

Spring 2015-16

## **FYS 101: *Back from the Front: Transitioning from the Military to Civilian Life***

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### **Course Description:**

Military veterans throughout American history have experienced challenges coming back from the front. What few people realize, however, is that throughout history they've also found ways to overcome those challenges. In this course, we will take an inter-disciplinary approach to studying the history of coming home from war, drawing comparisons from the Revolutionary War to the War on Terror. We will also learn to identify the unique and valuable skills you developed in the military and apply them in civilian settings. Upon completion of this course, you will be able to (1) read with perception and discernment, (2) write with clarity and precision, and (3) think both critically and courageously—skills that are sorely needed in today's workforce.

**Class Meets:** Mondays and Wednesdays 12:25-1:40 PM

**Location:** Collins Classroom Center (CCC) 231

**Instructor:** David Chrisinger

**Office:** CCC 471 **Phone:** 715-346-3979 **Email:** [dchrisin@uwsp.edu](mailto:dchrisin@uwsp.edu) or [dave.chrisinger@gmail.com](mailto:dave.chrisinger@gmail.com)

**Regular Office Hours:** Immediately following class (and by appointment)

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### **Purpose of the First Year Seminar:**

The First Year Seminar is designed for new students to introduce critical thinking skills, orient them to the academic community and campus life, and to equip them with the skills necessary to be a successful student. The First Year Seminar is also intended to foster your intellectual curiosity and help you begin the process of taking responsibility for your education, career choices, and personal development.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completing this First Year Seminar, you 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.

You will also be able to:

- Comprehend, analyze, and describe the social, political, economic, and other challenges military veterans have faced throughout American history.
- Identify, analyze, and describe recurring themes and trends in war literature and in the accounts of veterans from different eras of service.
- Identify and implement successful strategies for overcoming your own challenges.
- Make meaning of your experiences in the military through reflective writing and contribute to the growing body of research centered on improving the lives of veterans.
- Identify the unique and valuable skills you developed in the military and apply those skills in civilian settings.

To put it simply, the overall purpose of this course is to teach you ways to deal with any adjustment issues you may be experiencing at the beginning of your academic life, rather than allowing them to linger and become a burden later in more difficult, career-specific courses.

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### **Required Reading:**

- *WAR*, by Sebastian Junger, 2010.

Additional readings may be posted on Desire2Learn (D2L) or the class website:  
<http://strongeratthebrokenplaces.com>

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## Grading:

- **Class Attendance and Participation:** 200 points (20 percent of your final grade)
  - *Attendance:* Your attendance is required, and I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Because regular attendance is vital to academic and personal success, too many unexcused absences will hinder your progress and negatively affect your final grade. While you will be allowed three **unexcused** absences, each additional absence after three will result in a 3 percent reduction of your final grade. An **excused** absence is defined as a serious sickness, death in the family, or university-related function (all excused absences require appropriate documentation).
  - *Participation:* For each class period, I expect you to (1) have required readings completed before class begins; (2) bring with you all necessary materials, including the reading(s) and something to take notes with; (3) listen attentively to others; (4) show respect to me and your fellow classmates; (5) contribute to class discussions and activities; and (6) complete assignments by the due date. In addition, I may require you to post discussion comments on D2L from time to time. Failure to come to class prepared or to post a comment will result in a 3 percent reduction of your final grade.
- **Reflective Essay Writing:** 200 points (20 percent of your final grade)
  - You will be required to complete four short reflective essays (2-3 pages) throughout the semester. Each essay will be worth 50 points. Reflective essays are your personal reflections on course readings and experiences in the seminar.
- **Out-of-Class Experience Reports:** 100 points (10 percent of your final grade)
  - You will be required to complete four short, informal reports (1-2 pages) about your interactions with (1) the veteran community (on or off campus); (2) an academic club, organization, or event; (3) a non-academic club, organization, or event; and (4) a varsity athletic event on campus.
- **Group Report:** 200 points (20 percent of your final grade)
  - Instead of taking a mid-term exam, you will be assigned to a group and will be required to analyze published books or articles, research reports, surveys, historical data, and media reports surrounding the return of veterans to mainstream society to illustrate the common readjustment issues veterans have had to deal with throughout American history.
  - As a group, you will summarize and contextualize what you found and each group member will present a portion of the presentation to the class.

- Possible topics include (1) combat addiction and risky behaviors, (2) alcohol and drug abuse, (3) relationship issues, (4) unemployment and homelessness, (5) violent crime, (6) and suicide.
- **Final Essay:** 300 points (30 percent of your final grade)
  - Instead of taking a final exam, you will be required to write a substantial personal essay (2,000-4,000 words) that builds on one or more of the reflective essays you already wrote.
  - You should take one of your reflective essays and expand on its topic by incorporating findings/data of published books or articles, research reports, studies, surveys, or other sources.
  - Ideally, your final essay will be personal in nature, but it will speak to larger issues affecting veterans and their transition to civilian life. A well-written final essay will contribute to the growing body of work centered on improving the lives of veterans while also helping you make sense of your own experiences.

### **Late Assignments:**

For each assignment, you will be given a due date. Assignments are always due **no later than the beginning of class** on their respective due dates. More specifically, you must upload your assignment to D2L before class begins.

Late assignments will be reduced by 5 percent per day late.

In-class assignments may only be made up if the absence was due to documented illness, family emergency, or approved university activity. You should talk to your instructor as soon as practical to make arrangements.

I recommend that you start working on assignments as soon as possible after they have been assigned. Starting early greatly increases your odds of completing the project to your satisfaction. Please call, email, or see me as soon as possible—**before the due date**—with any questions or concerns about an assignment.

## Grading Scale:

Grade Earned	Points Earned	Percentage Earned	Interpretation
A	950-1,000	95-100	<i>Mastery of concepts; can apply concepts to new situations; above standards for writing</i>
A-	900-949	90-94	
B+	860-899	86-89	<i>Solid understanding of concepts; strong foundation for future work; meets standards for writing</i>
B	820-859	82-85	
B-	790-819	79-81	
C+	760-789	76-78	<i>Acceptable understanding of concepts; questionable foundation for future work; approaching standards for writing</i>
C	720-759	72-75	
C-	690-719	69-71	
D+	660-689	66-68	<i>Doubtful understanding; weak foundation for future work; below standards for writing</i>
D	630-659	63-65	
D-	600-629	60-62	
F	< 600	< 60	<i>Demonstrably failed to demonstrate understanding of key concepts; unacceptable level of writing</i>

## **UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities:**

UWSP values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, a set of expectations have been developed for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP.

## **Accommodations for Student Service Members and Veterans:**

I recognize the complexities of being a member of the military community and also a student. Please inform me if you are in need of special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military- and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff trained to assist you.

## **Academic Honesty:**

UWSP is committed to the fundamental values of preserving academic honesty as defined in the Student Handbook. I reserve the right to use electronic means to help prevent plagiarism. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review at Turnitin.com. Observed cheating or plagiarism may result in an immediate failure of the course.

## **UWSP 14.03 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.**

1. Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:
  - a) Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
  - b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
  - c) Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
  - d) Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
  - e) Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
  - f) Assists other students in any of these acts.
2. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:
  - a) cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course;

- b) submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another;
- c) submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas;
- d) stealing examinations or course materials;
- e) submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course;
- f) tampering with the laboratory experiment or computer program of another student; or
- g) knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information on UWSP's policies, go to:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability Services Office, located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information if you go to: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>