

Request for Proposals

First-Year Seminars: A Curricular Experiment

- First-year seminars adapted from existing courses with cohorts of twenty students will be available as a teaching opportunity in both the fall and spring semesters. In the fall each group of students will be enrolled in a three-credit core course linked with a one-credit section of Post Foundations (formerly College 101) taught by the same instructor and emphasizing critical thinking and oral communication skills. There will also be an opportunity to link some of the first-year seminars with Writing I (formerly English 1). In the spring semester, the first-year seminar will be a three-credit core course with a focus on critical thinking. The content of these courses will be determined by discipline and designed explicitly to help students engage more fully with the college experience. Through intensive faculty mentoring, intentional co-curricular activities and regular faculty meetings and discussions, faculty members teaching first-year seminars will work together and with students in order to introduce them to the connections between the knowledge found in all of their courses.
- Recognizing that some of our students are not able to succeed in college because of poor preparation while others are much more prepared, the first-year seminar model will emphasize critical thinking and oral communication along with skills appropriate to each respective discipline in an effort to draw students into active engagement with learning and present all of them with college-level expectations.
- Each first-year seminar will be chosen from the existing repertoire of core courses typically taken by first-year students. Faculty can offer proposals for both the fall and spring semesters if such sequences are available in their programs or submit a proposal for either the fall or spring semester.
- The first semester seminar will be linked to a Post Foundations section in which Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning, Information Literacy, Critical Thinking and Ethical Reasoning are introduced.
- An effort will be made to incorporate at least one common assignment for critical thinking and oral communication in all first-year seminars.

Proposals by should be designed so that they accomplish the following goals:

- The courses should be approached thematically and emphasize the “big questions” about society, community, human meaning and purpose, and nature’s design. In their encounter with these areas of inquiry, students will gain knowledge of themselves, society and culture, the natural world and the expressive arts and learn to adopt a variety of perspectives on the human experience.
- The seminar format and reduced class size should allow for a discussion-based format that encourages students to become active learners and build college-level skills;
- In collaboration with student success and student services offices, out-of-classroom experiences will be intentionally integrated in ways that allow students to make connections between what they are learning in class and the outside world;
- The courses will encourage the practice of “perspective taking,” introducing students to unfamiliar perspectives and teaching them how to understand, critique and inhabit them;
- The courses will build in the mentoring of individual students, helping each one navigate his or her initial college experiences successfully;
- The courses will encourage the development of camaraderie among the students in the cohort and aim at the building of community and a sense of connection to LIU Post.

And now, some details:

1. Course selection

The selected course(s) should be ones that are likely to enroll first-year students as a matter of course.

2. Teaching strategies

In-class formats that ask students to be active in the classroom—discussions, small group work, peer teaching, periodic responses to professor-delivered content—are strongly encouraged, in contrast to a lecture format that reinforces passive learning.

3. Out-of-classroom experiences

One of the key components of the learning community experience is getting students out into the world to encourage them to think about the connections

between what they are learning and its applications. This might take a number of forms: community service, field trips, visits to performances.

4. Mentoring

Proposals should make some arrangement so that faculty members meet at some point with individual students. The faculty members should also be alert to students who might be struggling. In the first semester seminar linked to College 101, discussions and regular contact between the faculty teaching the core class and College 101 will help identify struggling students.

5. Camaraderie and Connections to Post

Proposals should include some plans for other ways of building community. These might take the form of a get-together for food, or a reflective circle, or a celebration of a semester milestone, or tours of unusual but useful aspects of Post—some fun that connects people.

6. Departmental Approval

Make sure to discuss your plans with your Department Chair, so your Chair can endorse the project and facilitate scheduling and co-ordination.

Timetable:

- Applications will be accepted throughout the 2014-15 academic year. Please send all applications to John Lutz at John.Lutz@liu.edu

Thanks from the Learning Communities Committee

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| John Lutz, Director | English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences |
| Rick Desrochers | Theater, School of Visual and Performing Arts |
| Vic DiVenere | Earth and Environmental Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences |
| Michele Dornisch | Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, Information and Technology |
| Nancy Frye | Psychology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences |
| Eric Lichten | Sociology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences |
| Marci Swede | Health Sciences, School of Health Professions and Nursing |
| Brian Sweeney | Sociology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences |
| Shawn Welnak | Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences |

For more information, contact Professor John Lutz in the English Department (John.Lutz@liu.edu) or any other member of the Committee

APPLICATION FORM

First-Year Seminars

Fall Seminar

NAME_____

DEPARTMENT_____

EMAIL ADDRESS_____

PHONE _____

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE_____

SIGNATURE, DEPARTMENT CHAIR_____

Spring Seminar

NAME_____

DEPARTMENT_____

EMAIL ADDRESS_____

PHONE _____

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE_____

SIGNATURE, DEPARTMENT CHAIR_____

On a separate page, please indicate describe the manner in which this course (or sequence of courses) will meet the goals described in the request for proposals. (Your descriptions should not exceed 750 words.)

- How will the courses encourage students to appreciate new perspectives and begin to understand the interrelatedness of knowledge?
- What teaching strategies will be used to encourage the active participation of students?
- How will the course(s) encourage students to make connections with the campus community?
- What forms of mentoring will take place both in and out of the classroom?
- How will the course(s) improve student learning?

Please include a description for each course and an accompanying picture or graphic for the purposes of advertising.

Please send the applications to John Lutz at John.Lutz@liu.edu