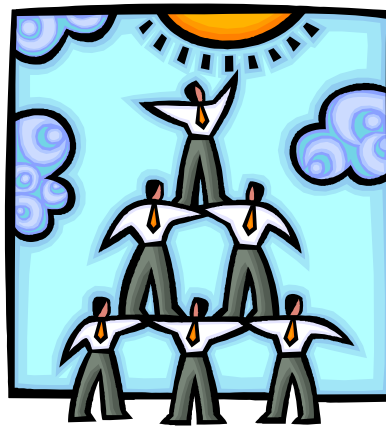


Goals & Content Requirements

Freshman Seminar involves students in the Appalachian community through a mix of activities, lectures, discussions, and participation in cultural events. In small classes, students build learning skills, practice time management and other life skills; examine the purpose and value of higher education and learn to set goals for this semester and beyond.

The course offers three Course Designators which meet graduation requirements (Writing, Computing, and Cross-Disciplinary).

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Goals of Freshman Seminar at ASU

Achieving Academic Success

- Students will continue to develop their abilities in critical thinking, writing, reading, and problem solving.
- Students will strengthen study skills, including note taking and test taking.
- Students will understand their own learning styles.
- Students will appreciate what it means to be an educated person and understand the value of a college degree.
- Students will develop effective academic computing skills, including word processing, email, and PowerPoint.
- Students will understand how to effectively utilize the library and how to locate and evaluate electronic information.
- Students will understand the value of integrity as it relates to academic work and will be knowledgeable about the rules, regulations, and processes related to academic integrity.

Building Community

- Students will develop connections with students, faculty, advisors, and the Appalachian community that support and enrich a successful college experience.

Exploring and Managing Life Beyond the Classroom

- Students will develop and practice effective time, stress, and money management strategies.
- Students will discuss wellness issues related to alcohol and drug awareness, with the aspiration to make mature and healthy decisions.
- Students will be exposed to cultural opportunities.
- Students will gain an awareness and appreciation for multiculturalism & diversity.
- Students will learn about their opportunities to study abroad.
- Students will be provided an opportunity to reflect on who they are, what they value, and what they want out of life.
- Students will seek clarity about career goals and will be introduced to campus resources, such as Peer Career and the Career Development Center that will help them in the career exploration process.

Connecting with Appalachian

- Students will learn about campus resources that could enrich and support their educational experience.
- Students will learn about campus policies & regulations, including the Code of Academic Conduct, registration information, and general education requirements.
- Students will learn about the history and traditions of the University.
- Students will understand the importance of getting involved in co-curricular activities and how to pursue these opportunities.

FRESHMAN SEMINAR (US 1150)

COURSE CONTENT GUIDELINES

(2007)

Introduction

Freshman Seminar offers first semester students a carefully structured orientation to college, an introduction to academic and personal success strategies, and an opportunity for self-discovery and self-realization. It draws on national models and extensive research for much of its conceptual framework, but is tailored to fit the unique needs and challenges faced by Appalachian State University freshmen. In addition, US 1150 remains committed to the University's Mission Statement, especially the goals of maintaining a "strong sense of community," "excellence in teaching," and our tradition of "faculty commitment to students both inside and outside the classroom." Freshman Seminar supports Appalachian's Undergraduate Educational Goals by providing a variety of learning experiences that permit personal growth and development, encouraging interaction among faculty and students, and demonstrating the interrelatedness of knowledge and the importance of life-long learning.

Freshman Seminar helps students make a successful transition to college, discover the resources and opportunities offered by Appalachian, strengthen learning skills, develop critical thinking skills, broaden horizons, and move toward intellectual and individual independence. These goals are supported and advanced by well-prepared and caring faculty working together with Peer Leaders, Academic Advisors, Learning Community faculty, and the Freshman Seminar staff in academic learning communities. The course content requirements listed below should be included in each Freshman Seminar class. They reflect University mandates, instructor agreements, and advisory committee recommendations over the past nineteen years.

I. Course Management

A. Syllabus – Your course syllabus sets a tone for class. It shows your planning and commitment, your expectations and concerns, your goals and enthusiasm for the semester. The syllabus is your public statement of purpose which students will rely on throughout the semester. University policy requires that every student in your class receive a syllabus on the first day of class. You are also required to keep a copy of your syllabus on file in the Freshman Seminar office. Please submit a copy of your syllabus by the opening of the term. University regulations and standard practice also specify a number of required components to your syllabus. These include:

- 1. The title**, course number, meeting place and time, and semester.
- 2. Your Contact Info**, campus address, phone number, and e-mail address.
- 3. Statement of your purposes/goals/objectives** in teaching the course.

4. Enumeration of course requirements and goals. Our central purpose in Freshman Seminar is to help entering freshmen be successful. This involves support in a wide range of areas from establishing new relationships and building academic and life skills to providing opportunities for personal growth and broadening of personal perspectives. A more complete statement of program goals is contained in the training manual. Be certain to keep these goals in mind as you work out your course requirements.

5. Required Readings -- Give a bibliographic citation and tell students if the book is a rental or purchase text. The following texts/books are required for all Freshman Seminar sections:

***P.O.W.E.R. Learning*, Bob Feldman (Rental).**

In the spring of 2005, the FS textbook selection committee designed a custom edition of Bob Feldman's *P.O.W.E.R. Learning*, coupled with numerous articles, as our common text. This textbook and its supporting materials provide a valuable resource for Freshman Seminar classes. It is available through the rental system at the bookstore.

***New Connections: A Handbook for Freshman Seminar*, (5th Edition).
Friedman, Marsh, & Brantz (Purchase).**

In its fifth edition, this ASU specific handbook provides a compendium of information used in Freshman Seminar classes. Segments on computing, Appalachian history, Myers-Briggs, campus resources, money management, wellness, and other topics provide a convenient and essential resource for students. All Freshman Seminar classes use *New Connections*, which is available for purchase through the Bookstore (for \$22.95).

Summer Reading Selection: *A Home on the Field* by Paul Caudros.

All Freshman Seminar sections are required to incorporate the Summer Reading book. At a minimum, one class period should be devoted to class discussion of this book. *A Home on the Field* will be distributed to all freshmen during Phase I orientation.

You may choose to include one other book/reading. Numerous additional possibilities are listed in the training manual and on our Freshman Seminar Home Page (<http://www.freshmanseminar.appstate.edu>). Readings should be discussed thoroughly and incorporated into class discourse.

6. Office Hours -- regular hours and other times available for student conferences. We recommend that you be available on campus for Freshman Seminar students from 2-3 hours per week.

7. Attendance Policy – Attendance policies should be designed to encourage participation rather than penalize students. Freshman Seminar usually requires out-of-class attendance at events such as the Group Interaction Course (GIC), Open House, etc. Instructors should be flexible with students who have schedule conflicts and reassign seat time for out of class events where appropriate. The University requires that you spell out your attendance policy in your syllabus.

8. Your Grading Policy -- US 1150 is a letter graded course.

We do not expect that all our students will receive A's. Please do not grade Freshman Seminar as a pass/fail course. It is very important that you make **qualitative** assessments with appropriate feedback on each student's work. It is also very important that this course have academic standards comparable to other first year courses. You should clearly spell out your grading policy. Students expect to know how they will be graded and the University requires that we explain our grading policy in our syllabus.

B. Class Budget One unique advantage we enjoy when teaching Freshman Seminar is our class budget. We can supply each class with \$15 per student to pay for the GIC (\$5), cultural activities (\$5), and having a meal with your class (\$5). The purpose of this money is to support community building, stronger faculty-student connections, and a friendlier atmosphere in your class. The Freshman Seminar office will assist you in scheduling and paying for the GIC, and we will also purchase and deliver cultural events tickets to you. Itemized receipts for food purchases or other expenditures within your \$5/student limit must be turned in to the Freshman Seminar office for reimbursement.

C. Course Evaluation University policy requires that all classes be evaluated once a year. Freshman Seminar students participate in a standard course and instructor evaluation at the end of the semester. Evaluation forms are provided by the Freshman Seminar office. Student evaluation results are returned to instructors early the following semester. A copy of the current evaluation form is in the Faculty Training Manual. In addition to the end of course evaluations, students may be asked to complete the online version of the First-Year Initiative Survey (FYI) sponsored by the Policy Center on the First Year of College. Furthermore, we encourage you to conduct a **midterm evaluation** and seek regular student feedback throughout the semester.

II. Course Designators

Freshman Seminar (US 1150) carries three course designators: Writing (W), Computing (C), and Cross-Disciplinary (CD).

Writing

A course must require a "substantial amount" of writing to be considered for a writing designator. Different kinds of writing may be practiced. The instructor will evaluate writing and students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate improvement based on instructor feedback. For a three-hour course, at least 15% of the grade should be based on

writing. Students in US 1150 write frequently throughout the semester, receive meaningful faculty feedback, and are given the opportunity to either revise papers or complete additional writing assignments in order to demonstrate improvement. Types of writing that would qualify might include: a series of short reaction papers, weekly journals or reaction cards, regular letters/memos, essays or reports, term papers, individual written projects, book reports, cultural events reviews, etc

Students must have multiple opportunities to engage in formal writing, receive feedback, and be given a chance to improve their writing on subsequent assignments. The objective is to have students write frequently and **receive regular written feedback**. Required writing should be turned in, evaluated carefully, and returned promptly with appropriate comments from you. Students must write the equivalent of 2-3 formal papers during the course of the semester. These can range from short reaction papers (1-2 pages) to longer (4-5 pages) analytical papers.

Computing

Our Computing (C) designation requires that we help students learn to use specific software applications and to develop skills in using computers as learning tools. Freshman Seminar is a gateway to the University. As such, we help students learn baseline software applications and computer skills necessary to succeed in college. These include, but are not limited to: using a word processor to write and format papers, proper use of electronic mail, Internet research, spreadsheets, and powerpoint. Development of these skills and applications is infused with other course content. Below are examples of how computing can be infused with other Freshman Seminar goals:

- ❑ Reflective e-mail journals
- ❑ Creating a spreadsheet as part of a budgeting, time management, or GPA calculating assignment.
- ❑ Creating a PowerPoint presentation on Appalachian history, wellness, or career options.

Discussing the implications of technology on our lives, especially the impact on interpersonal relationships, is also an effective way to address computing.

Cross-Disciplinary

The goal of cross-disciplinary courses is to integrate knowledge acquired and analytical methods applied from two or more disciplines. Cross-disciplinary courses will explore topics from the perspective of two or more disciplines and incorporate readings, analyses, and evaluation measures that ensure a cross-disciplinary perspective. US 1150 incorporates content, readings, and perspectives from many disciplines, including Psychology, History, Education, English/Literature, Health, Theatre/Dance/Art/Music, and Business. The units that meet the spirit of this designator are marked throughout this document with a CD.

III. Building Community

Community building is an essential element of a successful seminar experience and goes far beyond simply playing name games. Community building leads to better class discussions since students feel more comfortable sharing information and taking academic risks. In addition, a student's decision to stay at Appalachian is closely related to their sense of belonging and the connections they make with faculty and peers. While community building can take many forms, **all sections are required to participate in the Group Interaction Course.**

Group Interaction Course:

One of the most popular required activities in Freshman Seminar is the Group Interaction Course. Students report that it is a powerful experience and instructors tell us that their classroom dynamic is much better after the event. The GIC takes place in the quiet beauty of the University Woods. The GIC becomes a metaphor for building community, valuing difference, seeking instruction, planning, dealing with criticism and failure, focusing attention, managing time, and many other things related to college success. Contact the Freshman Seminar office to sign up for a time. Consult the faculty training manual for additional information about preparation, participation, and follow-up class assignments.

IV. Achieving Academic Success

A. Learning Skills Freshman Seminar is not a learning skills course. However, freshmen regularly report that they need to improve their learning skills to succeed in college. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many freshmen continue to use the same approaches ("tools") that worked in high school--even though they do not always work in college. With this in mind, we must address learning skills more directly in Freshman Seminar if we are to prepare students to be successful in their majors and beyond. Consequently, each class should introduce academic success strategies. Learning skills activities should be woven together throughout the semester with other course objectives.

B. Use of the Library Students must learn how to use Belk Library if they want to succeed at Appalachian. Students will benefit throughout their college and professional lives from this initial introduction. It can best be accomplished by integrating a library research component into at least one class assignment (whether in Freshman Seminar or the linked course). The educational staff and faculty in Belk Library support our efforts and have developed several components to further our efforts. First, they have developed a tutorial and quiz on basic library research skills that must be completed before the class visits Belk Library. Every student will complete this on-line library tutorial quiz. Second, library staff will work with instructors to develop relevant assignments requiring use of library resources. Finally, library personnel will introduce students to resources available in the Electronic Library Classroom and then support their individual research efforts. The goal is to show freshmen how to make use of modern library resources for

both general information and discipline specific purposes. At a minimum, students will learn how to locate books, journal articles, reference materials, and use electronic databases. Every class must participate in a library visit that includes a session in the Electronic Library Classroom. To prepare for this assignment, schedule a class visit, or find out more about this component call Ann Viles at 262-4972 or Betsy Williams at 262-2817.

C. Academic Integrity Professional ethics and integrity are becoming more and more important in today's complex world. As the first step toward preparing young professionals, each Freshman Seminar class will discuss Appalachian's Academic Integrity Code, including what constitutes a violation of academic integrity and the importance of academic attribution.

V. Exploring & Managing Life Beyond the Classroom

A. Time Management Up to this point the lives of our freshmen have been determined overwhelmingly by school, family, and work. Now we ask them to manage 168 hours each college week in a largely unstructured environment. This can be challenging for freshmen. Accordingly, each Freshman Seminar class must address effective time management strategies. Experience has informed us that simply lecturing to students about ways to manage time is not very effective. No one approach is likely to work for all students. Thus, this topic (as are most FS topics) is best suited to class discussion and self-exploration.

B. Wellness (*CD - Health*) Freshmen often overlook the importance of wellness in their success strategies. Experience shows that students who do not employ proper wellness strategies often get derailed during their first semester. Freshman Seminar must confront wellness issues beyond Open House visits to Health Services. Topics could include stress, personal health, exercise/nutrition, and responsible decision making about alcohol and drugs.

C. Money Management (*CD - Business*) Learning to manage money is one of the most difficult challenges new college students face. Even though our students may be receiving money from home, they may never have had to manage their finances before. Living on a limited budget, avoiding the lure of credit cards, and establishing a good credit history are new challenges for freshmen. Decisions made now may strongly affect their financial future. This is the time in their life to start learning smart money management. Freshman Seminar should address the important issues of budgeting and establishing good credit.

D. Liberal Arts Education (*CD - Education*) From our experience, freshmen know very little about what it means to be a liberally educated person. They enter college without clearly understanding the goals of higher education. Freshman Seminar helps students understand the goals of a liberal arts education, the importance of academic

integrity, the rituals and celebrations of the academic world (Convocation), and the personal process of goal setting. It can be helpful to connect this conversation with career planning so students can see how their general education will prepare them for the 21st century world of work. We urge you to assign the article in *New Connections* on the liberal arts and to discuss this concept with your students.

E. Myers-Briggs (*CD – Psychology*) The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is the most widely used personality assessment instrument in the world. It is not a diagnostic tool for psychological problems or a scale of positive or negative behaviors. It helps us understand human differences and our preferred styles of learning and behavior. We employ the MBTI to help students meet the challenges of the classroom and campus. It can be a very powerful teaching and motivational tool with freshmen and can be connected with learning skills, diversity issues, understanding professors, roommate problems, relationship issues, career exploration, and a host of other Freshman Seminar topics. Resource persons will be available fall semester to present this concept to your class. A minimum of one full class is needed to explain and demonstrate the concepts. Assignments utilizing MBTI can be integrated into other topics throughout the semester.

F. Majors and Career Planning - A clearly thought out career path can provide the focus, motivation, and determination needed to persevere to graduation. Therefore, it is important that each class of Freshman Seminar address major and career development issues, probably in the second half of the semester. This can be done with textbook or web-based assignments, by visiting the Peer-Career office, or by inviting individuals from the Career Development Center to your class. Academic advisors are also equipped to facilitate this component in connection with developing a four-year plan and choosing a major.

G. International Programs (*CD – Social Sciences; Humanities*) Understanding our world is more important today than ever before. Global events and trends shape our work, votes, and future more than ever seemed possible a generation ago. We can learn about our global society in the classroom, but a more powerful and increasingly viable way of discovering our world is to study abroad. Representatives from International Programs (Bob White, Nancy Wells, etc) can arrange group presentations to explain study abroad opportunities to our students. Other ideas for incorporating this component into your class can be found in the Resource Manual.

VI. Connecting with Appalachian

A. Open House Each fall the Freshman Seminar Office organizes an Open House designed to introduce students to support services and personnel that may be critical to their success. Classes visit Health Services, Peer Career Office, and Counseling Center. Visits are scheduled in the late afternoon or early evening and usually last about one hour and twenty minutes. Instructors are expected to attend with their classes. Many instructors substitute Open House for one class period. Most connect an assignment or

quiz to this activity to ensure student accountability. Dates for this year's Open House are being finalized. More information will be forthcoming shortly. Each class is expected to participate in this informational program.

B. Convocation Freshman Seminar classes participate in fall convocation. Experience has shown that we need to prepare students ahead of time with information about the speaker and the topic. Attending as a class can help to build community outside the classroom. Follow up discussions can address important common issues confronting our entire academic community.

C. Campus Involvement National studies show that students succeed at higher rates when they are actively involved in campus life. Involvement can, of course, be carried too far, leaving no time for academic or personal life. But modest involvement can make an important difference. As a result, Freshman Seminar instructors have long felt that each freshman must become involved in one campus organization of their choice during their first semester at Appalachian. There is a wide range of options, including official clubs, intramural sports, religious activities, or perhaps even employment. Selection should be preceded by a discussion of what constitutes a campus organization, criteria for involvement, pros and cons of involvement, and the overall benefits of membership or participation.

D. Appalachian History (*CD - History*) Freshman Seminar offers the only class that introduces freshmen to Appalachian's past. Our history presents a unique vehicle for "discovering" identity and understanding our purpose. Suggestions for introducing Appalachian history are contained in the Faculty Training Manual. A minimum of one class must be spent on ASU History. Talking about history usually comes later in the semester, after other more basic things like community building, transitions, and learning skills have been introduced. Some instructors have scheduled Appalachian history around homecoming to add substance, flavor, and context to a freshman's early college experience.

VII. Out of Class Engagement

Faculty should include at least one of the following options:

A. Service Learning - Last year almost half of all Freshman Seminar classes engaged in some form of service project. A service project can advance class goals, especially community building and discovering Appalachian. Furthermore, service projects can strengthen helping, communication, and coping skills. They can broaden perspectives, develop human interaction skills, and teach freshmen how to handle new kinds of responsibility. Service learning can help students identify and define future student and life roles. If you decide to undertake a service project, our experience shows that these work best when performed as a whole class. Appalachian's ACT office can also help you organize a meaningful project. We encourage you to consider a service project.

B. Cultural Events (*CD- Humanities*). Cultural experiences are an important part of a liberal arts education. They broaden horizons, open new worlds, and offer opportunities for self-discovery and expression. Freshman Seminar students are encouraged to attend at least one University-sponsored cultural event. A portion of our class budget can support ticket purchases for cultural events. Attending a cultural event is also an opportune time to organize a meal with your class.

C. Walk for Awareness Freshman Seminar classes are encouraged to attend the Walk for Awareness. This annual event, held on the Tuesday evening (9 p.m.) after Labor Day, provides a powerful forum to discuss campus and personal safety.

VIII. Learning Communities Involvement (*CD - Varies*)

The most important new academic initiative of the past decade is the Academic Learning Community. These link each Freshman Seminar class with one other academic class, sometimes English or History. Students are co-enrolled in both classes, class activities are coordinated, and instructors meet periodically to talk about the students with an Academic Advisor. The results have been remarkable. Students are more successful and feel more connected, supported, and engaged. Faculty learn to share and interact in new academic ways. And students have the benefit of a three-person support team (Freshman Seminar instructor, instructor in the other academic class, and an Academic Advisor) working to support their success. We urge you to participate fully and enthusiastically in your Learning Community. They expand our Freshman Seminar community in valuable ways.