

WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

FIRST YEAR SEMINARS



2019-2020 CATALOG

What are First Year Seminars?

All new students begin their lives at WOU by taking some short classes to help them successfully adjust to the requirements of college-level courses. These classes are meant to be an opportunity to practice foundational skills such as reading, information literacy, creative and critical thinking, and technological literacy while in a small class setting. You are required to take one writing-focused class and one quantitative-focused class. Each class will be taught around a different topic, and you are free to choose any two classes with topics that interest you. You will need to complete both of the classes you choose by the end of your freshman year.

First-Year Seminars (FYS) will help you learn and practice these skills:

- Intellectual foundations and breadth of exposure
- Multidisciplinary learning

In addition, these courses will refine your abilities in:

- Reading
- Information literacy
- Creative and critical thinking
- Technological literacy

Your writing-focused course, FYS 107, will work on least two of these skills:

- Context of and purpose for writing
- Content development
- Genre and disciplinary conventions
- Sources and evidence
- Control of syntax and mechanics

Your quantitative-focused course, FYS 207, will work on least two of these skills:

- Interpretation
- Representation
- Calculation
- Application/analysis
- Assumptions
- Communication

For more about these skills, visit: wou.edu/gened/learning-outcomes-and-rubrics/

So what do I need to do?

Use the Course Descriptions to decide what courses to take:

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The description of each course is organized like this:

Course Title	
Subtitle	
Description of what topics the course will cover.	
Writing or Quantitative Name(s)	FYS 107 or 207 Term(s) offered CRN* for Fall

* CRNs are numbers that identify each class section at WOU. You can use them to quickly find classes during registration. CRNs for Winter and Spring sections will be posted on wou.edu/gened/students as they become available.

Complete two FYS courses by the end of your first year at WOU:

You can take these in any order or even take both in the same term

- ☐ 1 x Writing Focused (FYS 107) 4 credits
- ☐ 1 x Quantitative Focused (FYS 207) 4 credits

Everything in this catalog (and more!) is available online at wou.edu/gened/students/

- ✓ Filter the course list by term, category, topic, professor name, and description
- ✓ Learn about and view course lists for the other general education requirements
- ✓ Print extra copies of planning worksheets

Crisis & Collapse

Worse than the Great Depression

An Impending Global Economic Crisis

This course will undertake a brief historical study of the Great Depression, with a primary focus on economic and political conditions in the United States in the late-1920s and early-1930s. It will then make a comparison with current economic macroeconomic situation in the United States, along with the political climate.

Quantitative
Oerther

FYS 207
Spring

What's the Worst that Could Happen?

Why we Love Dystopian Stories

Remember when your mother asked if you would jump off a bridge if all your friends did? That's why dystopian stories are useful; they take ideas to extremes to examine how humans might meet dire conditions. This course explores why we like stories about the end of the world as we know it.

Writing
Anderson

FYS 107
Winter

Exploring Natural Disasters

A Bad Day on Planet Earth

This course focuses on natural disasters and how these normal processes of the Earth concentrate their energies and deal heavy blows to humans as well as have severe environment and health impacts for many years after the event.

Quantitative
Wade

FYS 207
Winter, Spring

How to Survive a Mass Extinction

In this seminar, we will explore mass extinction events in Earth's history. Students will put together the evidence to determine if humans are causing mass extinction or in danger of becoming part of one.

Quantitative
Baumgartner and Myers

FYS 207
Fall
CRN: 11910

Do Scientists Create Disasters

Why are scientists so often depicted as evil or short-sighted? This seminar examines how science is represented in film and television and explores actual instances in which scientists have unleashed disaster and also how they have helped avoid the same.

Writing
Dawson

FYS 107
Winter

Express Yourself

Color and Visual Communication

A studio art course that explores basic color theory and how color is used in visual communication.

Writing FYS 107
Garrison Winter

Introduction to Comedy Writing

Introduces multiple media and genres of comedy writing and the craft of writing in these genres. Students will do research in the history of facets of comedy, such as tropes and comedy figures.

Writing FYS 107
Soderlund Winter

Signs and Symbols

History, Communication, and Design

A part lecture/part studio class investigating signs and symbols: their history & how they have evolved, how they communicate, their role in society, and how to conceive & create them.

Writing FYS 107
Bracy Fall
CRN: 11862

Nature and Photography

What is nature? This course considers ideas and images of nature from a variety of perspectives. Includes instruction in photography and studio time.

Writing FYS 107
Tankersley Fall
CRN: 11606

Hypermedia and Hypertext

Although it is now ubiquitous, the hyperlink is the most radical feature of the internet. This course focuses on ways of reading and writing through the network and technology of hyperlinking.

Writing FYS 107
Thakur Spring

Social Media and Musical Identity through the Numbers

In this course, we will examine the influence of different types of social media and individual social media usage on music consumption, music listening, and musical identity formation. Students draw data-based conclusions about music consumption and the influence of social media on the development of their individual musical identity.

Quantitative FYS 207
Reddan Fall
CRN: 11877

Storytelling with Data

Creating Effective Infographics

This class will help you develop your "eye" for good data visualizations by leveraging the power of human visual perception to find patterns in data (exploration) and use those patterns to effectively tell a compelling story (communication).

Quantitative FYS 207
Leadley Fall
CRN: 11849

Foodies & Farmers

Can Our Food Choices Help Save the World Reflecting on Our Impact

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.

Writing
Schmidt

FYS 107
Fall
CRN: 11932

Can Our Food Choices Help Save the World Exploring the Data

Can you help save your life and our world by the dietary choices that you make? This seminar will focus on investigating and displaying information on compassionate eating and plant-based diets. Learning Community with FYS 207: Can Our Food Choices Help Save the World: Reflecting on our Impact.

Quantitative
Burton

FYS 207
Fall
CRN: 11918

Feeding Ourselves

Urban Agriculture and the Local Food Movement

No species can live without a means to feed itself. In this class students explore urban agriculture as a way to feed people more efficiently though the context of science and social justice. And along the way we will grow some food we can eat.

Quantitative
Howard

FYS 207
Spring

People and Plants

A History of Foods, Cultures, and Ecologies

Explores the often overlooked ways that human dependency on plants has influenced human economies, religious beliefs, medicinal practices, fuel supplies and textiles resources, food cultures, social organization, political infrastructure, and connections to nature.

Writing
Swedo

FYS 107
Spring

Life Hacking

How We Make Choices

Lessons from Economics and Psychology

A winning gambler will keep playing to continue the streak, while a loser will keep playing to win it back. This is just one example of what behavioral economists have learned about the psychological, emotional, cultural and social factors that influence the decisions we make. This course takes up these lessons.

Writing
Leadley

FYS 107
Winter

Winning at the Numbers Game in a Society that's Betting you Can't

In this course, we will critically analyze how people in power take advantage of those unwilling to "do the math." Learn to question, challenge, and win against a society trying to convince you that you are bad at math.

Quantitative
Beaver, Harrington

FYS 207
Fall, Winter, Spring
CRN: 11919

Getting Woke to Being Broke

The True Cost of "Getting By" Reflected in your Values and Goals

In this class, we will research and practice what it means to be first-generation or low-income in the current U.S. educational system. Individual values and goal setting will be explored and will be central themes in the work produced. This course is cost-remitted for students in the Student Enrichment Program (SEP), and meets the SEP course requirements.

Quantitative
Haberman-Guthrie

FYS 207
Fall, Winter, Spring
CRN: 11838

To Infinity and Beyond!

Creative Problem-Solving Skills for College and Life

Creative Problem-Solving is a highly sought-after skill in the 21st century. Get introduced to tools, and a proven, research-validated process for solving problems, accomplishing goals, and capitalizing on opportunities.

Writing
Murfin

FYS 107
Fall, Spring
CRN: 11930

Save the Planet

A Paradise Built in Hell

Writing in a Changing Climate

This course accepts as true that climate change exists and is already influencing not only the environment but also culture. The seminar focuses on the cultural questions raised by a changing climate.

Writing
Haas

FYS 107
Spring

Can Our Food Choices Help Save the World

Exploring the Data

Can you help save your life and our world by the dietary choices that you make? This seminar will focus on investigating and displaying information on compassionate eating and plant-based diets. Learning Community with FYS 207: Can Our Food Choices Help Save the World: Reflecting on our Impact.

Quantitative
Burton

FYS 207
Fall
CRN: 11918

Can Our Food Choices Help Save the World

Reflecting on Our Impact

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.

Writing
Schmidt

FYS 107
Fall
CRN: 11932

America's National Parks and Monuments

An Exploration of their Geologic Significance and Preservation Challenges

America's National Parks and Monuments preserve some of the most iconic landscapes on Earth. This course explores the historical reasons why these places have been protected, what makes some of them geologically significant, and challenges to their preservation.

Writing
Smith

FYS 107
Fall
CRN: TBA

Energy Issues

An Environmental Perspective

This course will focus on the origin, production and development, distribution, uses and impacts of energy in contemporary society.

Quantitative
Wade

FYS 207
Fall, Spring
CRN: TBA

Environmental Challenges of the Pacific Northwest

The residents of the Pacific Northwest have huge respect for the environment and are very proactive in protecting the region. This course explores environmental challenges faced by the region and how the Pacific Northwest can meet these challenges in a responsible way.

Quantitative
Dandeneau

FYS 207
Winter

Science & Culture

#SlayingPublicHealth

This course showcases all the ways public health impacts living conditions and quality of life around the world, in Oregon, and on our campus. Through hands-on fieldwork, media, and guest lectures, students will explore ways to get involved locally and globally to make a positive difference in their communities.

Quantitative
Vala-Haynes
FYS 207
Fall, Winter, Spring
CRN: 11709

Energy Issues

An Environmental Perspective

This course will focus on the origin, production and development, distribution, uses and impacts of energy in contemporary society.

Quantitative
Wade
FYS 207
Fall, Spring
CRN: TBA

The Science of Happiness

There are countless ideas about happiness and how we can have some of it. This course focuses on what scientific research can tell us about happiness and strategies to practice when transitioning to WOU and pursuing meaningful future careers and life beyond WOU.

Writing
Clark
FYS 107
Winter

Fear and Ignorance

Scientific Controversies of the Past and Present

In this class, we will learn about some major scientific topics that cause fear or are controversial. We will learn how to find reliable scientific sources, how to read, and how to understand scientific sources.

Quantitative
Kelley
FYS 207
Spring

Mathematics, Music and the Mind

Music is simultaneously deeply emotional and exceedingly logical. On one level, music is just a collection of physical forces and mathematical patterns, but our experience of music can be psychologically transformative. This seminar will examine music through mathematical and neuroscientific lenses.

Quantitative
Merrill
FYS 207
Fall, Winter
CRN: 11920

The Opiate Crisis

Medical and Societal Effects of Opiate Use and Addiction

This course provides an interdisciplinary approach to help students understand the physical and psychological nature of opiate addiction, the health implications and treatment options, as well as the larger societal and economic impacts of this disease.

Quantitative
Flatt
FYS 207
Fall
CRN: 11833

Social Justice

Equity and Pop Culture

This seminar focuses on equity and pop culture: How does the media we consume convey messages about what is just and fair based on unequal representations of particular races/ethnicities/languages/socioeconomic statuses/genders/or abilities?

Writing
Emerson

FYS 107
Spring

Illustrating Social Issues

What Numbers do and don't Tell us

This course nurtures curiosity and critical thinking as we unpack and understand some of this complexity. We will (1) read a variety of genres to explore selected social issues, (2) illuminate social patterns using data, and (3) integrate "illustrations" from different disciplines to better understand perplexing social issues.

Quantitative
Monahan

FYS 207
Winter

Gender Based Violence on Campus

Separating Rumor, Perception and Reality

Students in this course will learn to "read," analyze, and evaluate data to better understand gender-based violence as a social problem, and the power of quantitative information as a tool for framing and informing the topic.

Quantitative
Addington

FYS 207
Winter

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Gender, Trauma and Mental Health

Uses a young adult novel to explore not only writing and narrative, but also to look at issues facing young people that are often swept under the rug. Stephen Chbosky's book opens up discussions of gender identity and expression, how trauma influences our lives, and mental health challenges for young adults.

Writing
Addington and Glascock

FYS 107
Spring

Mobility, Freedom and the Right to Move

Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right. And yet, for many, social difference and circumstance may result in their freedom of movement being limited, whether by law or custom. This seminar focuses on the significance of movement to the practice of human freedom.

Writing
Huston

FYS 107
Winter

Oregon History Detectives

Discovering Diverse Voices

Introduces students to the tools they need to discover and analyze the lives of diverse Oregonians in our history and teach others about their experiences to build a richer understanding of our past.

Writing
Jensen and Carano

FYS 107
Fall
CRN: 11712

Tech & Data

Algorithms and Culture

The Good, the Bad and the Biased

This seminar focuses on the interaction between algorithms—precise sequences of instructions for processes that can be executed by a computer—and culture. We'll ask: how are algorithms affecting culture and how is culture affecting algorithms? Learning community with GEOG 107.

Quantitative	FYS 207
Flesch	Fall
	CRN: 11912

Exploring the Solar System

In this seminar, we will see how our understanding of the Solar System has evolved over the centuries and how a revolution in astronomy led to the birth of modern science. By conducting an analysis of the structure and composition of the Solar System, students will see what this information reveals about the origin and evolution of the Solar System.

Quantitative	FYS 207
Oxford	Fall
	CRN: 11850

Trend lines versus Headlines

By objectively looking at the trend lines, often by contrasting them against the screaming and misleading news headlines, we will investigate the state of the world and, thereby, think about how to make the world a better place for future generations.

Quantitative	FYS 207
Khé	Fall
	CRN: 11585

Storytelling with Data

Creating Effective Infographics

This class will help you develop your “eye” for good data visualizations by leveraging the power of human visual perception to find patterns in data (exploration) and use those patterns to effectively tell a compelling story (communication).

Quantitative	FYS 207
Leadley	Fall
	CRN: 11849

Illuminating Code of Dance

This course will explore parallels between dance and coding and will culminate in creating an iPuppet dance using basic tools from dance choreography, illuminated puppet pieces, and basic coding skills.

Quantitative	FYS 207
Flesch, Thomas	Fall
	CRN: 11857

Illustrating Social Issues

What Numbers do and don't Tell us

This course nurtures curiosity and critical thinking as we unpack and understand some of this complexity. We will (1) read a variety of genres to explore selected social issues, (2) illuminate social patterns using data, and (3) integrate “illustrations” from different disciplines to better understand perplexing social issues.

Quantitative	FYS 207
Monahan	Winter

The Great Outdoors

America's National Parks and Monuments An Exploration of their Geologic Significance and Preservation Challenges

America's National Parks and Monuments preserve some of the most iconic landscapes on Earth. This course explores the historical reasons why these places have been protected, what makes some of them geologically significant, and challenges to their preservation.

Writing
Smith

FYS 107
Fall
CRN: TBA

Exploring Natural Disasters A Bad Day on Planet Earth

This course focuses on natural disasters and how these normal processes of the Earth concentrate their energies and deal heavy blows to humans as well as have severe environment and health impacts for many years after the event.

Quantitative
Wade

FYS 207
Winter, Spring

Nature and Photography

What is nature? This course considers ideas and images of nature from a variety of perspectives. Includes instruction in photography and studio time.

Writing
Tankersley

FYS 107
Fall
CRN: 11606

Environmental Challenges of the Pacific Northwest

The residents of the Pacific Northwest have huge respect for the environment and are very proactive in protecting the region. This course explores environmental challenges faced by the region and how the Pacific Northwest can meet these challenges in a responsible way.

Quantitative
Dandeneau

FYS 207
Winter

Exploring the Solar System

In this seminar, we will see how our understanding of the Solar System has evolved over the centuries and how a revolution in astronomy led to the birth of modern science. By conducting an analysis of the structure and composition of the Solar System, students will see what this information reveals about the origin and evolution of the Solar System.

Quantitative
Oxford

FYS 207
Fall
CRN: 11850

The Human Condition

Play

It's Not Just for Kids

Explores the role of lifetime play from global to local through multiple lenses—historical, cultural, political, sociological, relational, psychological, and physiological.

Writing
Timken

FYS 107
Fall, Winter, Spring
CRN: 11710

Play and Creativity

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.

Writing
Emerson

FYS 107
Fall, Winter
CRN: 11898

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Gender, Trauma and Mental Health

Uses a young adult novel to explore not only writing and narrative, but also to look at issues facing young people that are often swept under the rug. Stephen Chbosky's book opens up discussions of gender identity and expression, how trauma influences our lives, and mental health challenges for young adults.

Writing
Addington and Glascock

FYS 107
Spring

Short Stories, Wide World

In this course, students will read compelling short stories, and critically think and write about the human-geographic messages in them. Through these readings, students will articulate the state of the human condition, and also arrive at informed speculation on their own future and the future of humanity.

Writing
Khé

FYS 107
Spring

The Good, The Bad, and The Ambivalent Understanding Parent-Child Relationships Over Time

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.

Writing
Manoogian

FYS 107
Fall
CRN: 11848

The Science of Happiness

There are countless ideas about happiness and how we can have some of it. This course focuses on what scientific research can tell us about happiness and strategies to practice when transitioning to WOU and pursuing meaningful future careers and life beyond WOU

Writing
Clark

FYS 107
Winter

Viva la Revolución

No Justice, No Peace

Activism, Resistance, and Writing for Social Justice

Considers the history of writing for and about social justice through the work of writers, artists, and advocates who have used their voices to help others, while we also find ways to use our own voices to do the same.

Writing
Graziano

FYS 107
Winter

The Joker and the Fool

The Use of Humor as a Tool for Subversion

Comedy is the vehicle for the carnival—a topsy-turvy world in which criticisms of the powerful are met with laughter (usually). The question is why are they allowed to get away with mocking those who could ruin their lives? And how do they do it?

Writing
Anderson

FYS 107
Spring

What's the Worst that Could Happen?

Why we Love Dystopian Stories

Remember when your mother asked if you would jump off a bridge if all your friends did? That's why dystopian stories are useful; they take ideas to extremes to examine how humans might meet dire conditions. This course explores why we like stories about the end of the world as we know it.

Writing
Anderson

FYS 107
Winter

Poets, Playwrights and Revolutionaries

Lessons from the Soviet Bloc

Explores how playwrights, poets, students, workers, novelists, filmmakers and pacifists challenged the authoritarian political systems of Communist Central Europe after 1945. These social movements contributed to revolutions that ended the Cold War and transformed Europe.

Writing
Doellinger

FYS 107
Winter

Started from the Bottom Now We're Here

How Underrepresented College Students will Inherit the Earth

In this class, we will research and write about what it means to be first-generation or low-income in the current U.S. educational system. This course is cost-remitted for students in the Student Enrichment Program (SEP), and meets the SEP course requirements.

Writing
Haberman-Guthrie

FYS 107
Fall, Winter, Spring
CRN: 11835, 11836, 11837

Wondrous Weird

The Strange in Art and Literature

Incorporates creative and critical thinking and writing, through examination of Surrealism and its impact on art, writing, culture and society. In Surrealism, thinking and reality merge, as we incorporate reality in our dreams and see the bizarre and dream-like in everyday life.

Writing
Tillinghast-Voit

FYS 107
Spring

Schedule details may have changed since publication. Please double check the schedule online at wou.edu/findcourse

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