



# 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 2019 would be eligible to be taught during the 2020 - 21, 2021 - 22 and 2022 - 23 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

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
- Do Scientists Create Natural Disasters?

### 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. Learning Community with FYS 207: Can Our Food Choices Help Save the World: Exploring the Data.

### 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 potential course fee) and provide additional information regarding the special information in the comment field.



### 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. The First Year Seminar Coordinator has provided a brief overview of a variety of ways in which all the Foundational Skills can be practiced at ([moodle link](#)). 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

This overview should include an expanded description of the topic focus and a rationale for how this offering will be an appealing fit for a First Year Seminar topic. You must describe how your topic will align to the General Education Learning Outcomes. In this section of your proposal, you will identify and clearly describe how students will have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate 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). **Both of these outcomes must be addressed in this section.** It is necessary that you describe at least one way that you will provide students the opportunity to demonstrate *each* of the required Learning Outcomes. Proposals that do not clearly include a description of how students will engage in practice aligned to both learning outcomes will be returned for revision. Be aware that for assessment purposes, you will be developing and administering a signature assignment to document student achievement on each learning outcome.

You must describe how your topic section will align to the foundational skill that you selected by identifying how students will have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate the specific Foundational Knowledge skill identified by the Seminar focus (use either the Quantitative Literacy or Written Communication rubric). You may also choose to identify how students will engage in other Foundational Skills by using the Foundational Skills rubric.



You must also describe how your topic selection will provide the students to engage in the practice of integrating knowledge across multiple disciplines at the benchmark level using the Integrating Knowledge rubric.

### Notes/Comments

This section is optional, but allows you to provide essential information regarding your proposal. If you require special scheduling arrangements (e.g. co-teaching, hybrid hour, studio or lab time, Salem campus) or have other needs to effectively offer your topic section, you should provide that information here.

### Supporting Documents

This section is optional; it is not necessary to provide a syllabus when proposing a First Year Seminar topic section, although you will be expected to provide one to the General Education office by the time your topic section is offered. 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.