

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE PROPOSAL
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **FSEM 100 topics** courses for review **or** any **other existing course** that you wish to have designated to meet the first year seminar requirement.

COURSE NUMBER:	FSEM		
COURSE TITLE:	IS COLLEGE WORTH IT?		
SUBMITTED BY:	Tim O'Donnell	DATE:	1-27-14
<i>This course proposal has the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION. In the space below, provide a one to two sentence description of this class. The description will be entered in Banner, and will also be used in other publications about the first year seminar program (such as the “Eagle Essentials” booklet).

A focus on the roots, evolution, and prospects for three intrinsically connected idea(1)s: the liberal arts, citizenship, and the university. Through an exploration of a variety of thinkers--from Plato to Steve Jobs--participants will consider the proposition for a 21st century liberal arts education and create practical plans for realizing it in their own lives.

RATIONALE. Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM's basic components and new student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above), and why this course should be approved to meet the FSEM General Education requirement.

Students will engage the question of “is college worth it” through a discussion-based exploration of the writings of a range of thinkers, both historic and contemporary, which include: Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, Benjamin Franklin, W.E.B. Du Bois, John Dewey, Albert Einstein, Martha Nussbaum, and Steve Jobs. Students will be responsible for: 1) reading and reflecting critically on primary texts and supplementary secondary sources; 2) leading and participating in class discussion; 3) writing and editing reflection papers to synthesize the readings; 4) researching and constructing an evidence based analysis of a contemporary issue in higher education as well as an individual four-year and forty-year educational plan that will be shared with others through the modalities of written and oral presentations; 5) working in teams to craft and advocate for an evidenced based solution to a problem of the contemporary university. Assignments and instruction will be offered which is relevant to UMW's FSEM SLOs, thereby developing proficiencies in the areas of information literacy, writing, and speaking—consistent with the University's QEP and its forthcoming online learning modules.

SYLLABUS. *Attach a course syllabus.*

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document** to **John P. Broome** (jbroom@umw.edu). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

FSEM: Is College Worth It? • Fall 2014

FSEM 100__-01 • Combs 322 • T R 12:30 – 1:45

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Office Hours: TR 10:45-12:15, W 10:00-noon and by appointment

Readings/Required Materials:

The primary materials for this course will be drawn from: Bruce A. Kimball, *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Documentary History*. University Press of America, 2013. This volume of collected documents contains many of the primary sources that will be the focus of our conversations, representing thinkers ranging from antiquity to contemporary viewpoints on the rise and fall of the American University. This text will be available in the bookstore and is also available on Amazon (hardcopy and Kindle).

We will also utilize selections from a variety of other thinkers to support our discussions and explorations, including the following:

Atwill, Janet. *Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009.

Bennett, William J, and David Wilezol. *Is College Worth It?: A Former United States Secretary of Education and a Liberal Arts Graduate Expose the Broken Promise of Higher Education*, 2013.

Bok, Derek. *Higher Education in America*. Princeton University Press, 2013.

Bush, Vannevar. "As We May Think." *The Atlantic*, July 1945.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/>.

Delbanco, Andrew. *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*, 2013.

Engelbart, Doug. *Augmenting Human Intellect*: Menlo Park, CA: Stanford Research Institute, 1962.

http://www.dougenelbart.org/pubs/papers/scanned/Doug_Engelbart-AugmentingHumanIntellect.pdf.

Isaacson, Walter. *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.

———. *Einstein: His Life and Universe*. Simon & Schuster, 2007.

———. *Steve Jobs*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011.

Kerr, Clark. *The Uses of the University*, 2001.

Nussbaum, Martha Craven. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Thelin, John R. *A History of American Higher Education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Finally, since discussion based ventures usually benefit from the presence of real world and real time examples, you are encouraged to regularly browse and read online versions of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Education*

Course Description and Objectives:

As a first year seminar, this course is designed to introduce students to the world of college level seminar style learning through the choice of an accessible topic—in this case, “Is College Worth It.” The course will be discussion based and will focus on the development of students’ writing, speaking, and information literacy skills which are “said to be” fundamental a liberal arts education. Along the way, we will explore many of the greatest thinkers on what the liberal arts, citizenship, and higher education are all about. From a practical perspective, students will work individually to develop their own liberal learning action plan and as a group to create a solution to one of higher education’s thorny problems.

Learning Outcomes:

As a general education course satisfying the FSEM requirement, this courses has the following learning outcomes which are contained in the University of Mary Washington’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP):

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

Grading:

The final grade for the course will be computed from the following:

- 20% - Participation
- 10% - Discussion Leader
- 15% - Writing Assignments: Bi-weekly Reflective Papers
- 15% - Group Project: Memorandum/Issue Brief (Written Portion)
- 15% - Group Project: Making College Worth It (Oral Portion)
- 25% - Final Reflection Essay and Presentation: Four and Forty Year Academic Plan

A mid-semester grade report of unsatisfactory is a warning that significant improvement is needed. Unsatisfactory performance could result from a lack of attendance/participation, a grade of “D” or lower on one or more assignments, and/or a failure to complete an assignment by the due date. Students whose mid-semester grade report indicates unsatisfactory performance are highly encouraged to meet with the instructor as soon as possible.

Class Participation:

Everyone is expected to be an active participant in this seminar. This means: attending class regularly, being an active listener and cooperative learner when present, as well as being prepared for class by doing the readings assigned by discussion leaders, and participating in and contributing to class discussions both in-class and online. Your class participation grade will be based on (1) the frequency and quality of your contribution to the class, (2) the degree to which you make use of the readings and other materials in sharing your insights with the rest of us (3), the energy, enthusiasm and involvement you bring to our meetings and the material of the course,

and (4) the degree to which you function as a “civilized” member of our social learning community.

Discussion Leader:

Each student will work to lead class discussion on one day. Discussion leaders are expected to prepare advance materials for the day: a) Circulate links and selected supplementary materials one week prior to the scheduled class session via email to the entire class; b) Prepare a set of discussion questions based upon the readings; c) Facilitate class discussion in any of a variety of techniques (in order to prepare for the final reflective paper, each discussion should consider the connections between the citizenship, college, the liberal arts, and one’s own learning process).

Writing Assignments - Bi-Weekly Reflection Papers

Over the course of the first 12 weeks of the course, students will write a series of reflection papers of increasing length and complexity designed to respond to the readings and questions of the course and build toward a coherent and compelling argument related to the subject matter of this course. These assignments are designed to create deliberate opportunities for a) working with a Writing Center consultant, b) receiving feedback from a peer, c) writing multiple drafts, and d) identifying their argument and building evidence-based lines of reasoning to support their position.

Group Project: Memorandum/Issue Brief and Oral Presentation

At the beginning of the semester, we will establish working groups of three-to-four students who will work together to identify, explore, and map a solution to one of higher education’s most significant problems. Students may choose to focus on an issue unique to Mary Washington or one that stretches across the Commonwealth and/or the nation. Groups will produce a short issue brief analyzing the problem and a researched based plan designed to address the issue. During the last week of class, each group will present a final group presentation on their project efforts. As part of this assignment, students are required to visit the Speaking Center and the Writing Center (as a group). The final memorandum should include a thorough bibliography demonstrating effective information retrieval techniques using a specified style manual (appropriate to the disciplinary expectations for the students intended major).

Final Reflection Essay and Oral Presentation:

Is college worth it? At the end of this course, you will be required to submit a final reflection essay (typed, 4-5 pages, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman, one-inch margins) which reflects the students current thinking on this question. As part of this reflection, students should outline and discuss their academic plan for the next four years and the next forty years. The first part of this task involves a discussion of how students will reach the 120 credits they will need for graduation, with special emphasis on general education, major, and elective choices. Beyond course selection, students should reflect on their plan for the high impact educational opportunities they plan to participate in (co-curricular, extra-curricular and experiential learning) while at UMW. The second part of this task involves planning and anticipation of life-long learning and the student’s “life-long learning bucket list.”

Technology in the Classroom:

Bringing computers, tablets, and smart phones to class is welcome. In fact, there are many times where we may find the ability to access information extremely beneficial. However, participants will refrain from communicating with the outside world and performing non-class related activities during the times that the class is assembled (unless it is germane and relevant to the class). During the final group and individual presentations, students will refrain from using these technologies all together.

Disability Resources:

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University of Mary Washington 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 accommodations. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise.

If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Services and have reasonable accommodation needs, I will be happy to help you contact them. The office will require appropriate documentation of a disability.

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

Honor System:

The Honor Code is a critical component of this course and relates to all written and spoken assignments. Please write and sign the University of Mary Washington honor pledge on every written assignment. I assume that you are observing the honor code for all of your work in this course, including each of your spoken and written assignments. Appropriate actions in accordance with the Honor Code will be taken as warranted. In this course, honor system violations include the willful claiming in a speech, as one's own, another's ideas, words, phrases and the like without appropriate acknowledgement in the form of an oral citation or reference.

Attendance:

Attendance in class is expected, required, and essential to a seminar style learning environment. Students have one, nontransferable, excused absence per month in September, October, and November. Attendance is expected on the days when students present their oral presentations. Absences will be reflected as part of the evaluation of class participation

Tentative Course Calendar for “Is College Worth It?”

Date	Topic
Week 1	Overview of the Course Introduction to the Convergence Center
Week 2	Classical Origins of the Liberal Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plato, Selections from <i>The Republic</i>• Isocrates, Selections from <i>Antidosis</i>• Cicero, Selections from <i>On the Orator</i>• Quintilian, Selections from <i>Education of the Orator</i> Writing Assignment 1 Due
Week 3	Is College Worth It? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• William Bennet, Selections from <i>Is College Worth It</i> (2013)
Week 4	The Growth of the College <ul style="list-style-type: none">• William R. Harper, Selections from “The Situation of the Small College” (1900)• Booker T. Washington, “Industrial Education for the Negro” (1903)• W.E.B. Du Bois, Selections from “The Talented Tenth” (1903) Writing Assignment 2 Due
Week 5	The American University <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harvard College, Selections from <i>New England’s First Fruit</i> (1643)• John R. Thelin, Selections from <i>A History of American Higher Education</i> (2011)
Week 6	Franklin, Einstein and Jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walter Isaacson, Selections from <i>Benjamin Franklin: An American Life</i> (2004)• Walter Isaacson, Selections from <i>Einstein: His Life and Universe</i> (2007)• Walter Isaacson, Selections from <i>Steve Jobs</i> (2011) Writing Assignment 3 Due
Week 7	On Disciplines and Interdisciplinarity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readings TBD
Week 8	On the Precipice the University as we Know It? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readings TBD Writing Assignment 4 Due
Week 9	The University of the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Andrew Delbanco, Selections from <i>College: What it Was, Is, and Should Be</i> (2013)

- Martha Nussbaum, Selections from *Cultivating Humanity* (1998)
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Week 10

On Thinking and Technology

- Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think." (1945)
- Doug Engelbart, Selections from *Augmenting Human Intellect* (1962)

Writing Assignment 5 Due

Week 11:

The Uses of the University

- Clark Kerr, Selections from *The Uses of the University* (2001)
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Week 12:

What Are the Jobs of the 21st Century

Readings: TBD

Week 13:

Group Meetings and Preparation for Oral Presentation

Week 14:

Oral Presentations: Final Group Projects

Final Exam:

Final Reflection Essay and 5 Minute Oral Presentation

**Criteria for Grading Speeches
adapted from the
National Communication Association**

You will earn an A on your speeches if you meet the following standards:

1. Satisfy all requirements for a B speech.
2. Demonstrate imagination and creativity in topic selection development.
3. Develop & sustain strong bonds of identification between you, your audience, and the topic.
4. Consistently adapt supporting material to the experiential world of your audience.
5. Reflect an even greater depth of research (e.g. more references).
6. Demonstrate the artful use of language and stylistic techniques.
7. Make a polished presentation that integrates verbal and nonverbal communication skills (and visuals aids/multimedia if part of the assignment).

You will earn a B on your speeches if you meet the following standards:

1. Satisfy all requirements for a C speech.
2. Select a challenging topic and adapt it appropriately to your audience.
3. Reflect a greater depth of research (e.g. more references).
4. Clearly identify sources of information and ideas.
5. Create and sustain attention throughout the speech.
6. Make effective use of transitions, previews, and summaries.
7. Use an effective oral style appropriate to your audience, message, and communication situation.
8. Present your speech with poise.

You will earn a C on your speeches if you meet the following standards:

1. The speech is original (your own work).
2. The type of speech presented is appropriate to the assignment.
3. The topic is sufficiently focused and appropriate for the audience.
4. The speech fits the time requirements of the assignment.
5. The speech is presented on the day assigned.
6. Main ideas are developed with appropriate supporting material (facts and figures, etc.).
7. The speech has a clear sense of purpose.
8. Speech design is appropriate, complete with an introduction and conclusion.
9. The speech is presented extemporaneously.
10. The speech satisfies any specific requirements of the assignment, such as number of references, outlines, or use of visual aids.
11. You use language correctly and your outline demonstrates few if any errors.

The D speech does not meet one or more of the standards for a C speech or

1. It is obviously unrehearsed. The speaker READS their speech (unless reading, as in oral interpretation of a text, is part of the assignment).
2. It is based entirely on biased information or unsupported opinions.

The F speech does not meet three or more standards of a C speech, reflects either of the problems associated with a D speech, or

1. It uses fabricated supporting material.
2. It is plagiarized.