

Critical Reading and Writing Version Distinctions

The Writing Requirement

Bentley expects all students to complete Critical Reading and Writing in the first semester. Multimodal Communication will be taken in the second semester. There are multiple versions of each course, but all meet the same objectives and satisfy the requirements. For Critical Reading and Writing, the versions are EMS 101, EMS 101L, EMS 102, and EMS 102L. The courses numbered 102 and 102L are reserved for students whose native language is not English and who request such a course. EMS 101L and EMS 102L are “lab” courses, explained below.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Courses: EMS 102 and 102L

Students whose first language is not English may be interested in taking a class with other such students. Taught by faculty with backgrounds in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages), these classes fulfill the same three credits, cover similar skills, and are just as rigorous as their 101 and 101L counterparts. Class texts and in-class exercises, however, are designed to help advance the reading and writing abilities of students continuing to strengthen their English.

** Multimodal Communication (in the second semester) also has ESOL sections: EMS 105*

The Lab Courses: EMS 101L and 102L

The lab courses represent a significant investment by Bentley in the academic and professional success of our students. They are designed like science lab courses, providing additional time each week to work on lessons and engage in writing workshops. The lab approach achieves the goals of the course without imposing the burden of a non-credit preliminary course (required by many other colleges). Completing 101L or 102L satisfies the requirement: there is no need to take EMS 101. The course is highly praised by students who have taken it. Here is a letter one lab student wrote to his professor:

Before I took this class, I was an acclaimed writer, and was used to receiving praise for every piece of work that I churned out of my computer. Indeed, being placed in the top 1% of the country for my writing skills (according to the ACT) and practically receiving an A+ on every paper I wrote set the bar extraordinarily high for me. And so, when I was placed in this class, I took it as a huge insult, and even took the time to speak with the writing department about whether or not it was a mistake. I now see that it was not, and I'm happy to admit that I was wrong. By taking that extra hour and 15 minutes to improve my writing skills, I now see why I didn't achieve the level of perfection that I once thought I was capable. . . . I'm not perfect, and I still do have much to improve upon, but I'm definitely a better writer now than I was before I took the class, and hope to improve upon these writing skills even further as I progress through college, and eventually, through the real world as well.

Honors Sections

All honors students must take EMS 101H.

** Honors students must take EMS 104H (Multimodal Communication for Honors students) in their second semester.*

Placement

Students are placed on the basis of the placement essays, which are read by a committee of professors who teach writing. The essays are evaluated according to carefully developed criteria that have proven to

identify the amount of writing instruction students need to read and write at a level acceptable at Bentley. Surprising though it may be, we have found that there is **no correlation** between college writing ability and high school grades, SAT scores, or honors/AP courses.