

First Year Seminar (FYS)

I. Description of Purpose and Content

The First Year Seminar brings students into the university through close engagement with full-time faculty. Faculty work with a writing instructor and LMU librarians to introduce students to intellectual rigor, critical thinking, and effective writing skills while laying the foundation for a life-long commitment to learning. The topic of each section of the FYS is chosen and developed by the full-time faculty member within one of seven broad themes: 1) Faith and Reason, 2) Ethics and Justice, 3) Virtue and Justice, 4) Culture, Art and Society, 5) Power and Privilege, 6) Globalization, and 7) Science, Nature, and Society. Instructors share the example of life-long commitment to intellectual curiosity and creative activity by developing topics that grow from their own work and interests. Aimed at improving students' skills in written and oral communication and information literacy, the FYS invites students to engage critically and reflectively with scholarly discourse, analyzing and producing texts in a variety of media formats. FYS activities, pedagogies and experiences aim to develop intellectual community inside and outside the classroom. Seminars may be linked to Living/Learning Communities so that the activities that take place in the seminar are coherently connected to the co-curricular programming in the LLC.

II. Learning Outcomes

FYS students will:

- Understand and appreciate the intellectual rigor and academic excellence that defines an LMU education.
- Engage critically and reflectively in scholarly discourse.
- Learn to read critically and carefully.
- Exercise critical thinking in oral discussion and writing.
- Be able to evaluate sources for quality (e.g., by learning to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources).
- Acquire research skills including use of the library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online.

III. Defining Characteristics

The content of the FYS is driven by instructors' own interests, teaching, or research fields, within the seven broad themes of the course. The seminar environment encourages conversations that carry forward into Rhetorical Arts and the Explorations and Integrations stages of the Core. Activities and pedagogies stress written and oral communication skills and critical, scholarly engagement with a variety of formats. This critical engagement should also advance students' information literacy and research skills.

The First Year Seminar will:

1. Be taught principally by a full time faculty member who is responsible for course content (including reading and writing assignments) and for assigning final grades.

2. Identify the subject matter as falling into one of the following categories: 1) Faith and Reason, 2) Ethics and Justice, 3) Virtue and Justice, 4) Culture, Art and Society, 5) Power and Privilege, 6) Globalization, and 7) Science, Nature, and Society.
3. Emphasize activities and pedagogies that stress written and oral communication skills and critical scholarly engagement.
4. Employ a writing instructor who provides students with guidance in presenting, developing, and revising their ideas, as well as working toward stylistic objectives of clarity and coherence.
5. Incorporate LMU librarians in order to develop information literacy and basic research skills.
6. Include formal instruction in grammar, structure, style, and citation.
7. Be taught primarily as a seminar with students expected to engage actively and responsibly with the material under consideration.
8. Assign at least 50% of the course grade on the basis of assessed academic writing, making use of multiple drafts for the purpose of revision, editing, and proofreading and providing some form of feedback on all submitted assignments.
9. Assign at least 15% of the course grade on the basis of oral competency.
10. Assign at least 10% of the course grade on the basis of assessed information literacy, which must include completion of standardized tutorials prepared by LMU librarians.