

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 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, 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

- 1. 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:
 - a. New faculty spring training:** Friday, April 17 from 1:00–3:00
 - b. Faculty advising training:** June or August, *exact dates forthcoming* (highly recommended for returning faculty; additional \$250 stipend to be provided (beyond FSEM workshop stipends)
 - c. New/Returning faculty fall training:** Wednesday, September 2 from 9:00–2:00
- 2. 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 8–11, 2020) and organize an off-campus “Destinations” trip for students on Friday, September 11th. *The intellectual and social interactions that occur during Discoveries Week and the Destinations trip are critical to the success of FSEM courses.*
 - a. Destinations 2020 Update:** Due to budgetary constraints, University Academic Programs cannot arrange or finance charter buses for 2020 Destinations trips. Please plan accordingly.
 - b. A note on 2020:** While Discoveries Orientation is aimed at helping students to transition to DU, it is often reported as overwhelming for students and thus, is insufficient in meeting this need on its own. As such, faculty should allocate sufficient class time for topics related to the student transition to university life. This content is critical to student success and should be purposefully integrated into the early weeks of FSEM.
- 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 the FSEM course. The 2020–2021 One Book selection will be announced March 2020. See the One Book, One DU [website](#) for additional information.
- 4. 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 20, 2020. Over summer break, FSEM faculty send welcome letters, review student schedules, and respond to student questions.
- 5. 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.
- 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 *or* Discoveries Orientation in the 2020–2021 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

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.

| Fund | Description |
|------------------|--|
| Destinations | \$25 per person in Discoveries group, including OL and instructor. These funds are only available for 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 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 |
| | | | (by request*) |
| | | Total | \$1,500.00 |

***Materials 2020 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: Rachel Walsh (Rachel.walsh@du.edu), Daniel Melleno (daniel.melleno@du.edu)

SOCS: Esteban Gomez (Esteban.gomez@du.edu), Pamela Miller (pamela.miller@du.edu)

NSM: Nancy Sasaki (Nancy.sasaki@du.edu), Paul Sutton (paul.sutton@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)

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.**

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 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 (e.g., *How will you draw 18-year-old first-time college students into your intellectual world?*).
- b. Tentative Destinations trip agenda
 - Develop a “Destinations” trip plan for where you plan to take students during Discoveries Week. See Destinations Trip Ideas on the [FSEM faculty resources website](#) for examples. Organized group trips can be arranged on request. **Charter buses are not available for 2020 Destinations.** 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** 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 special attention to the ways it addresses each of the First-Year Seminar features outlined above.
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 Sunday, March 1, 2020.** Faculty will be notified by April 1. Please direct any questions to Academic Programs staff at firstsem@du.edu.