

**GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE PROPOSAL**  
UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Use this form to submit **EXISTING** courses for review. If this course will be submitted for review in more than one category, submit a separate proposal for each category.

<b>COURSE NUMBER:</b>	FSEM100VV		
<b>COURSE TITLE:</b>	SIX DEGREES: THE SCIENCE OF A CONNECTED AGE		
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Karen Anewalt	<b>DATE:</b>	1/10/08
<i>This course proposal is submitted with the department's approval. (Put a check in the box to the right.)</i>			<b>X</b>
<i>If part of a science sequence involving two departments, both departments approve.</i>			

**THIS COURSE IS PROPOSED FOR (check one).**

<b>First-Year Seminar</b> ( <i>indicate in the rationale if this will also count for major credit</i> )	<b>X</b>
<b>Quantitative Reasoning</b>	
<b>Global Inquiry</b>	
<b>Human Experience and Society</b>	
<b>Experiential Learning</b>	
<b>Arts, Literature, and Performance: Process</b>	<b>or</b>
	<b>Appreciation</b>
<b>Natural Science</b> ( <i>include both parts of the sequence</i> )	

**NOTE:** See the report entitled "General Education Curriculum as Approved by the Faculty Senate," dated November 7, 2007, for details about the general education categories and the criteria that will be used to evaluate courses proposed. The report is available at [www.jtmorello.org/gened](http://www.jtmorello.org/gened).

**RATIONALE:** Using only the space provided in the box below, **briefly** state why this course should be approved as a general education course in the category specified above. *Attach a course syllabus.* **Submit this form and attached syllabus electronically as one document to John Morello ([jmorello@umw.edu](mailto:jmorello@umw.edu)).** All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

The class will provide students with experience in critiquing primary sources, collecting and analyzing data, and supporting an argument. Students will receive writing and critical thinking experience through the creation of a journal of exploratory writing related to class discussion, assignments, and their own research. Students will be exploring the applications of network theory by completing several speaking assignments throughout the semester. Students will select topics (with instructor assistance), collect and analyze supporting sources, and present findings to the class. Time spent in class will be largely devoted to discussion of topics from the reading. Additionally, class time will be spent in small group problem solving activities using existing or student created network models. Through the presentations, class activities, discussions, and journal activities, students will gain skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and effective communication. All of these skills will serve students well as they pursue their liberal arts education.

FSEM 100vv Spring 2008  
Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age

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Phone: 540-654-1362  
Office Hours: Monday 2-3pm & Weds 2-4pm

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**Course Overview:**

What do Facebook, ant colonies, computer networks, and corporations all have in common? How many degrees of separation exist between you and Kevin Bacon? Consider the answers to these questions through an exploration of network modeling, the theories behind social networks, and the application of network models to the world.

**Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to train you in the basic skills required for college students. You will learn to analyze information, make connections between concepts, solve intellectual problems, and communicate clearly.

**Texts:**

*Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age*  
Duncan J. Watts  
ISBN: 0-393-32542-3

*Linked: How Everything Is Connected to Everything Else and What It Means for Business, Science, and Everyday Life*  
Albert-Laszlo Barabasi  
ISBN: 0-452-28439-2

*Nexus: Small Worlds and the Groundbreaking Theory of Networks*  
Mark Buchanan  
ISBN: 0-393-32442-7

**Rules of the game:**

1. Absolutely, positively, NO question is stupid in this class!! Your job is *not* to already know everything before you start the course. Your job is to try hard to learn, and part of that involves asking questions.
2. This class will be interactive. Come to class ready to participate in class activities and discussions. (Don't worry if you don't "know all the answers".) Come to class, participate, and take good notes.
3. Don't skip class. Just don't. It's bad form. I work hard on preparing for class, to make it compelling and relevant. Plus you miss out on important stuff, and you'll end up falling behind if you skip lecture. So come every time. Come happy, fresh, excited, and ready to think and to participate.

4. Don't cheat. **If you ever feel tempted to cheat, in this class or any other, come and talk to me about it.** It's not wrong to feel tempted, and we can find other ways out of whatever dilemma you're facing without compromising your moral character.

**Grading:**

Participation:	40%
Journal/Exploratory writing:	20%
Formal Presentations:	20%
Final Exam:	20%

**Participation:**

Your attendance is essential to the success of this course because it is discussion-based. In class we'll be discussing readings, completing in-class writing assignments, working in groups to solve problems, and critiquing the work of others. If you are absent, you not only miss important material, but you detract from the experience of others in the class. Lateness is distracting, so please try to arrive on time. As a courtesy to your fellow classmates, please turn off your cell phone before the beginning of class.

In order to participate effectively in class, you should bring the source of the assigned reading with you to class each day.

If you miss a class, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss what you missed.

The participation portion of your course grade will be affected by:

- Active participation in group-activities
- Thoughtful participation in class discussions
- Performance on unannounced quizzes on reading assignments
- Completion of outside assignments

**Journal/Exploratory Writing:**

In this course, we will be focused on making connections between various ideas and fields. We'll be discovering the ways that people and ideas are connected and the implications of these connections. You will be keeping a journal (think of it as exploratory writing if that makes you feel more comfortable) in which you write about YOUR thoughts related to the course materials and the connections that you make as you read course assignments, reflect on class discussions and activities, and conduct your own research.

You are likely to need two journals.

1. You are required to keep a journal in the form of an online blog. You should blog about your ideas, impressions, and discoveries that occur to you as you complete the reading assignments for class. You can also blog about your ideas related to in-class activities and discussions. Sometimes you'll be given a specific question or concept to focus on in your blog post. Sometimes you'll have free reign. Your posts should be public so that the other seminar members may view them and comment. The goal

of the blogs is to allow you to interact more intimately with other members of the course.

2. You will need to keep a research journal. This journal will allow you to record details related to the individual research that you conduct during the semester. You should record sources that you explore, ideas that occur to you during your research, and drafts of your presentations. This journal can be online in your blog or it can be kept in a paper notebook. If you keep your research journal in your blog space, it can be publicly viewable by all or can be private and viewable only by Dr Anewalt and yourself.

Regardless of format, both blogs will be evaluated several times during the semester. If you keep a paper research journal, please bring it with you to class each day.

### **Formal Presentations:**

During the semester, you will make two formal presentations. The first will be on a date of your choice during the 5<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> week of class. The presentation will be used to review and analyze the assigned reading in preparation for the class discussion for the day.

The second presentation will be on a research topic of your choice (instructor approved). You will conduct your research during the second half of the semester and make your presentation during the 12th week of the semester.

Both presentations will be evaluated based on content and delivery. You will receive a graded evaluation from the course instructor. You will also receive peer evaluations on each presentation.

### **Exams:**

The final exam will be given on Monday April 28 from noon-2:30pm

**Please contact me as soon as possible if you have 3 exams scheduled in a 24 hour exam period.**

### **The Honor Code and this Course:**

This course is designed to encourage you to get to know each other and join in open discussions about course topics. Discussing ideas found in the reading assignments, class discussions, or your own journal is highly encouraged and may sometimes be required to complete assignments.

Obviously you must take your own exams and must make your own presentations. Other work may be done in collaboration with other students in the course provided that all work that you turn in is your own. Do not simply copy assignments from your friends. This course is an opportunity to learn about something new. Don't waste your opportunity.

### **How to reach me:**

By far the best way is to come to office hours or e-mail me (to [anewalt@umw.edu](mailto:anewalt@umw.edu)). You can also call my office at 654-1362.

**How I reach you:**

I will be communicating with you outside of class time via e-mail (using the e-mail address that Blackboard has on file for you.) In order to get this information in a timely manner, you need to check your e-mail every single day! Otherwise you'll miss important updates, including help on the assignments!

I will post announcements to blackboard from time to time, so it's a good idea to check it every once in a while just to see if there's anything interesting. Anything urgent, however, I'll send via e-mail to make sure everyone gets it in a timely fashion.

**Disabilities:**

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 have a disability that may affect your participation in this course, please contact 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 - 209 George Washington Hall  
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