

Request for Proposals for First-Year Seminar Courses

Overview

Since 2005, the [First-Year Seminar \(FSEM\) program](#) has been a showcase feature of undergraduate education at DU. A small and rigorous four-credit course, FSEM introduces students to the academic values and norms of the University community. In addition to teaching the seminar, faculty meet with students throughout the year to provide consistent academic advising, mentoring, and support. Up to eighty-five First-Year Seminars are offered each fall quarter on topics reflecting the wide range of faculty intellectual passions.

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

Program Features:

A key priority of the First-Year Seminar program is to introduce students to the value and excitement of pursuing intellectual questions, and the rewards that come from developing deeper levels of expertise. Faculty cultivate this and other program priorities through the following features:

- 1) **Intellectual Community.** FSEM faculty emphasize intellectual community and academic discourse as key elements of college life. Students demonstrate active membership in our academic community through critical reading, discussion, research, and writing. As well, students may participate in a variety of special events selected by faculty (e.g., field trips, community projects, laboratory or research experiences, on/off-campus lectures, films, concerts, performances).
- 2) **Academic Expectations.** Seminars introduce students to university-level academic expectations, including the notions that the quantity and quality of college-level work are significantly more demanding than 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 course material and participating in class activities. FSEM students feel challenged and know they must work hard to meet faculty expectations.
- 3) **Active Learning Environment.** FSEM faculty create an active learning environment where writing, performance, collaboration, primary research and laboratory work, and other forms of experiential and/or creative activities structure the seminar. Learning activities vary according to faculty and seminar emphases. Some seminars might require several short papers, have students collaborate on a class project, or make use of a research log. Others might assign creative projects, performances, debates, or oral presentations.

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

- 4) **Strong Advising Relationships.** FSEM faculty build advising relationships that extend beyond the transactional aspects of academic planning. Across a full year of academic advising, faculty help students navigate University resources and access various networks of support. Faculty guide students to make

thoughtful course selections, while framing the common curriculum as an entrée to formative, integrated, and deep learning experiences. Students turn to FSEM faculty with all manner of questions; faculty provide resources that empower students to find the answers they seek.

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. Experienced instructors attend a shorter portion of the training, while novice instructors receive a more in-depth orientation. Stipend: \$250.
2. **Discoveries Week.** Assisted by a student orientation leader, FSEM faculty facilitate Dialogues sessions with students during [Discoveries Week](#). Faculty attend each session at its scheduled time and location (September 3–6, 2019) and lead a Destinations trip for students on Thursday, September 5th. *The intellectual and social interactions that occur during Discoveries Week and the Destinations trip are critical to the success of FSEM courses.*
3. **One Book, One Prompt.** FSEM faculty incorporate themes from One Book and One Prompt into Discoveries week activities and may choose to build the book into their FSEM courses. The 2019–20 One Book selection will be announced mid-March. See the One Book, One DU [website](#).
4. **Advising.** In partnership with staff academic advisors, FSEM faculty provide academic guidance and advising throughout the first year. Faculty meet with students individually during each of the fall, winter, and spring Advising Weeks to prepare for registration. Students begin fall registration the week of July 15. FSEM faculty send welcome letters, review student schedules, and respond to student questions over the summer.
5. **Mentoring.** FSEM faculty serve as trusted mentors—guiding student transitions to the university environment by assisting students in exploring new disciplines and fields of study, supporting students in the development of effective intellectual habits, and generally serving as an on-campus advocate for FSEM students.
6. **Availability.** Faculty proposing First-Year Seminars should plan to be on campus all three quarters of the academic year. Faculty new to the university should have completed one full academic year on campus before teaching in this program. Faculty on leave during any academic quarter in the 2019–2020 school year are not eligible to teach FSEM.
7. **Assessment.** Faculty contribute to individual and program-wide assessment activities, including course/instructor evaluations, a Discoveries survey, and a teaching reflection on class experience.

Compensation & Budget

Compensation

Instructors are eligible for several types of additional compensation for their work in the FSEM program, as outlined on the [FSEM Faculty Resources website](#). As in previous years, retuning instructors can be compensated up to \$3,850 and new instructors up to \$5,350.

Available budgets

FSEM faculty should schedule events or outings for students that support FSEM goals. To that end, each instructor has three sources of funds available.

Fund	Description
Destinations	\$25 per person in Discoveries group, including OL and instructor. These funds are only available on the day of the Destinations trip.
Activities	\$50 per student. Activity Funds are limited to \$50 per enrolled student (as of week two in the fall quarter). If faculty exceed the Destinations budget of \$25 per person, additional expenses will be deducted from the Activities fund. This money is available anytime during the academic year.
Course Materials	\$250 total. Available beginning July 1 by request. 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

Seminars are implemented and overseen by members of the FSEM Faculty Committee, which is comprised of elected representatives from the divisions of Arts and 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: Heather Martin (heather.martin@du.edu)

AHUM: Rachel Walsh (Rachel.walsh@du.edu); Rachel Feder (Rachel.feder@du.edu)

SOCS: Esteban Gomez (Esteban.gomez@du.edu); Jing Sun (jing.sun@du.edu)

NSM: Hillary Hamann (Hillary.hamann@du.edu); Erika Trigoso (Erika.trigoso@du.edu)

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

Ex-officio: Jennifer Karas (jennifer.karas@du.edu); Leah O'Grady (leah.ogrady@du.edu); Sarah Hoffman (sarah.hoffman@du.edu); Grace Warner (grace.warner@du.edu)

Application Process

Proposals will be accepted from appointed faculty across the University, provided that the proposed courses 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, but should still fill out the online form below to update course title, description, etc.

Proposal Guidelines

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

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 features of the First-Year Seminar program as outlined above. *How will you draw 18-year-old newly matriculated college students into your intellectual world?*
 - b. Tentative Destinations trip agenda
 - If you have an idea of where you would like to take your students on their Destinations trip during Discoveries Week, please share that plan. You may also see the [Destinations Trip Ideas](#) document on the Portfolio site. Organized group trips can be arranged on request. Contact Academic Programs at firstsem@du.edu to obtain 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 two single-spaced pages.** Describe the course you are proposing, with special attention to the ways in which it will address **each** of the First-Year Seminar features outlined above.
3. **Proposed syllabus, including reading list and assignments.** Provide a syllabus to give the committee a sense of how the course will proceed week-by-week, including what students will be doing in class.

Please include the FSEM student learning outcome on your syllabus, and offer examples of course assignments and activities designed to meet it. Faculty developed a [rubric](#) to assess student progress toward our shared FSEM outcome.

Submission

All application materials (course proposal, syllabus, reading list, assignments) should be combined into one Word or PDF document. **All faculty (including returning instructors) should [submit the proposal](#) by Friday, February 15, 2019.** You will be notified about your proposal by mid-March. Please direct submission questions to Academic Programs staff at firstsem@du.edu.