

Request for First-Year Seminar Proposals

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 in the fall, 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 autumn on topics reflecting the wide array 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, and 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, ask students collaborate on a class project, or make use of a research log. Others might assign creative projects, performances, debates, or oral presentations.
- 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

- Training.** Instructors are required to attend FSEM faculty training. New instructors are required to attend three training sessions, and returning FSEM faculty are required to attend one, as designated below:
 - New faculty orientation:** Friday, April 9 from 1:00–3:00
 - Advising training:** Late August/Early September *exact dates forthcoming* (highly recommended for returning faculty; additional \$150 stipend to be provided (beyond FSEM workshop stipends)
 - All faculty info session:** Thursday, September 2 from 9:00–12:00
- Discoveries Week.** Assisted by a student orientation leader, FSEM faculty facilitate classroom sessions with students during [Discoveries Week](#). Faculty attend each session at its scheduled time and location (September 7–10, 2021) and organize an off-campus “Destinations” trip for students on Friday, September 10th. The intellectual and social interactions that occur during Discoveries Week and the Destinations trip are critical to the success of FSEM courses, so full faculty participation is mandatory.
 - Destinations 2021 Update:** Due to budgetary constraints, University Academic Programs cannot arrange or finance charter buses for 2021 Destinations trips. Please plan accordingly.
 - A note on 2021:** While Discoveries Orientation is aimed at helping students transition to DU, it can be overwhelming for some students. FSEM faculty should include information to support students’ transition to university life throughout the fall quarter, particularly during the first few weeks.
- Advising.** In partnership with staff academic advisors, FSEM faculty provide academic guidance and advising throughout the first year. Faculty meet with students individually to prepare for registration during *Advising Week* in the fall, winter, and spring. Students begin fall registration the week of July 19, 2021. Over summer break, FSEM faculty send welcome letters, review student schedules, and respond to student questions.
- Mentoring.** FSEM faculty serve as trusted mentors, assisting students in exploring new fields of study, supporting students in the development of effective intellectual habits, and generally serving as an on-campus student advocate. FSEM faculty report students-in-need to the Associate Director of Academic Programs and [Student Outreach and Support](#), and regularly refer students to on-campus resources.
- 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 *or* Discoveries Orientation in the 2021–2022 school year are not eligible to teach FSEM.
- 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

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

Available budgets

FSEM faculty should schedule events or outings that support FSEM goals. To that end, each instructor has three sources of funds available. We will do our best to preserve all budget items; however, all funds are subject to University budget guidelines for 2021–2022.

Fund	Description
Destinations	\$25 per person in Discoveries group, including OL and instructor. These funds are only available for the Destinations trip.
Activities	\$25 per student per quarter. Activity Funds are limited to \$25 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 for new FSEM faculty, \$100 for returning FSEM faculty (by request only). Available by request beginning July 1. Materials are for the current fall FSEM quarter only.

Available funds for NEW faculty (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

Available funds for RETURNING faculty (for a class of 18 students)			
Destinations	\$25	per person	\$500.00
Activities	\$50	per student	\$900.00
Materials			\$100.00
	Total		(by request*) \$1,500.00

***Materials 2021 Update:** Due to budget constraints, returning faculty members will be granted materials funding up to \$100 by request only. Materials purchases made prior to obtaining approval may not be reimbursed or covered by Academic Programs.

First-Year Faculty Seminar Committee

Seminars are selected 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: Rafael Fajardo (Rafael.Fajardo@du.edu), Daniel Melleno (daniel.melleno@du.edu)

SOCS: Sara Chatfield (Sara.Chatfield@du.edu), Pamela Miller (pamela.miller@du.edu)

NSM: Nancy Sasaki (Nancy.sasaki@du.edu), Barry Zink (Barry.Zink@du.edu)

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

Ex-officio: Jennifer Karas (jennifer.karas@du.edu), Monica Kosanovich (monica.kosanovich@du.edu)

Application Process

We invite proposals from appointed faculty across the University, provided that the proposed courses have a liberal arts/science orientation. **All seminars must be taught on-load.**

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 course survey**

- a. Course description (200 words)

- Describe the course, with special attention to how it addresses the FSEM features outlined on page 1.

- b. Tentative Destinations trip agenda

- Develop a “Destinations” trip plan for Discoveries Week. See Destinations Trip Ideas on the [FSEM faculty resources website](#) for examples. Organized group trips can be arranged on request. **Note that charter buses are not available for 2021 Destinations.**

- c. Tentative day and time of course

All scheduling should be coordinated through your **home academic department** to avoid conflicts with departmental courses. Please note that your home academic department is charged with ensuring courses are distributed evenly across available course days and times, so it is recommended that you consider offering your First-Year Seminar at a non-prime time (i.e., before 10 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m.) in order to provide a variety of options for incoming students.

2. **Course proposal, maximum two single-spaced pages.** Describe the course you are proposing, with attention to how it addresses each of the First-Year Seminar features outlined on page 1.

3. **Proposed syllabus, including reading list and assignments.** Provide a detailed 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 the syllabus and offer examples of course assignments and activities designed to meet it.

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 Monday, March 1, 2021.** Faculty will be notified by April 1. Please direct any questions to Academic Programs staff at firstsem@du.edu.