

First-Year Seminar Fact Sheet

What is a First-Year Seminar? Why have we included this in the GEP?

First-year seminars are being adopted by many colleges and universities in recent years to help students make the transition to college successfully. They have proven effective in increasing retention and improving the overall quality of students' experience in college. As part of the new GEP, UWSP has chosen to add this requirement in the form of an academically rigorous 3-credit course. These classes give students an opportunity to be intellectually challenged in the engaging environment of a small class, working to achieve these learning outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- Describe the importance of a liberal education and the ways in which academic study is structured at UWSP.
- Describe the importance of critical thinking and information literacy and apply the associated skills.
- Identify and apply appropriate note-taking, test-taking, and time-management strategies to their academic studies.
- Describe the importance of co-curricular involvement and how it enhances their academic study at UWSP.
- Identify and utilize UWSP programs, resources, and services that will support their academic studies and co-curricular involvement.
- Develop a plan that demonstrates their responsibility for their own education, specifically how it relates to their interests, abilities, career choices, and personal development.

Do all students need to take a First-Year Seminar?

Eventually, every student will need to take a First-Year Seminar. During the first five years of the GEP (2013-2018), students will be able to substitute an additional course in the Investigation Level of the GEP for the FYS.

Can a First-Year Seminar meet other requirements in the GEP?

During the pilot period (2011-2013), FYS courses also earn credit in the current GDR system. Once the GEP is implemented in Fall 2013, an FYS can earn GEP credit only in one of the "sidebar" categories (U.S. Diversity, Global Awareness, and Environmental Responsibility), or in Experiential Learning.

Who can teach a First-Year Seminar?

Each proposed course must be endorsed by an academic department. Faculty and Academic staff, including non-instructional staff, are welcome to propose courses.

How can I get involved?

A call for proposals, including an application form, will come from the Academic Affairs Office. Any topic will be considered; instructors will be asked to explain how the proposed course will meet the FYS learning outcomes and assess student achievement of those outcomes. Proposals are evaluated by the First-Year Seminar Steering Committee.