
Instructor Information

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Mission

The mission of First-Year Seminar is to provide first-year students an opportunity (1) to experience and develop knowledge, behaviors and attitudes that promote successful college study and positive campus participation, and (2) to appreciate multiple perspectives that reflect intellectual and cultural diversity within and beyond college.

Course Description

First-Year Seminar is designed to help students develop strategies and skills necessary for a successful college career. Topics include adjusting to college, setting academic goals, managing time and keeping organized, learning and studying in college, preparing for and taking tests, understanding college policies and regulations, and accessing and using SRSU computer technology. Students will learn about SRSU's resources, activities, and rich cultural diversity. Throughout the course, students will use critical thinking skills to make informed choices, to understand their responsibilities for academic success, and to become independent, motivated learners.

All First-Year Seminars have the same five common goals. The student will be able to:

1. Expand and deepen his/her understanding of the world and of self.
2. Enhance his/her ability to read and think critically.
3. Enhance his/her ability to communicate effectively, in writing, speech, and other appropriate forms.
4. Develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research.
5. Work closely with a faculty mentor.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Implement personal time management strategies based on short and long-term goals.
2. Describe behaviors that support personal responsibility for learning, characteristics of an effective learner, techniques that promote student success and problem solving of academic issues, and be able to discuss respect, civility, and academic integrity at SRSU.
3. Describe institution, department, and course requirements to earn a college degree and be able to identify SRSU policies in relation to them.
4. Identify and/or utilize college resources, activities, and events and demonstrate use of SRSU technology: student e-mail, SRSU website, Blackboard, and Lobo Online.
5. Exhibit financial literacy in relation to college and beyond.
6. Discuss the importance of SRSU in the larger community.

Attendance & Class Participation

A high degree of engagement is expected and will contribute to your learning as an active participant. This includes interacting with the guest presenters and other students, completing your degree plan and being prepared to participate in class discussions. This class is the beginning of your journey to becoming a professional. All unexcused absences will result in a 10-point deduction from your final grade. You must talk to me “in person”; voice and email messages are not considered valid excuses. Evidence of professionalism includes attendance, collegial attitude, participation, and punctuality.

The instructors will drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. An absence is defined as non-attendance in fifty minutes of class; for example, non-attendance in a one and one-half hour class will constitute one and one-half absences and non-attendance in a three-hour class will constitute three absences. An absence because of participation in an official University activity is considered to be an authorized absence.

A student who is dropped from a course for excessive absences will be notified in writing by the Director of Records and Registration after the drop has been approved by the Provost and Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs. Any student dropped for excessive absences will receive an "F" in the course dropped.

Classroom Behaviors

You are encouraged and expected to openly engage in class discussions, ask questions, share ideas, and express your thoughts. **Please be respectful of others by avoiding disruptive behaviors such as side conversations, cell phone use, arriving late, leaving early, etc. Keep your cell phone on silent or off.**

Please provide your classmates and instructor the professional courtesy of arriving on time for the beginning of class and staying for the full duration of every class. **Cell phones are permitted in class; however, phones must be placed in silent mode or turned off. No texting is allowed during class.**

Classroom Climate of Respect

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

SRSU Disability Services

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Rebecca Greathouse Wren, LPC-S, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email rebecca.wren@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

SRSU Library Services

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

The Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries at Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass. Offer additional access to library spaces and resources. Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde students may also use online resources available through SWTJC website, library.swtjc.edu. The SWTJC Libraries serve as pick-up locations for Inter-Library Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery from the Alpine campus.

Diversity Statement

"I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you."

Academic Integrity

"The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials."
--Excerpt from the Student Handbook

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

All students are expected to complete their own work at all times. Any dishonest conduct will be promptly rewarded with an immediate "F".

Plagiarism

A student guilty of plagiarism and/or cheating will receive a grade of "F" in the course involved and the grade will be so recorded on the transcript. Students giving and receiving assistance in any unauthorized manner during an examination will subject themselves to this cheating policy. A pattern of cheating will result in suspension.

Late Work

All assignments are to be submitted via Blackboard. No late work will be accepted without proper documentation or prior approval by the instructor. All assignments are due at the beginning of class unless I state otherwise. No consideration of extending a due date will be considered on the day an assignment is due, students should contact the instructor if they are expecting to be unable to meet a deadline. Should I decide to accept a major assignment late, then a significant penalty will be assigned depending upon the circumstances.

Grade Breakdown:

Final grades will be determined by the totals in these areas:

- 30% Attendance, Participation, In-class assignments
 - 20% Service-Learning Project
 - 20% Interview/Presentation
- 15% Homework and other assignments

Grading Scale:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

Below 60 = F

Required Textbook

No required text

Required: Blackboard 9 access and a Sul Ross email address

Course Communication: The official e-mail communications channel for this course is the Sul Ross State University e-mail account (yourname@sulross.edu) of each student and professor. For the purposes of this course, no other e-mail account is acceptable.

Description of Course Assignments

Writing Requirement

APA writing format is required. Assignments must be typed using one-inch margins, 12-point type, and double line spacing; have all pages beginning with the first page numbered; and be edited for spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Your writing is a reflection of your professional growth.

- Attend one student club meeting and reflection

DUE: Wednesday, Oct. 13

You are required to attend one student club meeting. You must get the signature of an officer. In addition, you will need to write a two-paragraph reflection paper over the meeting. One paragraph should give an explanation of what happened at the meeting, and the second paragraph should be a reflection of what you thought about the meeting.

Service-Learning Project Details: Due Wednesday, Nov. 17

You are required to complete 5 hours of volunteer work. You must get a verification statement and signature from the agency confirming that you did complete 5 hours of volunteer work. In addition, you will need to write a two-paragraph reflection paper over the volunteering experience. One paragraph should give an explanation of what type of volunteering you did/what you did, and the second paragraph should be a reflection of what you thought about the experience. A list of volunteer opportunities will be given out during class and discussed.

-Presentations/Power Point Due Wednesday, Nov. 3

Interview/Paper: Due Wednesday, Nov. 17

1. You will need to conduct an interview with any one of the following:

- Faculty member in your intended major/field of interest,
- Upper division student in your intended major/field of interest,
- Professional in a career that you may be interested in pursuing,
- Graduate student in your same academic specialization, or
- Student from a diverse background; international, underrepresented group, etc.

2. You will need to write a 2-page, paper detailing your findings. You may present the information in the form of a script, using titles for yourself and the person you interviewed. The reader needs to be able to understand what you asked and the responses from the person you interviewed. Additionally, you will need to give a synopsis of your thoughts about your findings.

3. Present your interview to the class. In addition, you will need to create some type of a graphic organizer (flow chart/power point/map) of the interview and present it to the class. Your presentation should be 3-5 minutes.

Course Assignments	Due Date	Points
Attendance (12 sessions)	Weekly	120 points
Attend Club Meeting and Reflection	October 13	100 points
Interview Presentations	November 3 and 13	100 points
Interview Paper	November 13	75 points
Volunteer hours and Reflection	November 13	75 points
Total Points		470 points

Tentative Weekly Schedule: Wednesdays, 10:00-10:50

Week

1: 8/25 - Introduction to class/syllabus/College Culture/Student responsibilities/Faculty Expectations

2: 9/1 - Email/Blackboard/Lobo Online Review (Tim Parsons)

3: 9/8 - Complete Kognito At-Risk for Students (bring lab top to class)

4: 9/15 - Library Workshop: Info. Literacy/Plagiarism/Academic Integrity (meet at the library)

5: 9/22 - Student Organizations/SRSU Traditions

6: 9/29 - Notetaking/Study Skills/Learning Strategies

7: 10/6- Sports & Recreation for Stress Relief and Community Building

Attend Club Meeting and Reflection DUE

8: 10/13 - (1) Title IX video

(2) Guidelines for interviewing a professional, writing the paper, and presentation of interview.

9: 10/20 - Career Planning and Exploration with Career Services

10: 10/27 - Financial Aid/Money Matters

11: 11/3 - **Presentations of Interviewing a Professional Due** (*I will choose students randomly to present*)

12: 11/11- Holiday

13: 11/17- Continue Presentations of Interviewing a Professional Interview Paper Due

Service Learning Project Volunteer hours and Reflection Due

THIS SYLLABUS MAY CHANGE AT ANYTIME

End of Semester for First Year Seminar!

Important University Dates:

8/26	Last day to add a class to your schedule
9/8	Last day to drop a course (without it counting against you)
9/5	University “Meal on the Mall”
11/12	Last day to drop a course with a “W” (by 5 p.m.)
11/24	Residence halls close for Thanksgiving at 9 am
12/1	Last class day before finals
12/2	“Dead Day”
12/3-6,8	Final Exams
12/10	Graduation begins at 7 pm
12/11	Residence halls close at Noon