

From: [Neff, Jennifer](#)
To: [McCorrison, Joy](#); [McGraw, Scott](#)
Cc: [Nathanson, Amy](#); [Vankeerbergen, Bernadette](#); [Steele, Rachel](#); [Hilty, Michael](#)
Subject: New First-Year Seminar - Career Paths in Middle East Studies
Date: Monday, April 8, 2024 4:15:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Good afternoon,

On Friday, March 22nd, the Social and Behavioral Sciences Subcommittee of the ASC Curriculum Committee reviewed a new first-year seminar proposal titled “Career Paths in Middle East Studies”.

The Subcommittee did not vote on the proposal as they would like the following points addressed:

- Given that students will be taking this course in their first semester, it is unlikely that they will be able to draw the necessary connections to work on resume drafting and career building based on their very limited experience with the field. Instead, first-year seminars are designed to, among other things, introduce students to unfamiliar academic areas and frontier areas of scholarly pursuit (not to be misunderstood as an overview of a field of study at the university), allowing first-year students a glimpse of current topics of research and study. The Subcommittee asks the instructor to consider this feedback and refocus the course in a way that achieves the goals of the [First Year Seminar Program](#). Examples of first-year seminars that address the goals of the program well are [Spatial Thinking](#) and [Political Courage](#).
- If the instructor wishes to rework and resubmit the proposed first-year seminar, then the following points will also need to be taken into consideration.
 - The Subcommittee notices some discrepancies between listing of assignments in the course components, course requirements, grading, and assignment descriptions. For example, the course components section mention preparing articles while the course requirements and assignment descriptions mention analyses of readings (and the grading section does not list this requirement at all). It is not entirely clear if these are the same assignment, and the Subcommittee recommends unifying the titles of each assignment in every section in which it is listed. The Subcommittee asks that the instructor be clearer about how assignments not explicitly stated in the grading section of the syllabus will be assessed. Specifically, it would be helpful to clarify if the analyses of readings are rolled into the participation grade or are graded individually and have been mistakenly omitted from the grading section. [Syllabus pp. 3-4]
 - The Subcommittee requests that the syllabus indicate whether the course will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory or will be letter graded.
 - The Subcommittee notices that a comment has been left on the course calendar and kindly asks that the instructor remove it from the syllabus. [Syllabus p. 5]
 - The Subcommittee requests that the unit use the most recent version of the Student Life Disability Services Statement, which was updated to reflect the university’s new COVID-19 policies in August 2023. The updated statement can be found in copy/paste format on the [Arts and Sciences Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#). [Syllabus p. 6]
 - The Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee recently (03-01-2024) updated the list of required syllabus statements for all syllabi to include a new statement on religious

accommodations. The new version of this required statement is a result of a directive by the Executive Vice President and Provost and can be found here on the [ASC Curriculum and Assessment Services website](#). Please note that the link to religious holidays, holy days and observances at the end of the statement is also required to be included in the syllabus. The Subcommittee thanks you for adding this revised statement to your course syllabus.

Should you have any questions about the feedback of the Subcommittee, do not hesitate to contact Amy Nathanson (faculty Chair of the SBS Subcommittee; cc'd here), or me.

Please feel free to send a revised syllabus to me, and I will then submit it for final approval.

Best,
Jennifer



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Pronouns: she/her/hers