

## **A statement from the Yale English Department Faculty on Recent Budget Cuts Affecting Instructional Faculty and Writing Courses\***

Yale has long prided itself on its dedication to deep humanistic learning in a college setting. The university's recent [Report](#) on Trust in Higher Education urges a recommitment to the core values of a liberal arts education. The Report calls on us to take responsibility for critical thinking, to open minds to debate, and to prepare students for successful professional and civic life—in short, to re-center classroom education.

We could not agree more on the importance of these principles. However, we are concerned that they will be undermined by Yale's recent decision to reduce the budget for its instructional faculty. Here in the English Department, the cuts will make an immediate, negative impact on our capacity to teach creative and expository writing seminars that are integral to our curriculum and foundational for Yale College undergraduates. Although housed in English, seminars such as our flagship composition course ENGL1014 (Expository Writing Seminars), along with ENGL1015 (Literature Seminars) and creative courses such as ENGL 1020 (Reading and Writing the Modern Essay), serve students from across Yale College. These courses allow students to explore the range of human expression both as careful readers and as creative practitioners. They also teach the skills of critical thinking and evidence-based argument. While all these courses have been affected by the cuts, no single class has been harder hit than ENGL1014. In 2024-25, we offered 45 sections. Next year we will be able to offer no more than 35. At the same time, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) has raised the enrollment cap in each section from 12 to 15 students, putting new strain on instructors while compromising the student-focused format that makes the courses effective.

Why do these enrollment changes matter? Unlike other Yale courses that fulfill a writing (WR) credit, the English Department's writing seminars focus specifically on the craft of writing and argument. The instructors prioritize intensive feedback on students' writing in-progress, small-group interactions for students to develop their ideas, and regular workshops for students to revise their work. Indeed, Residential College deans have reported to our department officers that students who initially believed themselves not to be "good writers" gained skills and confidence in ENGL1014, then went on to major in writing-heavy disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

And yet, such courses have been greatly diminished. The section reductions and increased enrollment cap that will impact the course in 2026-27 have been the subject of concern among both faculty and students, as reported by the [Yale Daily News](#). These decisions were made without consulting the instructional faculty and without regard for the seminars' pedagogical rationale.

The curricular changes also undermine the academic contributions and institutional security of the colleagues who teach these labor-intensive courses—the English Department's instructional faculty. The demonstrated effectiveness and demand for our writing seminars testify to the

---

\* This statement represents the consensus view of the English Department's faculty, across all ranks, as discussed and approved in a series of meetings in spring 2026.

unique pedagogical expertise of these colleagues, who meet Yale's high standards for teaching excellence while also serving on committees, formally and informally advising students, and providing pre-professional and moral support. Instructional faculty are essential to the department's ability to center the classroom. Without them, our vital writing courses could not proceed.

Yale has acknowledged that instructional faculty deserve professional recognition and stronger institutional support. In 2023, the [Report](#) of the FAS Instructional Faculty Working Group (IFWG) identified three priorities: offering instructional faculty teaching professorships and more job security, enabling instructional faculty's pursuit of robust research profiles, and including instructional faculty in decision-making university communities. The administration's recent budgetary decisions have reversed much of the progress made by the Working Group.

The future of critical thinking and writing at Yale is at stake. The new course reductions and increased enrollment caps stand at odds with Yale's educational mission and priorities as President McNinnis explained them in [her response to the Report on Trust in Higher Education](#). Now that incoming students have ready access to AI technologies, Yale should be devoting more resources to careful, individualized writing instruction—not less. The English Department's courses are models for upholding the core values of the university, and our instructional faculty need more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive working conditions to carry on this important work. Yale English can and should be integral to the future of writing instruction for the university.

To address these challenges, we invite the Yale College Dean, the Dean of FAS, and the Humanities Division Dean to meet with our department officers and faculty to strategize—together—how Yale should reinvest in our students and the teaching of writing.