The KU First-Year Seminar Program

First Year Seminars (FYS) are 3-credit hour, discussion-based courses designed for freshmen. They are taught by faculty and focus on thought-provoking and innovative topics that capitalize on the faculty member’s expertise. During the 2011-2012 academic year, a steering committee of faculty, staff and students designed the FYS program and developed the pilot seminars for Fall 2012. We anticipate adding 10 to 14 new FYS in the Fall of 2013. The Office of First-Year Experience is now soliciting proposals for these new FYS courses.

FYS Program Objectives
The FYS program is a cornerstone of KU’s plan to invest in first-year experiences that promote student engagement in the intellectual life of KU (Goal 1C in Bold Aspirations). FYS courses are designed to introduce students to intellectual discovery and scholarly inquiry at the university, develop and inspire students’ own intellectual curiosity, and foster critical thinking and learning skills. The goal is to lay a strong foundation for lifelong learning and inquiry to serve our students in their academic and professional careers. FYS also create early connections between students and faculty members.

FYS Course Information
- Each FYS will be capped at 19 students.
- FYS will be identified by the discipline code(s) and the course number 177.
- Faculty members who teach FYS do so as part of their regular teaching responsibilities.
- FYS will count towards the critical thinking goal for the KU Core. See kucore.ku.edu.
- FYS include 1-2 co-curricular or cultural activities each semester that bring together students and faculty across seminars.

FYS Course Guidelines
- There are no prerequisites for FYS; therefore they should be designed for students from any discipline who have an interest in the topic.
- FYS classes should involve active learning, discussion, and engagement with peers.
- All FYS should be designed around the critical thinking goal and learning outcomes of the KU Core. Any additional course learning goals should be clearly articulated.
- FYS course assignments should also emphasize written communication skills.
- These courses should be organized around applied problems and expose students to hands-on or experiential learning opportunities.
- FYS should include a “capstone” assignment or project and a plan for gauging students’ achievement of learning outcomes on this assignment.
- FYS should include library training and promote collaborations with other units on campus (e.g., Center for Service learning, Spencer Museum of Art, Writing Center).
- Interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary courses, or cross-course connections between individual FYS, are encouraged.