

Report on the Freshman Seminar Program to the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, Autumn 2013

A brief history of the Freshman Seminar Program

The Freshman Seminar Program began under the direction of President Karen Holbrook in 2003—with the first seminars offered winter quarter 2004—in order to provide unique learning experiences for first-year students. Seminars are capped at 18 first-year students to allow for significant student discussion and participation. On the quarter calendar, seminars were offered as one or two credit-hour courses; on semesters, all seminars are one semester-hour. Seminars are offered as decimals of Arts and Sciences 1137 (graded “A” through “E”) and 1138 (graded “S/U”).

Goals for the Freshman Seminar Program

- Provide first-year students opportunities for contact with faculty in small group-discussion settings.
- Offer an introduction to frontier areas of scholarly pursuit, allowing freshmen a glimpse of current topics of research and study.
- Introduce students to unfamiliar academic areas.
- Provide insight into how faculty pursue scholarship in their disciplines.

Faculty Administration of the Freshman Seminar Program

Proposals are reviewed by a panel of the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee. Membership of the panel reflects the Arts and Sciences and the professional colleges. Each course is approved with the understanding that approval is attached to the individual faculty member(s) teaching the course. If the course is to be offered in future semesters with a different instructor, it must be resubmitted. Once approved, faculty may offer a seminar more than once in an academic year and in subsequent academic years. A current syllabus must be resubmitted to the subcommittee after a period of five years.

Freshman Seminars by year

| Year | # of Seminars | Enrollment | % of Seats Filled | # of Departments Represented | # of Colleges/Units Represented |
|-------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2004 | 24 | 228 | 47.5 | 19 | 5 |
| 2005 | 27 | 309 | 61.8 | 18 | 5 |
| 2005 – 2006 | 50 | 602 | 66.4 | 36 | 13 |
| 2006 – 2007 | 70 | 900 | 72 | 44 | 16 |
| 2007 – 2008 | 63 | 849 | 75 | 38 | 19 |
| 2008 – 2009 | 59 | 826 | 78 | 26 | 13 |
| 2009 – 2010 | 57 | 757 | 74 | 24 | 12 |
| 2010 – 2011 | 53 | 759 | 79 | 26 | 9 |
| 2011 – 2012 | 31 | 457 | 82 | 31 [†] | 7 [†] |
| 2012 – 2013 | 15 | 244 | 90 | 19 [†] | 6 [†] |

[†]Estimate based on current appointments; multiple appointments are included.

Note: as of 9/17/2013, the Autumn 2013 enrollment for Freshman Seminars was 192 students across 13 seminars (82% full).

Freshman Seminar Program

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