

First-Year Seminar Proposal Guide

First-Year Seminar (FYS) is a 2 credit hour course offered in Area B2 of the core curriculum. Heading into its second year, the course is part of **UWG's LEAP West! Initiatives** and is designed to help first-year students make a successful transition to academic learning at the college level. Instructors who teach FYS have a commitment to the following:

1. Developing a course around an engaging, academically-focused topic. A topic that exhibits the instructor's passion for learning and their interest in sharing their love of learning with first-year students;
2. A commitment to helping first-year students make a successful transition to college-level learning by serving as an instructor and as an academic mentor; and
3. Using course content to help students reflect upon the value of active learning and provide them with some of the introductory skills they need to become active learners.

I. FYS GOALS:

Goal 1: Introduce first-year students to the importance of life-long, active learning and the value of intellectual inquiry as keys to academic success in college and professional success beyond college.

Seminars will focus on academic topics that faculty are genuinely excited to share and explore with students. Assignments and discussions will encourage students to reflect not only on the topic itself but also on the process of intellectual inquiry and learning.

Goal 2: Provide first-year students with an opportunity for meaningful intellectual and professional dialogue with faculty members as a way to develop mentoring relationships and foster positive faculty-student interactions throughout their college careers.

The seminar will emphasize dialogue and discussion among faculty and students. Faculty should design class and homework assignments that foster vibrant, intellectual conversations and mentoring relationships.

II. FYS LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The following two learning outcomes must be included and assessed in each FYS course (you're welcome to include others). These learning outcomes simply identify elements that we are required to assess as part of the core or want to assess as part of the development of the FYS model. Therefore, it is important to make sure that your course can be aligned with these outcomes.

1. Written and Oral Communication: **Students will adapt written and oral communication to specific rhetorical purposes and audiences.**

- *The assessment of this outcome is up to each individual instructor.*

2. Life-Long Learning: **Students will recognize and begin to implement the skills necessary to become life-long, active learners through the exploration of an academic topic that focuses on a contemporary and/or enduring topic, question, or problem.**

- *The FYS committee has designed a rubric to help with the assessment.*

III. SUBMITTING A FYS PROPOSAL—WHAT TO CONSIDER:

As you consider your proposal for a First-Year Seminar (FYS) course, we encourage you to focus on four key questions:

1. Are the two required learning outcomes for the FYS course applicable to your topical idea?
2. Is your course topic robust enough to fit at two-credit 16-week format?
3. Is your course appropriate for first-year students and will it help them learn how to succeed academically in college?
4. Does your course have appeal to all the different diverse identities of UWG students?

IV. COURSE DESIGN CHECKLIST:

1. COURSE TITLE: For the 2019-20 academic year, the First-Year Seminar courses can be titled in any catchy way that you like, but

- While students will have access to all FYS course descriptions, it is possible that students will select a section of the course strictly by its title, so having an accurate and catchy title is important!
- If possible keep your title to 10 to 12 words or less. This helps students read the titles on BANWEB.
- Consider some of the following examples as guides:
 - What Do You Know About Sources of Energy?
 - Sports, Society, and Culture
 - Who Are You, Really?
 - Friendship and Dating in College
 - Poetry and Song Lyrics
 - The Death Penalty

2. COURSE PROPOSAL: In approximately 500 words clarify the following:

- What will be covered in your course—the course description,
- Has enough academic content to fill a 2-credit 16-week course,
- How your course content fits within the FYS course goals and outcomes listed above, and
- Appeals to a wide array of students.

3. INTERDISCIPLINARY COMPONENT: FYS courses must include an interdisciplinary component. As part of your proposal, a) identify at least two different disciplinary perspectives and how they are integrated into or contribute to the course; and b) provide an example of one or two texts, activities, and assignments through which students will develop an interdisciplinary perspective/approach.

4. WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE: A FYS is NOT an orientation course to college life or a remedial course on basic study skills, although it can include elements of these within the context of a focused academic topic as needed. It is NOT a broad survey course or an introduction to a specific major and should not repeat introductory courses in other core areas—it should have a unique focus and topic. It is NOT an advanced seminar; it should be appropriate for students who are in their first semester of college and should model the most positive elements of a successful seminar: interactive discussions and collaborative, engaging assignments.

5. SUBMISSION TIMELINE: The submission process will **open October 1st and close January 14, 2019**. An electronic link is forthcoming. **Proposals will be reviewed and approved on a first come, first serve basis.**

6. SUBMISSION PROCESS: FYS submissions will be evaluated carefully by a committee comprised of instructors who have taught FYS, members of the LEAP Steering committee, and students that have taken the course. Accepted proposals will be sent through the Faculty Senate course submission system for final approval in the spring—this is required for all new XIDS course proposals.

V. OTHER FYS FAQs:

1. INSTRUCTOR COMPENSATION? Instructors who teach an FYS section in addition to their assigned courses for the semester will receive \$1,500 for teaching the seminar.

- Instructors can elect to receive the \$1,500 as professional development funds or as a salary supplement. The salary supplement will be paid over two pay periods and will include tax deductions—the same as with all salary.
 - Note: Hourly employees (non-exempt contracts) must accept their compensation as professional development.

- If an instructor wants to teach a FYS as part of their assigned course load for the semester, this must be developed through the regular semester course assignment process through their department and college.

2. DO I NEED DEPARTMENT CHAIR/SUPERVISORY APPROVAL TO TEACH? Yes, there is a brief form.

3. BEYOND TEACHING THE FYS, ARE THERE ANY OTHER EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING?

Yes, the following are also requirements for participation:

- All new instructors must participate in a half-day First-Year Seminar Design Workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to foster dialogue among instructors participating in the FYS pilot and to help them take their academic topics and develop them to meet the general design requirements for the FYS (see seminar goals, learning outcomes, and common design elements above). Workshops will encourage and support innovation in course design since another goal of the FYS pilot is to explore different design models and pedagogical strategies that would improve the design of future first-year seminars at UWG. Multiple workshops will be scheduled in May and June to accommodate faculty schedules. Instructors who participate in the workshop will receive \$250 in professional development funds. We will survey instructors in advance to determine the best times to schedule workshops.
- Participate in an informal discussion group during the semester in which the pilot first-year seminar is taught. Groups of 4-5 participating instructors will meet for lunch twice over the course of the semester to share experiences, discuss best practices, and provide recommendations regarding the first-year seminar model; and
- Collect assessment data to the Provost's Office within your course. Pre-designed templates for assessment associated with the first-year seminars will be provided to facilitate data collection. While data collection will not be extensive, it will be needed to assess the effectiveness of different design models. The Provost's Office will coordinate the design and collection of assessment data, but will need instructors to provide the necessary data from their sections.

4. CAN I TEACH A FYS ON ANY TOPIC? In general yes, but topics should have some clearly identifiable connection to your professional expertise, either through the academic degrees (masters or doctorate) you have received or scholarly work you have produced.

5. WILL THERE BE ANY OPPORTUNITIES TO TEACH FYS ONLINE? Yes, we anticipate scheduling some online FYS sections, and instructors can indicate this as a preference during the proposal

submission process. However, the number of sections offered will be limited. Instructors teaching online sections will need to meet additional course design criteria for successful online teaching.

6. WILL FYS BE OFFERED AT LOCATIONS BEYOND THE UWG CARROLLTON CAMPUS? Yes, we would like to offer some sections of FYS at the Newnan campus. Instructors can indicate their preference for teaching at the Newnan campus during the proposal submission process.

7. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FYS AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES? There should be a FYS section offered as part of every learning community, and Learning Community Coordinators will be responsible for the development of FYS for their communities.

VI. OTHER QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about FYS or the proposal process, please don't hesitate to contact:

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