

Report on the First-Year Seminar Program* to the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, Autumn 2023

A brief history of the First-Year Seminar Program

The First-Year 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 First-Year 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 first-year students 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 First-Year 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 in subsequent academic years. A current syllabus must be resubmitted to the subcommittee after a period of five years.

First-Year 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 [†]
2013 – 2014	17	236	77	18 [†]	7 [†]
2014 – 2015	14	177	70	14 [†]	4 [†]
2015 – 2016	8	84	58	9 [†]	3 [†]
2016 – 2017	35	478	73	28 [†]	9 [†]
2017 – 2018	47	690	81	35 [†]	9 [†]
2018 – 2019	37	552	82	26 [†]	8 [†]
2019 – 2020	38	566	83	25 [†]	6 [†]
2020 – 2021	35	499	79	25 [†]	7 [†]
2021 – 2022	28	476	94	20 [†]	7 [†]
2022 – 2023	23	365	88	17 [†]	6 [†]

Note: as of 8/29/2023, the autumn 2023 enrollment for First-Year Seminars was 343 students across 25 seminars (76% full).

*The First-Year Seminar Program began as the Freshman Seminar Program under President Holbrook.

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