

FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS AT KALAMAZOO COLLEGE 2009 GOALS & EXPECTATIONS

Goals

Kalamazoo College's First-Year Seminars

- help students achieve college-level skills in critical thinking, writing, and speaking;
- help students find and develop a voice through writing, speaking, analytical reading, and discussion;
- are taught in a discussion rather than a lecture format and teach students how to "seminar;"
- integrate collaborative and group work, research strategies, peer reviewing, and effective discussions, all promoting active, engaged learning;
- contain a significant intercultural component, appropriate to an internationally-focused college; and
- include a "Survivor in the Library" session, intended to help students learn research techniques and apply them to a focused project.

Focus on college-level writing: methodology

- Frequent, short, writing assignments, rather than a few lengthy papers (a total of 25-30 pp., including revisions)
- A variety of types of writing (response papers, mini-research projects, journals, essays, etc.)
- At least one writing conferences (suggested length: 20-30 minute conference, devoted to a work in progress; can be used as a substitute for class time)
- A common writing evaluation rubric to create shared expectations
- Link to writing consultants in the Writing Center
- Peer reviewing

Emphasis on oral communication and discussion

- Discussion is not optional; formal presentations are optional

Focus on international and intercultural

- Make an intercultural/international emphasis at least one significant assignment or unit of the Seminar
- Name it and claim it: say what we are doing and why

Survivor in the Library: College Information Literacy Skills

- Since this is part of the teaching mission of the Seminar, plan to be present for and participate in the "Survivor" session. Our Seminar will participate in one class session called "Survivor in the Library: College Information Literacy Skills." The session is intended to help you learn research techniques and will be led by your instructor and reference librarians Robin Rank or Liz Smith. Your work will be part of a focused project on a topic selected by your professor.

Focus On College-Level Writing: Tier One Writing Competencies

The faculty at Kalamazoo College has developed these goals for the first-tier of writing proficiency, to prepare students for second-tier writing (in discipline-specific courses in the major) and for the final stage, the SIP. We hope that every student leaving the First-Year Seminar will develop competency in these areas:

Achieving clarity through revision

- stating and developing a thesis
- writing coherent sentences and well-developed paragraphs
- using correct grammar and mechanics
- being conscious of overall structure and impact
- becoming proficient at editing and proof reading
- writing frequently to gain fluency

Constructing an argument using evidence

- understanding the difference between opinion, argument, and evidence, and becoming aware of which of the three serves the writing project at hand
- synthesizing others' ideas with one's own
- using sources to support ideas and positions
- using quoted materials effectively and correctly

Gaining experience in research strategies

- citing sources correctly
- understanding synthesis, paraphrase, and plagiarism

- becoming aware of style guides; learning to use one correctly

Cultivating an authentic and versatile style of written communication

- discovering one's own way into material
- making deliberate choices about structure, style, and voice, with a distinct awareness of audience, context and impact
- demonstrating or developing authenticity and ownership of the work

First-Year Forums

First-Year Forums are intended to help entering K students continue their academic and personal growth. They foster the goals of the First-Year Experience Program, which are to help students:

- *achieve academic success,*
- *identify and pursue their passions,*
- *connect with Kalamazoo College and the greater Kalamazoo communities,*
- *construct complex intercultural understandings, and*
- *develop a purpose-filled and balanced life.*

First-year students choose five Forums to attend during fall term. If a student does not attend five, the final grade in the Seminar will be lowered by two points for each Forum missed.

Student questions about attendance during the term should go to Sally Arent in Student Development (sarent@kzoo.edu)

Assessment

- Students will take the CIRP survey (with 20 institution-specific questions) during orientation. The end-of-fall-quarter survey will be done using Survey Monkey instead of class time.