

## **Building a Scribner Seminar Course**

As you prepare to construct or modify a Scribner Seminar syllabus it is important to keep in mind that these courses are fundamentally different from the courses typically offered at the College. They are unique in several ways: they are open only to first-year students; they include

- € *recognize choices, examine assumptions and ask questions of themselves and of their own work*
- € *formulate conclusions based upon evidence*
- € *communicate ideas both orally and in writing*
- € *relate the results of the course to their educational goals*

### **Interdisciplinary Perspectives**

Your course should help students see the benefits of employing more than one single disciplinary perspective when approaching any subject matter or issue. Ideally, students will learn to distinguish among, and formulate, the types of questions asked by different disciplines as well as learn to use their various methodologies to gain the most complete understanding possible.

The interdisciplinary focus may be broad, drawing on a wide range of disciplines (e.g., biology, economics, and literature). Alternatively, the course may reflect the perspectives of a smaller number of disciplines, and those disciplines may all be within a similar area of study. For instance, one might propose a course that draws on the social sciences (e.g., combining historical and economic perspectives), or the sciences (e.g., combining biological, mathematical, and physics perspectives).

### **Critical Thinking**

Your course should develop the sorts of skills that are consistent with the notion of Critical Thinking as espoused in Skidmore's [Goals for Student Learning and Development](#). Specifically, students will learn to read critically and to gather and interpret evidence. They will learn to consider and address complexities and ambiguities. They will learn to make connections among ideas. They will come to recognize choices, examine assumptions, and ask questions of

Thi|| 1.47anv aat

## **Accessibility**

All Scribner Seminars must be accessible to all incoming students. Please keep in mind, in particular, that international students may be excited to study American topics but may have less familiarity with our culture. If your course is in any way specific to the United States, such students may require additional patience and support.

## **Procedure for Course Approval**

Instructors must upload their course proposals in the Courseleaf's CIM system by January 8, 2024. Once inside the system, c

## **How to Schedule your Scribner Seminar**

Course scheduling for Scribner Seminars happens each January—before departmental deadlines. You will receive an e-mail in early January with instructions on how to submit your day/time and classroom preferences. The four credit hour seminar may be delivered in two ways: 1) via a standard 4-credit hour block; or 2) via a three credit hour block + an additional "floating" hour for the 4<sup>th</sup> credit. For option #2, the floating 4<sup>th</sup> credit hour may be scheduled on any weekday morning, 8:30-9:30 a.m., or on a weekday evening (MTWTh), 6:30-7:30 p.m. or 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Please note that you must submit three options. While we will do everything possible to give you your first choice, we must balance a variety of concerns as we schedule courses. We will confirm with you first before recommending the final day and time to the Registrar's Office.

SEE THE REGISTRAR'S WEBSITE FOR A LIST OF SCHEDULING OPTIONS.

## **Additional Pedagogical Considerations**

### **Cluster Approaches**

Scribner Seminars lend themselves to collaborations. Feel free to be creative regarding potential interactions with another seminar instructor; this might even involve occasional joint teaching. Successful models have included "Human Dilemmas" (up to 9 seminars with a common syllabus) and "Sport and Society" (two instructors teaching the same course at separate times and joining together for the fourth hour).

### **Writing in the Seminars**

Writing plays a crucial role in the seminars and links to the larger goal of helping students understand and practice the conventions of academic discourse:

- € reading critically
- € analyzing ideas and formulating relevant questions
- € generating original ideas
- € developing a thesis and using it to focus an essay or presentation
- € organizing ideas logically
- € supporting claims with evidence
- € presenting material orally
- € moving through the process of drafting to revising
- € attending to clarity, cohesiveness, and grammar
- € using sources appropriately
- € upholding standards of academic integrity

Possible assignments might include:

- € brief written responses to readings
- € online discussions or chat room participation
- € in-class three- to five-minute writing exercises in response to specific prompts
- € activities to help generate ideas (brainstorming, listing, mapping, free writing) in

## **4<sup>th</sup> Credit Hour Program**

### **Designing the Fourth Hour Component**

The Scribner Seminars were designed to respond to some of the challenges of teaching new college students. Specifically, the 4<sup>th</sup> credit hour component allows students to explore some of the curricular and co-curricular issues that often arise in the first year of college but go largely unaddressed in other college courses.

roles, if any, these sessions will play in the classroom. Wherever these sessions occur, the faculty and Peer Mentors will want to coordinate timing.

There are, of course, a number of offices on campus that might also prove useful to your first-year students and might be incorporated into fourth hour programming. Among these are the Tang Museum, the Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges, the Counseling Center, Career Services, the Writing Center, the Library, etc. We are happy to facilitate “open houses” if faculty would like to learn more about these offices. If you would like more focused attention for your class, we encourage you to contact these campus offices directly; you do not need the FYE’s approval to schedule individualized sessions.

## **Funding**

Each seminar receives a \$650 budget: \$600 for co-curricular programming, and \$50 for course development (books and other pedagogical materials). Faculty members who have not yet taught in the FYE receive an additional \$75 (for a total of \$125) for pedagogical materials. Receipts for reimbursement must be submitted by Dec. 12th of your teaching semester. See **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES** for further information.

The FYE encourages faculty to think creatively about ways to enhance student learning. If you have something in mind that exceeds your budget, you may petition the Director for additional funds; this must be done by July 31st via the form available on the FYE website. We will accommodate as many requests as possible.

The FYE further encourages collaboration among faculty in the planning of co-curricular events; indeed, several faculty members might wish to pool their resources. The FYE website lists the fall Scribner Seminars and provides brief course descriptions; we invite you to contact other faculty to explore possible collaborations. With some advance planning, seminars might, for example, combine forces and funding for a field trip. The FYE office is available to facilitate these collaborations, so please feel free to utilize us.

## **Arranging Special Events**

Please contact Christy Brown in the FYE Office for assistance in scheduling and arranging all field trips and for help with any other special event, including the ordering of food. Christy will also keep track of your budget and will let you know if you are approaching your limit.

Please be advised that all trips requiring bussing, including local field trips, necessitate the submission of a "Funding Request Form" (available on the FYE website). All forms must be submitted by July 31st. For trips without bussing, the field trip form must be submitted two weeks in advance.

**SEE POLICIES & PROCEDURES REGARDING TRANSPORTATION, PURCHASES, ACCESSING FUNDS, ETC.**