a course that tailors itself to those goals and needs. Also, measure progress through strong assessment. Ultimately, do not be afraid to fail or be wrong when moving the course forward.