

First Seminar/ First-year Learning Communities Pilot-test
Instructions for Topic Proposals – 2006 (1/20/06)

Proposal Review Process

Proposals for First Seminar topics (course sections) should be submitted by March 1, 2006, for review and approval. Topic proposals will be reviewed simultaneously by the Gen Ed Review Committee (GERC) and the appropriate School Curriculum Committee and must be approved by both bodies. The Gen Ed Review Committee will begin reviewing proposals at its March ?? meeting. Proposal authors will be invited to be present at the March ?? meeting in order to answer questions and get the Committee's formative feedback. Final decisions will be made at the March ?? meeting.

The intent of the GERC review is to assess each proposal's overall compliance with the concept, objectives, and specific core requirements of UNIV 179 as expressed in the UNIV 179 Draft Proposal (pp. 41-44, Gen Ed Task Force Final Report, 01/18/05). The intent of the School Curriculum Committee's review is to approve the Gen Ed designation of the topic/section as a G1, G2, or G3 elective. The Guidelines below and the attached Rubric are intended to ensure that the proposal contains the information necessary for these reviews and to standardize the approval process.

Review by the Committees should be a formative evaluation. Feedback should be given to proposal authors in order to correct weaknesses in the course design so approval can be gained. However, given the imposed time constraints, any revision period will be quite limited. Authors and reviewers should still make a good faith effort to work toward improvement and eventual approval. However, it is in the best interest of our students and the pilot-testing effort that only appropriate courses are approved.

Proposal Submission Guidelines

First Seminar topic proposals should address four major questions:

- What is the general nature of your topic and your approach to the topic? While course descriptions may vary in detail, they should communicate the subject matter that is to be included in the seminar and the general approach to be taken (e.g., course assignments, key readings).
- What are the course objectives (in terms of student learning outcomes)?
- How does the course meet the overall intent and objectives for First Seminars (as expressed in the UNIV 179 Draft Proposal)? Certain features of the First Seminar are strongly encouraged for all sections (e.g., a service learning component, explicitly addressing the role of Gen Ed and liberal arts, opportunities for developing information literacy skills). Please consult the Draft Proposal (dated 12/3/04) for UNIV 179 available on the Gen Ed website (<http://muweb.millersville.edu/~gened/>).
- What disciplinary orientation(s) is/are employed in the course, and where would this section fall in terms of Liberal Arts Core blocks (i.e., G1, G2, or G3)?

A rubric has been developed to aid in the topic review and approval process. Proposal writers should use the rubric to make sure that their responses to the above four questions effectively address the criteria reflected in the rubric.

Rubric for Scoring First Seminar Topic/Section Proposals – 2006

For each of the following items, check if the proposal meets the criterion. In scoring a proposal it is acceptable to score each the following items as yes (meets the criteria), no (does not meet the criteria) or partially meets the criteria.

1. _____ The proposed seminar is likely to generate high interest among students.
2. _____ The proposed seminar is centered around a cohesive theme.
3. _____ The proposed seminar evidences a commitment to a seminar format in presentation and assessment.
4. _____ The proposed seminar evidences intellectual richness through its assignments and assessments.
5. _____ The proposed seminar promotes understanding of the General Education Program and its purpose.
6. _____ The proposed seminar supports students' successful transition to college life by fostering connections between and among students, teachers, and the college community.
7. _____ The proposed seminar emphasizes the explicit development of critical thinking skills in the Liberal Arts.
8. _____ The proposed seminar's approach to its topic is clearly linked to one or more of the epistemological orientations of the Liberal Arts Core (G1, G2, or G3 blocks), and linkages are explicitly and thoroughly articulated.
9. _____ The proposed seminar strengthens the students' information literacy skills.
10. _____ The proposed seminar provides a foundation for university study and lifelong learning by including some or all of the following:
 - a. _____ A service learning experience.
 - b. _____ Skill development in oral discussion and written communication.
 - c. _____ An increased understanding and tolerance for multicultural values in society that may be different from our own.
 - d. _____ An opportunity to reflect upon the importance of civic responsibility.
 - e. _____ An opportunity to reflect upon the importance of academic integrity.

Proposal _____

Reviewed by _____