



## Critical Reading, Writing and Speaking Course Sequence

After extensive research, Dominican launched this fall a new, two-semester Critical Reading, Writing and Speaking (CRWS) course sequence for first-year students, replacing the former English 100, English 101 and 102 sequence. The CRWS concept is based on national research indicating that theme-based, multi disciplinary courses serve as a better foundation for students' grasp of the skills they need to succeed as critical thinkers in their majors and fields of expertise. While new, the courses reflect the university's traditional emphasis on the importance of the liberal arts in shaping well-rounded graduates, regardless of their chosen major.

CRWS 101 and CRWS 102 merge the development of students' skills around a theme chosen by instructors across diverse academic fields and colleges, while introducing and advancing undergraduate learning goals and outcomes for reading, written and oral communication, critical thinking, collaboration, information literacy and intercultural competence. Students are encouraged to stay with the same cohort from the fall to the spring semester.

Each section of CRWS has two, embedded writing fellows assigned to support students through in-class activities and one-on-one tutoring, if needed.

"Working collaboratively with colleagues across different fields to innovate, while maintaining Dominican's mission to serve our students, is at the core of the CRWS program. Our path to a transformative pedagogy values the gifts we have, to become better educators and members of an interconnected community," said Gema Ortega, director of the CRWS program.

## School of Education Celebrates 35th Anniversary

"When principals throughout the Chicago area meet one of our School of Education graduates, they recognize that this is a really well-prepared teacher," said Ben Freville, associate dean of the College of Applied Social Sciences. "They have been prepared to develop and implement critical assessments, plan stimulating lessons, and use data to inform their instruction."

This year marks the School of Education's 35th anniversary. Much of its early success can be attributed to the work of former dean Sr. Colleen McNicholas, OP, who passed away this August. Between 1989 and 2012, McNicholas served the school in a number of capacities and guided it toward national accreditation.

"As was true of all the Dominican sisters at the university, she worked relentlessly to make sure that things of high quality were happening in our programs," said Colleen Reardon, former dean of the school.

The school consistently evaluates its programs and develops innovative ways to prepare educators. Recently, the elementary education program was redesigned to offer a model of training teachers that combines theory and

practice at area elementary schools, where they have the opportunity to interact with and observe students and teachers.

An undergraduate special education major was added in 2017. The program honors the late Therese Hogan, director of the long-standing special education program for graduate students.

The school has added a Learning Behavior Specialist endorsement for educators who want to teach special education students within their inclusive classrooms, as well as a Technology Specialist endorsement. The master of arts in education program has been reworked and now offers four specialized degrees focusing on diverse learners, inclusive learning, integrated instruction, and instructional technology.

A two-year alternative licensure program introduces graduate students immediately into area classrooms after an intensive summer program on campus. The teacher candidates are coached and mentored throughout their experience, while completing coursework at Dominican.

"The School of Education will continue to adapt to changes in society by introducing programs that prepare our graduates to be culturally responsive educators who empower their students to be change agents in their communities," Freville said.

