

Call for Proposals for First-Year Seminar

First-year seminars will be distributed across the disciplines, yet they are structured around a set of common student learning outcomes whose purpose is to introduce first-year students to the pursuit of intellectual inquiry while developing some of the fundamental skills necessary for success in a rigorous academic setting: information literacy and strong written and oral communication skills. Specific topics are determined by the instructor's background and interests. The objective of the first-year seminar is to cultivate the intellectual skills necessary for liberal learning through the in-depth study of a topic and the provision of instruction on how to gather and analyze information for the purpose of formulating and defending an opinion. Seminars will be deep in terms of the critical approach employed, but will involve topics that are accessible to first-year students. In addition, first-year seminars anticipate the experience of the senior seminar without the requisite background knowledge and skills that such seminars demand.

All first-year seminars involve meaningful writing and speaking assignments in which students are given instruction and guidance on writing and speaking at the college level. Resources provided by the QEP are being used to enhance the services offered by the Speaking and Writing Center so that instructors can lean on these centers as they develop this portion of their course. Contact the Director of the Writing Center, Gwen Hale (ghale@umw.edu), or the Director of the Speaking Center, Anand Rao (arao@umw.edu), for assistance on how the centers can help you. Peter Catlin (pcatlin@umw.edu) of Simpson Library is also a valuable resource for providing instruction on information literacy and a robust introduction to library resources.

Every course should have the following basic components and use the new student learning outcomes.

First-year seminars will

- utilize active, discussion-based, participatory learning;
- be exploratory in nature, rather than just presenting conclusions;
- have students read primary sources, not simply textbooks;
- have students synthesize material from multiple sources to develop their own views on the topic; and
- be capped at 15 students.

Student Learning Outcomes (must be included on your syllabus!)

Upon successful completion of an FSEM, students will

- utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- improve development and organization of written arguments;
- demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process;
- apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication; and
- communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

We are looking for seminars, not traditional courses, which illustrate the sort of intellectual inquiry higher education can offer. See, for instance, the sample syllabus appended to this document. In other words, you should not take an existing course and re-title and re-number it.

As we transition to all first-year students taking FSEM their first semester, instructors of FSEM should recognize that first-year advising will merge with the seminar program. FSEM instructors will be asked to devote a small portion of class time to advising issues and will be expected to meet their students individually for advising purposes. The Office of Academic and Career Services will be working with faculty in this endeavor and faculty will not be expected to develop advising materials. It is our hope that a collaborative program between first-year seminar instructors and the staff in the Academic and Career Services is a sound model for the academic component of the first-year experience.

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR REAPPROVAL FORM
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

COURSE TITLE:	WRITING FOR A WOUNDED PLANET: LITERATURE AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE US AND LATIN AMERICA		
SUBMITTED BY:	Jeremy Larochele	DATE:	11/21/14

RATIONALE. Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM's basic components and new student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above).

I have taught this FSEM three times, in spring 2008, fall 2013 and this fall 2014. These past two years it has been the course associated with the Greenhouse Living/Learning community and incorporates a number of activities and excursions outside of the classroom that directly relate to the content and themes of the course (a hike before classes start, a number of documentary screenings, a paddling trip, talks on campus, the Marstel Day Green Gala event....). I have found this model to be very effective at engaging students in both the academic piece in class but also setting them up to get involved on campus and in the surrounding community. Nearly all the participants from last year's Greenhouse are actively working on sustainability issues on campus this year. I participated in the advising pilot this fall and found that the experience of advising the students, as well as having staff from Academic and Career Services come in to class to share additional information, was quite effective and allowed me to get to know each individual student better. As a result, I feel that I was able to gear discussions in class and themes around some of the students' interests a bit more than I would have without having had the individual advising appointments. I fully embrace taking on the advising role as we move forward with this new FSEM and advising model for next year. I will also continue to invite staff from the library,

SYLLABUS. *Attach a course syllabus.*

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to Dave Stahlman (wdstahlm@umw.edu). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

RATIONALE:

I have taught this FSEM three times, in spring 2008, fall 2013 and this fall 2014. These past two years it has been the course associated with the Greenhouse Living/Learning community and incorporates a number of activities and excursions outside of the classroom that directly relate to the content and themes of the course (a hike before classes start, a number of documentary screenings, a paddling trip, talks on campus, the Marstel Day Green Gala event....). I have found this model to be very effective at engaging students in both the academic piece in class but also setting them up to get involved on campus and in the surrounding community. Nearly all the participants from last year's Greenhouse are actively working on sustainability issues on campus this year. I participated in the advising pilot this fall and found that the experience of advising the students, as well as having staff from Academic and Career Services come in to class to share additional information, was quite effective and allowed me to get to know each individual student better. As a result, I feel that I was able to gear discussions in class and themes around some of the students' interests a bit more than I would have without having had the individual advising appointments. I fully embrace taking on the advising role as we move forward with this new FSEM and advising model for next year. I will also continue to invite staff from the library, Writing and Speaking centers, as well as Academic and Career Services, to speak to the class so that we can make resources

available to students right from the beginning of their time here at UMW. I feel that it is much less likely that we will have students fall through the cracks if we can successfully implement this new model. I will also continue next year to implement the out of class activities that have made the Greenhouse living/learning community an effective way to make these student's first year on campus more engaging and personal.

In terms of the learning outcomes, as I have included on the syllabus, my FSEM seeks to meet these outcomes in the following ways:

Student Learning Outcomes (common to all FSEMS here at UMW):

Upon successful completion of an FSEM, students will

- utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- improve development and organization of written arguments (*We will accomplish these goals both through weekly blogging in response to readings (low stakes writing) and the process of writing the final paper, which is broken down into multiple steps.*)
- demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process (*for this reason, we will be breaking up the process of writing the final paper into smaller pieces (preliminary abstract, abstract and annotated bibliography, introduction and outline, first draft, and final version, with instructor and peer feedback throughout the steps)*)
- apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication (*our class will place a strong focus on speaking and the importance of recognizing appropriate registers for the classroom environment. Students will also take the communicate apprehension test and we will discuss ways to become more confident speaking in front of the class and in other venues*)
- communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion (*in every class, all students will be expected to participate fully after having prepared the material ahead of time. We will also work in groups and then share our findings with the class. Some of our outside of class activities will involve speaking with leaders on campus and in the community about environmental issues. As such, we will discuss effective ways of communicating in those settings.*)

FSEM 100A3
Writing For A Wounded Planet: Literature and Environment
in the US and Latin America

FALL 2014

Dr. Jeremy Larochelle
Associate Professor of Spanish
Office: 206 Combs Hall

Phone: 654-1368

e-mail: jlaroche@umw.edu
Office hours: MWF: 8:45-9am; 9:50-10:45am;
TTR: 9:15-9:30am; 1pm-2pm.
and by appointment.

Required Texts (available in the UMW bookstore)

Henry David Thoreau. *Walden* (1854)

Walt Whitman. *Song of Myself* (1855).

José Emilio Pacheco. *Selected Poems*. (1987)

Martín Espada. *Alabanza*

Ray González. *Memory Fever: A Journey Beyond El Paso del Norte* (1993)

Luis J. Rodríguez. *The Concrete River* (1993)

Bill McKibben. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* (2007)

All other texts will be available on Canvas corresponding to the week they are to be read. Students are required to either have a print copy of the reading during class or have electronic access to the file (in a convenient way so as to be able to jump to the page we are discussing). An e-reader or tablet would be preferable over a laptop for this purpose.

Course Description: Ideas about the relationship between humans and the non-human world throughout Latin American and US history, from the times of the Conquest up through the Twenty-first Century, have influenced the way in which humans have decided to manage, or exploit, natural resources. These ideas often manifest themselves in the form of cultural productions such as literature and art. In this seminar we will examine literary texts that represent three different traditions: US Nature Writing from the Nineteenth Century, Latin American Literature from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, and recent US Latino/a literature. Many of the US nature writers were read extensively by Latin American writers. Although these three distinct traditions represent disparate views on nature, culture and modernization, they all dialogue with the place of the human in nature. While some of the texts engage explicitly with various forms of environmentalism, and environmental activism, others more implicitly examine, and question, the limitations of an anthropocentric (human-centered) society. For example, environmental justice issues, seen in many of the US Latino/a texts, question a preservationist-oriented environmentalism prominent in the ideas of US nature writers. Through the analysis of primary texts, with the support of critical and theoretical sources, our discussions in class as well as writing and speaking assignments will emphasize critical thinking skills as we seek to make connections between texts.

This seminar seeks to familiarize students with the increasingly prominent study of literature and environment—or Ecocriticism—and some of the various theoretical and critical approaches of ecological literary criticism. Implicit in Literature and Environment Studies, is that the study of literature can lead to an awareness of both cultural and environmental issues and attitudes prevalent during a given time period. It is understood, then, that we will discuss the literary texts within the cultural, historical and environmental context in which they were produced. In these three different traditions and contexts, the pros and cons of modernization, “development” and “progress” will be discussed, emphasizing the human impact on the natural world, in addition to the “victims of modernization”, the poor, working-class people, who experience the ecological effects of modernization first-hand both in Latin America and in the US.

As this is the seminar reserved for students living in the Green House living/learning community, we will also seek to tie the ideas in class to the projects and interests of the Green House. Rather than merely discuss the merits of these ideas, we will work to find ways to make them relevant to our life here in Fredericksburg, both on campus and out in the local community. Excursions related to the Green House will provide us with opportunities to connect with the more-than-human world and to dialogue more directly with some of the environmental thinkers who wrote about their experiences of interconnectedness with nature.

Students' responsibilities:

- Always arrive on time
- Always treat your classmates with respect and openness
- Always come to class with an open mind
- Always come to class prepared to share ideas after completing and analyzing all of the assigned reading. The weekly blog fulfills much of this purpose, but I strongly recommend writing and taking notes as you read through the assigned readings.

Grade distribution:

25%: Class participation: This category does not refer only to the student's physical presence in class, but rather to a genuine effort to contribute positively to class discussions. Therefore, it is expected that at a very minimum students arrive on time, prepared with their comments about the material to be covered. As participation is not possible without attendance, **more than 3 unexcused absences over the course of the semester will significantly lower this portion of the grade, and therefore the final grade.** If you need to miss class for any reason, please contact the professor promptly via e-mail.

15%: Blogs: Students will submit weekly blog posts on their own blogs in response to a question on the main blog of the class: greenhousefsem14.umwblogs.org. Students will be expected to comment on at least two of their classmates' posts. Each blog post should fill approximately 1 page in Microsoft Word double-spaced and should demonstrate critical reflection of the material. Blogs will be graded first on timely completion and second on quality of the writing and critical presentation of ideas. Besides the first week of classes (in which the first blog will be due Thursday), Blogs will be due on Tuesdays before class. By Thursday, students are expected to comment on at least two of their classmate's blogs, with the goal of both reading and dialoguing with their ideas and of continuing the discussion outside of class.

15% Mid-term exam: will be a take-home exam and will be cumulative. The exam will consist of two essays. Students will have one week to complete the exam and are encouraged to refer to books, notes, and articles throughout the writing process. Students are not permitted to work in groups or consult with each other on the take-home.

20% Final Project: **The Final Project will be a 6-7 page paper** in which students analyze two works in depth—preferably one from each tradition (US Nature writing, Latin American literature in translation, and US Latino/a and Chicano literature) discussed in class—comparing ecological perspectives/implications. In their papers, students will be expected to dialogue with critical and theoretical readings discussed in class.

5% Presentation of Final Project: Students will present the theme and research process of their final projects to the class. The class will be expected to ask questions of the presenter and provide feedback.

5% Presentation on a reading: each student will guide the discussion of a reading (a poem) in class.

15% Final exam: The final, like the Midterm, will be cumulative and will be a take-home. Students will receive the questions on the last day of classes and will then have until the end of the designated final exam period to complete it.

Student Learning Outcomes (common to all FSEMS here at UMW):

Upon successful completion of an FSEM, students will

- utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
- improve development and organization of written arguments (*We will accomplish these goals both through weekly blogging and the process of writing the final paper, which is broken down into multiple steps.*)
- demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process (*for this reason, we will be breaking up the process of writing the final paper into smaller pieces (preliminary abstract, abstract and annotated bibliography, introduction and outline, first draft, and final version, with instructor and peer feedback throughout the steps)*)
- apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication (*our class will place a strong focus on speaking and the importance of recognizing appropriate registers for the classroom environment. Students will also take the communicate apprehension test and we will discuss ways to become more confident speaking in front of the class and in other venues*)
- communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion (*in every class, all students will be expected to participate fully after having prepared the material ahead of time. We will also work in groups and then share our findings with the class. Some of our outside of class activities will involve speaking with leaders on campus and in the community about environmental issues. As such, we will discuss effective ways of communicating in those settings.*)

Grading Scale

The Professor will use the following grading system to evaluate students' performance:

Points / Percentage	Grade
94 – 100	A Work of unusual excellence; quality of work is outstanding for level; superior
90 – 93	A- Excellent quality of work
87 – 89	B+ Work distinctively above average, quality of work goes beyond basic requirements for level
84 – 86	B
80 – 83	B- Work satisfies basic requirements for level
77 – 79	C+ Work of average quality. Student barely meets basic expectations for level
74 – 76	C
70 – 73	C- Work of below average quality
67 – 69	D+
64 – 66	D
60 – 63	D Lowest passing mark; work is of poor quality.
< 60	F Failure; no credit in course, work consistently fails to

Pass

meet even minimum requirements
P

Disability Resources

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through that office and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Please bring your accommodation letter to the appointment. I will hold any information shared with me in the strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise.

Office of Disability Services
209 George Washington Hall
540-654-1266
ods@umw.edu

Honor Code:

A basic requirement of FSEM100A3: Writing For a Wounded Planet is that each student handing in the required work must have completed it individually by her own effort and without help. Receiving help from outside sources such as translation software, copying, etc. constitutes a violation of the Honor Code. *Outside sources* means sources other than designated textbooks or other material provided by the professor for specific assignments. From time to time, students may be assigned to work with classmates in groups and will be encouraged to collaborate as instructed. Specific assignments may also require students to complete research with outside sources; for example to gather information from a website on the Internet, or to conduct interviews with people with specific expertise. In such cases, outside sources will be permitted as mentioned explicitly in the description and instructions that accompany the assignments.

Schedule of classes

Week 1

Tuesday, August 26: Introduction to the course and discussion about students' notions of "Environment". Stereotypes about "environment" in Latin America and the United States. What preconceived notions are prevalent concerning this term both in the US and Latin America? What is Ecocriticism? **Thoroughly read through syllabus, sign (virtually) and complete first day questionnaire and submit to professor electronically.**

Thursday, August 28: Discussion of the article: "The Trouble With Wilderness: Getting Back to the Wrong Nature" by William Cronon (available on Canvas under the folder "Week 1"). Written response to the following question to turn in and post to blog: How does the reading either go along with or differ

from your past notions of nature and the role of humans in its destruction? The Sublime as an approach to the natural world. **Set up blog by today, write short bio and respond to the question on Cronon.** Preservationism versus Sustainability.

Week 2

Nineteenth Century nature writing/environmental literature

Tuesday, September 2: Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854)

Glen Love. Selections from *Practical Ecocriticism* (2004) (available on Canvas)

Blog post on Glen Love and Thoreau.

Thursday, September 4: *Walden* continued.

Week 3

Tuesday, September 9: VISIT to the library, Speaking and Writing Centers.

Thursday, September 11: Ralph Waldo Emerson: selections from *Nature* (1836) and Susan Fennimore Cooper's : *Rural Hours* (1850) (Canvas)

Blog post on Emerson and Cooper.

Week 4

Tuesday, September 16: **Civilización y barbarie (Civilization and Barbarism)**: Fundamental ideas about the city versus the country in the Nineteenth Century in Latin America: *Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida* (1826) by Andrés Bello (Venezuela/Chile) and a selection from *Facundo* (1845) by Sarmiento (Argentina). (Canvas)

Thursday, September 18: "Song of Myself" by Walt Whitman (1855).

Week 5

Tuesday, September 23: "Song of Myself" continued. **Blog post on Whitman and Bello.**

Thursday, September 25: **ACADEMIC AND CAREER ADVISING SESSION in class**

Week 6

Tuesday, September 30: Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) (Canvas). Selection from John Muir (1880-1912) *Wild Muir* (Canvas)

Blog post on Frederick Jackson Turner and Muir.

Thursday, October 2: Muir continued and review of concepts in preparation for take-home midterm exam.

MIDTERM EXAM RECEIVED: students will have one week to complete.

Week 7

Tuesday, October 7: Movie: *Into the Wild*.

No blog this week (Midterm)

Thursday, October 9: End of film. **MIDTERM COLLECTED in class (late exams will not be accepted as you have a full week to complete the exam).**

Week 8

Tuesday, October 14: **FALL BREAK!!!**

Thursday, October 16: **Short Stories about the jungle and wilderness: The Frontier in Latin America.**

Selected stories by Horacio Quiroga (published in Uruguay, 1913) (Canvas)

Week 9

Tuesday, October 21: **Consumerism and post consumer waste. Interactions with the non-human in Contemporary Latin American poetry.**

Selected Poems, José Emilio Pacheco. **Blog post on Pacheco.**

Thursday, October 23: Pacheco continued. Article on Pacheco. (Canvas)

Library session on locating scholarly sources (about half the class)

Week 10

Tuesday, October 28: **Environmental and social justice in US Latino poetry**

Martín Espada, *Alabanza* **Blog on Espada. Lawrence Buell, Toxic Discourse (Canvas)**

Thursday, October 30 Martín Espada continued. **Individual presentations on poems by Espada in class today. (5 minutes or so including reading the poem aloud). Students will read the poem they have been assigned and provide their analysis/interpretation of the poem. We will then open the conversation up to the rest of the class to continue the discussion of the poem.)**

Week 11

Tuesday, November 4: **Writing along the Border: The non-human in Ray González's writing** Ray Gonzalez: *Memory Fever: A Journey Beyond El Paso del Norte* (1993)

Lawrence Buell: "The Place of Place" (*Writing for an Endangered World* (2001) (Canvas) **Preliminary abstract for final project due (Half a page with provisional bibliography (3 scholarly sources) to be turned in during class and posted to the blogs that evening for review and comments by classmates). As we have not yet covered all of the Latino/a writers, this may be an opportunity to discuss what you are interested in finding.**

Thursday, November 6: González continued. **Blog on González and sense of place.**

Week 12

Tuesday, November 11: **ADVISING SESSION ON CAREER AND OTHER RESOURCES**, Jennifer Cirbus, guest. **Abstract for final paper due today in class. 1-1.5 pages with provisional annotated bibliography (with brief descriptions of each source you list). Post to blog after class for review and comments from classmates. Schedule individual meetings with Dr. Laroche to discuss the abstract and plan for the final paper/presentation.**

Thursday, November 13: **Urban Ecology and Environmental Justice in Chicano Literature** Luis J. Rodríguez, *The Concrete River* (1993) *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities* by David Diaz (Canvas, week 12). **Sign up for a poem to present in class next Tuesday.**

Week 13

Tuesday, November 18: Rodríguez and David Díaz continued. **Brief presentations (5 minutes or so including reading the poem aloud) on poems by Rodríguez. Students will read the poem they have been assigned and provide their analysis/interpretation of the poem. We will then open the conversation up to the rest of the class to continue the discussion of the poem.)**

Thursday, November 20: Writing workshop and intro to Bill McKibben's book. **Bring at least the introduction to your paper and a plan for the paper (if not something close to a rough draft if you have it in time).**

Week 14

Tuesday, November 25: **DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY** (via e-mail preferably). **Due to the possibility of travel plans for Thanksgiving, we will not hold a normal class today, instead I will be available for individual meetings (on both Monday and Tuesday) to discuss and provide feedback on the draft of your final papers. I will provide feedback so that you can incorporate possible changes into the final draft due on the last day of class. Writing is a process and requires much revision. Turning in a fairly solid draft by today will allow for there to be a substantial revision process before turning in your definitive versions.**

Thursday, November 28: **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!**

Week 15: Looking Ahead: Bill McKibben's Deep Economy

Tuesday, December 2: McKibben, *Deep Economy*. Selection from David Abram (Canvas)

Thursday, December 4: McKibben continued. Final Project collected today. **Students receive final exam (A TAKE-HOME final similar to the midterm exam) which will be turned in at the end of the assigned Final exam period (December 10 from 3:30-6pm). FINAL PROJECT DUE IN CLASS TODAY.**

Week 16; Presentations on Final Projects during final exam period (December 11 from 3:30-6pm. The formal presentations will be 7-8 minutes and will involve sharing your argument on the final paper with the class. What do you argue about the two authors you chose to write about? What themes did you analyze? What evidence did you analyze in order to back up your arguments?

Students are encouraged to use a visual aid (such as quotes on the screen). Students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with the Speaking Center to do a dry run of the presentation and receive feedback. These presentations will be formal in nature and will require students to present their findings in an organized, yet engaging manner.

Questionnaire and Contract:

I have thoroughly read through the syllabus and understand what is expected of me in order to do well in this course.

Please sign: x _____ date:

1) What are you most looking forward to this semester at UMW?

What are you most anxious about? (if anything)

2) Under what conditions do you feel that you learn best? (alone with a book, working in groups, cramming, direct experience/hands-on, etc.) Do you consider yourself more of a visual or auditory learner?

3) What was your primary reason for choosing to attend UMW?

5) If you could make one change to UMW related to sustainability, what would it be?

6) Do you have an idea for an excursion with the Greenhouse that you would like us to try to plan?

7.) Is there something else that would be helpful for me to know about you?