First Year Seminar Course Guide

The University of Wisconsin Colleges’ First-Year Seminar
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The First-Year Seminar will help students develop a sense of responsibility for their own education and learning, introduce students to the skills necessary for academic and life success, provide students with an understanding of their membership in an academic community, instill in students an appreciation for a liberal arts education and a joy for learning, and develop a capacity for self-reflection and improvement. Because these achievements are best realized within an intellectually substantive context, each seminar instructor will incorporate a subject of inquiry of his or her choice for students to explore as they develop strategies for academic success.

The goals and strategies identified below are intended as a “common core” curriculum and not as an exhaustive list. It is expected that instructors will address all goals and strategies, and approach them and add to them in various ways depending on the instructor’s expertise, the campus culture, and the scope of the particular First-Year Seminar (e.g., topic or issue being addressed, number of credits, and linkages to other courses).

Common Core Goals of the UW Colleges First-Year Seminars:

Goal #1: To promote active learning as well as student involvement and responsibility in the learning process. This goal should be achieved through:
∞ Having students participate in one-to-one and small-group, writing, reading, speaking, and note-taking activities.
∞ Making students aware of learning support services on campus and encouraging their use as needed.
∞ Encouraging students to participate in study groups.
∞ Assisting students with learning how to learn.
∞ Teaching problem-solving and critical thinking strategies.

Goal #2: To assist students in the development of life management skills. This goal should be achieved by having students learn:
∞ Goal setting, priority setting, time management skills (with emphasis on balancing college, work, and family demands).
∞ The value of information literacy: reading, listening, library, and note-taking skills (with an infusion of technology/computer/Internet skills).
∞ Respect for divergent ideas, backgrounds, and people.
∞ Concepts relating to financial responsibility and planning.
∞ The importance of personal wellness and alcohol/drug awareness.

Goal #3: To engage students on the campus. This goal should be achieved by:
∞ Providing opportunities for collective student experiences.
∞ Providing opportunities for common reading participation.
∞ Promoting student attendance and involvement in special campus events and cocurricular activities.
∞ Encouraging involvement in campus committees, clubs, and societies.