

## 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](mailto:ghale@umw.edu)), or the Director of the Speaking Center, Anand Rao ([arao@umw.edu](mailto:arao@umw.edu)), for assistance on how the centers can help you. Peter Catlin ([pcatlin@umw.edu](mailto: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**

<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	IS TRYING TO BE HAPPIER AS FUTILE AS TRYING TO BE TALLER?		
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Holly Schiffrin	<b>DATE:</b>	10/29/14

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

Students read original source material in this class. They read several chapters from popular press books to provide a broad overview of the topics. Then, we pull select research articles from the chapters to read and discuss in class. I make sure they read research on both sides of key controversies in the field.

To prepare students for their three speaking assignments, I have a representative from the speaking center come to class and cover discussion participation, discussion facilitation, group presentations, and effective use of PowerPoint. In addition, students are required to meet with me before both of their presentations to get feedback from me and are required to attend the speaking center before their final research presentation.

There are also multiple writing assignments in the course. Students are required to complete 6 journal entries where they apply academic content to their personal lives. I provide feedback on each entry to allow them to improve subsequent journal entries. There is also a semester-long research project that is broken into 4 steps to ensure extensive, formative feedback. I devote one class to a visit with a reference librarian, have students complete the CRAAP module, conduct a peer review workshop, and require students to visit the writing center before their final paper. I also plan to incorporate additional modules developed for the QEP into future offerings of the course.

**SYLLABUS.** *Attach a course syllabus.*

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

**FSEM 100**  
**IS TRYING TO BE HAPPIER AS FUTILE AS TRYING TO BE TALLER?**  
**UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON**  
**FALL 2015**

INSTRUCTOR: Holly H. Schiffrin, Ph.D.  
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OFFICE: Annex B, Room 117  
OFFICE HOURS: MWF 1:00 – 2:00, TR 10:45 – 11:45, and by appointment  
CLASS TIME: TTH 9:30 – 10:45 AM in Annex A

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In the early 1900s, psychology had three missions: make the lives of all people fulfilling; identify and enhance human excellence; and treat pathology. More recently, psychology has primarily focused on decreasing maladaptive emotions and behaviors, while ignoring optimal functioning (e.g., happiness and life satisfaction). Positive psychology emerged to identify and enhance the human strengths and virtues that allow individuals and communities to thrive (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). However, some argue that the research in the field has not kept up with its promise. This course will provide an introduction to positive psychology, a critique of the field, and the opportunity to investigate some controversies identified. The format of the course will be primarily discussion-based with interactive assignments and application of material outside of class.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

*First-Year Seminar Learning Outcomes.* Students will:

1. Utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages or arguments;
2. Improve development and organization of written arguments;
3. Demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process;
4. Apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication; and
5. Communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

*Course-Specific Learning Outcomes.* Students also will be able to:

6. Understand the purpose and scope of positive psychology by reading primary sources on the key topics.
7. Think critically about controversial topics in positive psychology by reading opposing research, discussing with peers, presenting to class, and writing a research paper.
8. Connect research on positive psychology with other academic material as well as daily life.

### **REQUIRED READING**

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness*. New York: Free Press.

Harris, R. A. (2011). *Using sources effectively: Strengthening your writing and avoiding plagiarism*. Glendale, CA: Pycszak Publishing.

Positive Psychology Research Articles (available on Canvas)

### **RECOMMENDED TEXT**

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author.

## ASSIGNMENTS

*Discussion Participation (25%).* This is a discussion-based, freshman seminar. In order to obtain full credit for class participation, you are expected to attend *all* classes; complete assigned readings and a discussion facilitation guide *prior* to the start of each class; as well as participate in class discussions by listening carefully to others, asking questions, answering questions, expanding on another person's comments, constructively disagreeing with someone's comments, and making connections among multiple comments and/or the readings. At the end of each class, you will be asked to comment on your own participation. Each sheet will be graded on a scale from 0 (absent) to 10 (demonstrated exceptional preparation and participation).

*Journal (15%).* Periodically, you will be asked to write a 1-2 page paper applying the material covered in class to your life by either responding to a set of thought questions or by describing your experience doing an exercise given in or out of class. Although 7 topics are posted on Canvas, you are only required to submit 6 of these reflection papers during the semester. However, three (3) of the journal assignments are *required by everyone* because they will serve as the basis of class discussion. You need to read the journal assignments on Canvas *in advance* because several assignments require week long activities to write the entry. Each entry will be graded on a scale from 0 (not turned in) to 10 (addresses all parts of the assignment thoughtfully and thoroughly).

*Article Presentation (10%).* Students will work together in groups of three to read a research article related to how situational factors affect happiness and present the information in that article to the class. Students should summarize the key points of the article and facilitate a discussion of the article by addressing how the article relates to material from other readings and answering questions on the article from peers. Students should start the class by using an "attention grabber" related to the topic (e.g., a song, video clip, brief activity, etc). The article presentations should take approximately 20-25 minutes with the majority of the class spent facilitating discussion of the article. You should plan to meet with me at least *48 hours* before your presentation to discuss how you plan to conduct the class as well as provide me with a structured outline/hand out of the session (e.g., PPT slides). A grading rubric for this assignment is on Canvas.

*Integrative Research Project (IRP).* Students will work in groups of three to review research on a controversial topic within the field of positive psychology. I have suggestions listed in the course outline, but am open to other topics that you might be interested in investigating further.

*Part I. Identify a Research Topic (1%).* Write out either a specific research question or a thesis statement. Conduct a literature search and identify 6 promising *original research articles* from *peer-reviewed journals* obtained through your literature search. Attach the abstract with authors' names and journal title from PsycInfo.<sup>1</sup> There is an example of a "full record" abstract on Canvas. This assignment should be completed as a group.

*Part II: Annotated Bibliography (4%).* You should include a refined research question/thesis statement and summarize the key points of at least 6 peer-reviewed journal articles (other than articles assigned for class). For each article include a summary, a description of how it relates to your paper/presentation, and an APA style reference. In addition, you should complete the CRAAP rubric for each article you summarize and submit it with the assignment. There is an example of an annotated bibliography on Canvas. Please upload the 6 articles you used for the assignment onto Canvas. This assignment should be completed as a group.

*Part III. Annotated Outline (5%).* To help you transition from the article summaries to your paper, you will write an annotated outline of your paper. The focus of this assignment is to develop an integrative approach to answering your guiding question by reviewing relevant research. First, you will include a draft introductory paragraph with a thesis statement (in italics). Next, you will outline the subtopics needed to address your thesis statement. Then, identify the references that support each subtopic. Please note that references can and should be used in more than one place. A minimum of 6 references (other than articles assigned for class) should be included with this outline. Use APA style in-text citation style with authors' last names and the publication year

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<sup>1</sup> The words in italics have very specific meanings. Please see me prior to the assignment due date if you need clarification. Dissertation abstracts are NOT peer-reviewed. The full articles must be in English unless you can read another language.

within the outline and attach a reference list. There is a sample annotated outline on Canvas. This assignment should be **completed individually** by each group member.

*Part IV: Group Presentation (20%).* The presentation is an opportunity to share the information your group learned from your research project. Your presentation should be organized by key points supporting your topic rather than a series of article summaries. Your goal should be to provide your peers with the new information you have obtained in the most interesting way possible rather than simply an exhaustive recitation of the studies you have read. You should plan to have an attention grabber, present information obtained in an engaging manner, facilitate a discussion among peers, and have an application/exercise. You should meet with me *1 week* before your presentation to discuss how you plan to conduct the class as well as provide me with an electronic copy of an article (e.g., a good overview or a particularly interesting study) that I will post on Canvas for the class to read as background on your topic. You are **required** to visit the speaking center to obtain feedback on this presentation prior to giving it in class. A rubric for grading the presentation is available on Canvas.

*Part V: Paper (20%).* You will write a 7-8 page literature review style research paper. You must cite at least 6 peer-reviewed journal articles (other than articles assigned for class). The paper should be more than a summary of the articles you read. Rather, it should synthesize information across articles to indicate clearly what you have learned from reading them. Your paper should include *sub-headings* for limitations and gaps as well as future research where you clearly address these topics. The paper should be written in third person in a style appropriate for a review of research literature. Adherence to APA style as well as grammar, spelling, and clarity of writing will be incorporated into your grade. You are **required** to visit the writing center to obtain feedback on this paper *prior* to peer review on the last day of class. Bring a revised draft of the paper on the last day of class for the peer review workshop. The final paper is due at the end of the scheduled exam period for this class. A rubric for grading the paper is available on Canvas. This assignment should be **completed individually** by each group member.

Your paper should include the following:

1. APA style title page (an abstract is optional)
2. In the introduction, set the stage for the information you are going to provide. State the research problem under investigation as well as why this is an important topic to examine.
3. In the main body of the paper, integrate the information from the literature reviewed, as well as what you have learned in class, to describe what is known to date about both sides of the controversy you selected. Direct quotes should be for illustrative purposes only, kept to a minimum, and correctly cited.
4. *Limitations and Gaps:* Describe the limitations of the articles you have selected for addressing the research topic. Describe any gaps that remain in knowledge pertaining to your topic.
5. *Future Research:* Make suggestions for future research to address this topic.
6. *Conclusion:* Summarize the research findings to answer the research question asked or indicate support for/against the thesis statement.
7. *References:* APA style reference section

## EVALUATION AND GRADING

### *Final Grade:*

Discussion Participation	25%
Journal	15%
Article Presentation	10%
Research Topic	1%
Annotated Bibliography	4%
Annotated Outline	5%
Research Presentation	20%
<u>Research Paper</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

### *Grading Scale:*

A	=	94-100
A-	=	90-93
B+	=	87-89
B	=	83-86
B-	=	80-82
C+	=	77-79
C	=	73-76
C-	=	70-72
D+	=	67-69
D	=	60-66
F	=	59 or below

## POLICIES AND STANDARDS

*Assignments:* Most students complete assignments satisfactorily and on-time. Out of respect for the majority of students who meet deadlines, one letter grade is deducted per day for any work turned in late. **I must be notified in advance** if a student will be unable to meet one of the specified due dates. Only severe illness and legitimate emergencies are considered acceptable reasons for missing a due date.

*Speaking and Writing.* Although FSEMs are not designated as speaking or writing intensive, they are designed to give you practice developing these skills. Therefore, both your speaking and writing will be graded on content, organization, and clarity. You are encouraged to use the speaking and writing center resources to improve your in speaking and writing on all assignments. However, you are **required** to obtain feedback from the speaking center on your research project presentation prior to giving it in class as well as from the writing center on your APA style research report prior to submitting the initial draft.

*Midterm Grade:* Students whose average in the class is 70% or higher based on the material completed at the time mid-semester grades are due will receive a “satisfactory.” All other students will receive an “unsatisfactory.”

*Honor Code:* The University of Mary Washington’s Student Honor Code governs all work in this course. All students are expected to follow and affirm the Honor Code guidelines by writing and signing the Honor Code pledge on all assignments, quizzes, and exams. If you have any questions about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment in this course, please ask me – not another student – for clarification. Uncertainty about application of the Honor Code does not excuse the violation.

*Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.* If you are a student with a disability who requires an academic accommodation, please register with the Office of Disability Resources in 401 Lee Hall and communicate your requests for accommodation as soon as possible.

## COURSE OUTLINE<sup>2</sup>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading*</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
<b>I. Positive Emotion</b>			
1/15	Course Introduction	Experience Machine (Nozick)	
1/17	Participating in and Leading Discussions	Harris Ch 1 (Speaking Center visit)	
1/22	What is positive psychology?	Seligman Ch 1-3	#1 Pleasure v. Philanthropy*
1/24	What is the purpose of positive emotion?	Fredrickson et al. (2000)	
1/29	Can we increase happiness?	Seligman Ch 4; Brickman et al. (1978); Lykken & Tellegen (1996)	#2: Beautiful Day
1/31	Doing Library Research	Harris Ch 2-3 (Meet in Simpson 225)	
<b>II. Circumstances (for College Students)</b>			
2/5	<i>Student Led:</i> Procrastination	Tice & Baumeister (1997)	
2/7	<i>Student Led:</i> Geographic Location	Schkade & Kahneman (1998)	
2/12	<i>Student Led:</i> Dorm Selection	Dunn, Wilson, & Gilbert (2003)	<b>IRP: Part I due</b>
2/14	<i>Student Led:</i> Getting the Best Job	Iyengar et al. (2006)	#3: Choice
2/19	<i>Student Led:</i> Financial Success	Kasser & Ryan (1993)	
<b>III. Intentional Activity</b>			
2/21	Satisfaction about the past; Gratitude	Seligman Ch 5; Emmons & McCullough (2003)	#4: Blessings or Gratitude
2/26	Forgiveness	Harris et al (2006)	
2/28	Optimism about the Future	Seligman Ch 6	#5: Optimism*
<b>Spring Break</b>			
3/12	Giving Presentations/Writing Literature Reviews	Harris Ch 4-7 (Speaking /Writing Center visit)	<b>IRP: Part II due</b>
3/14	Happiness in the Present; Savoring	Seligman Ch 7; Quoidbach et al. (2010)	#6: Savoring or Flow
3/19	Mindfulness	Langer & Rodin (1976); Sahdra et al. (2011)	
3/21	Character Strengths	Seligman Ch 8-9	#7: Strengths*
<b>IV. Controversies in Positive Psychology</b>			
3/26	Critique of Positive Psychology	Ehrenreich Ch 1 & 6	
3/28	Critique of Positive Psychology	Held (2004)	<b>IRP: Part III due</b>
4/2	The Golden Mean	Grant & Schwarz (2011) /Harris Ch 8-9	
4/4	<i>Presentation:</i> Affect & Health	TBA	
4/9	<i>Presentation:</i> Affect & Mental Health (Depression & Loneliness)	TBA	
4/11	<i>Presentation:</i> Affect & Decision Making	TBA	
4/16	<i>Presentation:</i> Positive Illusions about Self & Others	TBA	
4/18	<i>Presentation:</i> Money and Happiness	TBA	
4/23	Peer Review Workshop		<b>Draft Paper Due</b>
4/25	<b>VPA – class canceled</b>		
4/30	Final Exam (8:30 – 11:00am)		<b>Final Paper Due</b>

\* A discussion facilitation guide is due **each** class period. Journal assignments with an asterisk are required.

<sup>2</sup> This outline is tentative and subject to change.