

Request for Proposals for First-Year Seminar Courses

Overview

Since 2005, the [FSEM program](#) has been a showcase feature of undergraduate education at DU. As a small, four-credit, academically rigorous course, the FSEM introduces students to the intellectual, academic, and community norms and values of the University. FSEM mentors meet with their students throughout the year (even after the end of the fall quarter course) to provide academic support, mentoring, and advising. Up to eighty-five First-Year Seminars are offered each year with topics reflecting the wide range of our appointed faculty members' intellectual passions.

FSEM Student Learning Outcomes: Students who successfully complete the FSEM will be able to engage in critical inquiry in the examination of concepts, texts, or artifacts and effectively communicate the results of such inquiry.

A key element of the First-Year Seminar program is to introduce first-year students to the value and excitement of pursuing intellectual questions and issues and to help students experience the rewards and empowerment that come from developing deeper levels of expertise and analytical skills. Additional goals are as follows:

- 1) **Intellectual Community.** FSEM mentors foster a sense of intellectual community and an appreciation of academic discourse as a key element of college life. Students demonstrate their active membership in an academic community through critical reading, discussion, research, and/or writing. As part of the FSEM experience, students may participate in a variety of special events (e.g., on- and off-campus lectures, films, discussions, concerts, performances, field trips, laboratory or research experiences).
- 2) **Academic Expectations.** Each seminar introduces students to the rigorous academic expectations at the university level, including the notions that the quantity and quality of university-level work are significantly higher than in high school; that students will allocate sufficient time outside of class to independent and focused learning; and that students will be held responsible for mastering the course material and participating, in a constructive and informed way, in class discussions and exercises. Your students should feel as if they are being challenged and need to work harder than they have before to meet your expectations.
- 3) **Active Learning Environment.** FSEM mentors will create an active learning environment where writing, performance, laboratory work, quantitative analyses, or other forms of experiential and/or creative activities structure the seminar. Learning activities vary according to each seminar's specific goals. Some seminars might require several short papers, have students post online responses to questions, or make use of a research notebook or log. Others might assign creative projects, performances, debates, or oral presentations.

Faculty members who are interested in using writing as an active learning strategy are invited to attend a writing workshop or to contact [Doug Hesse](#), Executive Director of Writing, for some helpful ideas.

- 4) **Strong Academic Advising Relationship.** FSEM mentors will foster a strong academic advising relationship with seminar students by helping students learn how to form an academic relationship with the FSEM mentor that extends beyond the transactional aspect of advising. FSEM mentors should also help students learn how to work with a team of advisors to make academic plans for each quarter, how to evaluate whether academic goals have been met, and what actions need to be taken when academic goals are not reached.

Faculty Expectations

1. **Training**—New instructors are required to attend a scheduled training session typically held the last week in August or the first week in September. We recommend that experienced instructors attend a shorter portion of the training, while novice instructors will receive more in-depth training. Stipend: \$250.
2. **Discoveries Week**—FSEM mentors, assisted by a student orientation leader, facilitate Dialogues sessions with their students during Discoveries Week. FSEM mentors should be prepared for and attend each session at its scheduled time and location (September 5-8, 2017). FSEM mentors participate in staffing the registration area on Registration Day and lead a Destinations trip for their students on Friday of Discoveries Week. The intellectual and social interactions during Discoveries Week, including the Destinations trip, are absolutely critical to the success of the FSEM seminars. See the Discoveries Week [website](#) for more information.
3. **One Book, One Prompt** – Faculty teaching FSEMs should plan to integrate themes from the One Book and/or One Prompt into their Discoveries week activities and may choose to integrate the themes into their course, if appropriate. The book selection will be announced in mid-March. See the One Book [website](#).
4. **Advising**—FSEM mentors serve as advisors to their students through the first year, in partnership with staff academic advisors. You should plan to meet individually with your students during fall, winter AND spring quarters during Advising Weeks to help students prepare to register for the upcoming term. As a First-Year Seminar faculty member **you are the only one** permitted to delete your students' PINs.
5. **Mentoring**—FSEM instructors serve as mentors to their students, overseeing students' successful transition to the university environment, assisting students in exploring new disciplines and fields of study, supporting students in the development of effective intellectual habits, and, in general, serving as an on-campus advocate for their students.
6. **Assessment**—The First-Year Seminar includes program-wide assessment activities, which instructors are expected to support and complete. Indirect assessments include the course/instructor evaluation and a Discoveries survey. FSEM mentors also complete a reflection about their class experience.
7. **Availability**—Faculty proposing First-Year Seminars should plan to be on campus for **all** three quarters of the academic year. **DO NOT** plan to teach an FSEM if you will be on leave for any academic quarter during the school year. Faculty new to the university should have completed one full academic year on campus before they are eligible to teach in this program.

Compensation & Budget

Compensation

Instructors are eligible for several types of additional compensation for their work in the FSEM program as outlined in the [FSEM Handbook](#), although the exact structure is still being developed for the 2017-2018 year. As in previous years, retuning instructors can be compensated up to \$3,850 and new instructors up to \$5,350.

Available budgets

The FSEM instructor should schedule events or outings for the students, which will tie in to the four FSEM goals. To that end, each instructor has three sources of funds available *by reimbursement*

Fund	Description
Destinations	\$25/person in Discoveries group (including OL, and instructor). Only available on the day of the Destinations trip
Activities	\$50/student -- Activity Funds are limited to \$50/enrolled student, at the end of week two in the fall quarter. Please remember that if you exceed your Destinations budget of \$25/person, the additional expenses will be deducted from your Activities Fund. This money is available anytime during this academic year.
Course Materials	\$250 total -- Available beginning July 1, BY REQUEST. The materials are for the current Fall FSEM quarter only.

Available funds for a class of 18 students			
Destinations	25	per person	\$500.00
Activities	50	per student	\$900.00
Materials			\$250.00
		Total	\$1,650.00

First-Year Faculty Seminar Committee

The seminars are implemented and overseen by members of the FSEM Faculty Committee who are elected representatives from the divisions of Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and the Writing Program. Members of the FSEM faculty committee are available to speak with you should you have any questions.

CHAIR: Paul Colomy (pcolomy@du.edu)

AHUM: Frédérique Chevillot (frederique.chevillot@du.edu); Linda Bensel-Meyers (linda.bensel-meyers@du.edu)

SOCS: Lynn Schofield Clark (lynn.clark@du.edu); Adrienne Russell (Adrienne.russell@du.edu)

NSM: Verl Murugaverl (vmurugav@du.edu); Tom Quinn (Tom.quinn@du.edu)

Writing Program: Richard Colby (Richard.colby@du.edu)

Ex-officio: Jennifer Karas (jennifer.karas@du.edu); Sarah Hoffman (sarah.hoffman@du.edu)

Application Process

Proposals will be accepted from appointed faculty across the University, provided that the courses proposed have a liberal arts/science orientation. **All seminars must be taught on-load.** Returning instructors teaching a previously approved course need not submit a proposal. Returning instructors who have taught the same course for more than four years may apply for curriculum planning funding (\$500 per course, pending budgetary approval) to support the complete revision of a course.

Proposal Guidelines

Please consult the [FSEM portfolio site](#) for examples of successful FSEM proposals and syllabi. A complete proposal consists of:

1. **Completed survey**
 - a. Course description, maximum 200 words
 - Describe the course you are proposing, with special attention to the ways in which it will address the goals of the First-Year Seminars as outlined above. *How will you draw 18-year-old newly matriculated college students into your intellectual world?*
 - b. Tentative Destinations trip plan
 - If you have an idea of where you would like to take your students on their Destinations trip at the end of the Discoveries Week, please share that plan. You may also see the [Destinations Trip Ideas](#) document on the Portfolio site. Organized group trips will be arranged again this year. Contact Sarah Hoffman (sarah.hoffman@du.edu) to request more information.
 - c. Tentative day and time of course
 - All scheduling should be coordinated through your **home academic department** so that there are no conflicts with departmental courses. *Please consider offering your First-Year Seminar at a non-prime time, i.e., before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. to minimize scheduling conflicts for first-year students.*
2. **Course proposal, maximum 2 single spaced pages.** Describe the course you are proposing, with special attention to the ways in which it will address **each** of the goals of the First-Year Seminars as outlined above.
3. **Proposed syllabus, including reading list, and assignments.** Providing a syllabus gives the committee an idea of how the class proceeds week-by-week and what students will be doing in class.
** Please include the FSEM student learning outcome in your proposed FSEM syllabus and provide examples of the course assignments and activities that will permit you to assess whether students are meeting the FSEM Learning Outcomes, listed on page 1. FSEM faculty have developed a rubric to assess students' progress regarding this outcome. You can access it [here](#) on the [FSEM Advising & Support portfolio site](#).

Submission

All application materials (course proposal, syllabus, reading list, assignments) should be combined into ONE Word or PDF document. **Submit your proposal [here](#) by Wednesday, February 1, 2017.** You will be notified about your proposal via e-mail by mid-March. Please direct submission questions to Jennifer Karas, 303-871-6793, Jennifer.karas@du.edu.