



# First Year Seminar Course proposal guide

We strongly recommend that you read this guide prior to entering the curriculum portal to enter your course proposal. It will also be valuable to have this guide at hand while entering your proposal to ensure that you have thoroughly addressed all the needed information. Proposals that do not include all of the required criteria will be returned for revision. If at any time you are not sure or have a question, you should contact the General Education office for assistance.

## Propose a First Year Seminar topic

First Year Seminar proposals are a special type of General Education proposal in which a faculty or staff member proposes to teach a particular topic in either a Writing-focused or Quantitative-focused seminar. The basic course structure already exists, the proposal is to describe how the particular topic or theme addresses all of the required elements of the course.

First Year Seminar topic proposals are due by the first Tuesday in November. Approved topics are included in the General Education program for three years, starting with the following academic year. For example, a topic proposal approved in fall term 2021 would be eligible to be taught during the 2022 - 23, 2023 - 24 and 2024 - 25 academic years.

First Year Seminar topic proposals originate with the faculty or staff member making the proposal and are directly reviewed by the General Education Committee. The topic proposals do not need approval at the department/program or division level and are not reviewed by the division or university Curriculum Committee.

## Special Note: Scheduling of First Year Seminars:

Approved FYS sections should be included in your department's or program's course schedule. The General Education Program does not control scheduling of FYS sections. You will be free to choose days and times that work in the context of your department's or program's needs and preferences. The scheduling information provided here is for General Education planning and advising purposes. Staff members proposing FYS who would like assistance scheduling an FYS should contact the General Education Director for assistance.

## Step-by-Step proposal preparation and submission instructions for First Year Seminar proposals

### Has this topic been taught before?

If you are requesting renewal of a course you have previously taught, you will be asked to respond to some additional questions that reflect on that prior experience.

If this is a new topic, prior to beginning a First Year Seminar topic proposal, identify whether you intend to propose a Writing-Focused topic (FYS 107) or a Quantitative-Focused topic (FYS 207). You will be required to articulate how your proposed topic section will require either writing or quantitative



practice and the General Education Committee will recommend revision and resubmission of proposals in which the alignment is not clear.

#### Section Title:

Provide a title for inclusion in General Education advising materials. This is a critical part of your proposal. Your course will be listed alongside tens of other FYS 107 and FYS 207 offerings. Your title should let students know what kinds of topics they will address or inquire about in language that is evocative and as broadly appealing as possible. If your course will engage students in particular kinds of inquiry, or activity, try to convey that in your title as well

#### *Examples:*

A Paradise Built in Hell: Writing in a Changing Climate  
What's the Worst that Could Happen? Why we Love Dystopian Stories  
Science or Snake Oil: What's Real and What's Not in Health Care

#### Term(s) and Year(s) to be Offered:

First Year Seminar topics may be proposed for potential inclusion in the General Education program for three years before you need to reapply, although depending on the number of proposals, the General Education program may not be able to offer all seminars as many times as proposers suggest. Identify in which term and academic year you would like to offer your section. You may select multiple terms. If you are interested and available to teach the section more than once, or have flexibility in which term you can teach, please note that in the comments field. If you are proposing a course that is to be taught by another instructor (e.g. a Division chair making a proposal on behalf of an NTT instructor), please also note that in the comments field.

#### Course Description (for catalog):

This is a brief (no more than one paragraph) description of the topic for inclusion in General Education advising materials. This description should provide a very brief overview for students of what they can expect from this topic section.

#### *Examples:*

Explores fresh perspectives on the significance of play. Hands-on experience, small group research, play design, and writing assignments will guide students through the interpretation, analysis, and application of multiple theories of play.

Relationships with parents are always changing and not always easy. Using a developmental and multidisciplinary approach, this course focuses on the relationships between parents and children as both age over time.

What does it mean to eat compassionately? This seminar examines plant-based living and its potential consequences on personal health and the world.

#### Will the course be co-taught?

If you will be collaborating with another faculty or staff member to teach the course, please select yes. This includes topic sections in which instructors will each teach one of multiple sections, partially team-taught sections where faculty members are planning together but not regularly in the classroom



together, and fully team-taught sections in which both instructors are in the classroom for all class sessions.

If applicable, supply the name(s) and contact information for other instructors:

You will need to include the full name, academic unit, and email contact for any collaborating instructors.

### Opportunities to practice Foundational Skills.

First Year Seminars require that students practice *all* of the following Foundational Skills:

- read and analyze for interpretation and comprehension
- find, evaluate, and use credible information
- think innovatively, use evidence and make connections to solve problems
- appropriately select and responsibly use technology, with a particular emphasis on systems at WOU

You must describe how your topic section will offer students the opportunities to practice all of the above skills. Please ensure that you have provided either a detailed description or a concrete example of how students will engage in every Foundational Skill through the lens of the topic you have selected. Proposals that do not include a clear connection to *each* Foundational skill will be returned for revision.

### Alignment of topic focus to General Education Learning Outcomes

In this section you will verify that your FYS topic aligns to the General Education Learning Outcomes 1 (Intellectual Foundations and Breadth of Exposure: Put into practice different and varied forms of knowledge, inquiry, and expression that frame academic and applied learning) and 4 (Multidisciplinary Learning Integrate knowledge, perspectives, and strategies across disciplines to answer questions and solve problems). You will also explain how you will address Foundational Skills related to practicing a variety of types of writing (FYS 107) or using and understanding quantitative information/evidence (207). You will also be asked to review information about General Education program assessment and agree to take part in assessment activities.

### Special Course information

Some First Year Seminars provide unique opportunities for students or require special pedagogical features. You should check any of the common options available include seminars (bilingual, offered on Salem campus, includes lab or studio time, require reduced course caps or need for a limited – no more than \$20/student – budget to support special course activities) and provide additional information regarding the special information in the comment field.

### Additional required information for renewal of previously taught topics:

In this section, you will be asked to provide a copy of the syllabus from the last time you taught the topic. You will also need to answer two additional questions about your previous experience: Why you want to continue teaching this FYS topic and what you learned about supporting incoming WOU students by teaching this topic. You will benefit by providing a detailed rationale for how the FYS course program benefits from maintaining this topic in the available offerings.



Western Oregon  
UNIVERSITY

General Education

### Notes/Comments

This section is optional, but allows you to provide essential information regarding your proposal that may not have been covered in other portions of the proposal form.

### Supporting Documents

This section is optional. If you have any supporting documents (e.g. sample assignments, a draft syllabus or course outline) those can be provided. Please be aware that supporting documents do not replace the content required in the previous fields. You should not assume that the General Education Committee will hunt for required information regarding foundational skills or learning outcome alignment in attached documents.