

**SRSU 1101**  
**First Year Seminar**  
**Fall 2024**  
**Wednesdays, 1-1:50 p.m.**

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**Professor:** Jessica Velasco, DPA  
**Office Hours:** TBD  
**Office Location:** LH 210  
**Phone:** 432-837-8742 (office)  
**Email:** [jessica.velasco@sulross.edu](mailto:jessica.velasco@sulross.edu)

**Mission:**

The mission of the First-Year Seminar is to provide first-year students an opportunity:

1. to develop knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes that promote successful academic and non- academic participation and
2. to appreciate multiple perspectives and 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 experience. 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 five common goals. The student will be able to:**

1. Expand and deepen their understanding of the world and of self,
2. enhance their ability to read and think critically,
3. Enhance their 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 the class instructor.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

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 the institution, department, and course requirements to earn a college degree and be able to identify SRSU policies in relation to them.
4. Identify and utilize college resources, activities, and events and demonstrate the 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.

**Core Assessment:**

In addition to other outcomes listed above, I will also be promoting the following in this class:

**Critical Thinking.** Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

**Communication.** Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

**Textbook & Course Materials:**

All of the materials for this class will be provided in class or on Blackboard.

**GRADING**

Grades in this class will be determined **by the number of points you earn by the end of the course.** The point distribution is listed below:

A	895-1000 points
B	795-894 POINTS
C	695-794 POINTS
D	595-694 POINTS
F	BELOW 595 POINTS

**You can track your progress by clicking on the “My Grades” tab in Blackboard. You can also view grading rubrics for each assignment in the “My Grades” tab. If I leave you additional feedback outside of the rubric, you will see a message bubble in the grading center. PLEASE NOTE: As mentioned above, the grade for this class is based on POINTS, not the average that Blackboard gives you.**

## POINT DISTRIBUTION

<b>Attendance &amp; Participation</b>	100 points
<b>Discussion Boards (60 x 5)</b>	300 points
<b>Syllabus Quiz</b>	20 points
<b>Email Assignment</b>	100 points
<b>Office Meeting with Professor</b>	100 points
<b>SRSU Engagement Card</b>	80 points
<b>Campus Cleanup</b>	100 points
<b>Registration Exercise</b>	100 points
<b>Final Presentation-FYE Portfolio</b>	100 points
Total	<b>1000 points</b>

## EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

**ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION/CLASS ENGAGEMENT:** Attendance and participation are worth 100 points in this class. Please come prepared to participate. Being prepared to participate means:

- You have read the assigned materials
- You have paper and writing utensils to take notes
- You have removed all distractions—phone is off and stowed away, earbuds are removed, etc.
- **You are on time, and you stay for the entire class**
- You refrain from distracting other students during class
- You fully participate in discussions and other activities

Your participation grade will be based on the items above.

**DISCUSSION BOARDS:** To better familiarize you with Blackboard and each other, as well as give you the opportunity to reflect more deeply on the topics we cover each week, you will be completing 5 discussion boards. Instructions and rubrics are on Blackboard. Your first discussion board is due by Friday at 11:59 p.m. on the first week of classes (introduction board).

**SYLLABUS QUIZ:** By Friday at 11:59 p.m. of the first week, you need to complete the syllabus quiz on Blackboard in the Week 1 folder. You will have ONE attempt. The quiz is worth 20 points.

**EMAIL ASSIGNMENT:** To help you practice appropriate email etiquette, you will be completing this assignment by September 18. Instructions and rubrics are on Blackboard. This is worth 100 points.

**OFFICE MEETING WITH PROFESSOR:** By Friday at 11:59 p.m. of the first week, you need to SCHEDULE a time to meet with me. The meeting must be completed by September 18. This is worth 100 points.

**SRSU ENGAGEMENT CARD:** In order to promote the full college experience and your engagement with your campus community, you will complete a SRSU Engagement Card. This includes a series of activities you will participate in by November 20. Instructions and rubrics are on Blackboard. This is worth 80 points.

**CAMPUS CLEANUP:** All of our first year seminar classes will be participating in this campus service event on November 20 during our regular class time. It is worth 100 points. More details will be announced when we get closer to the event date.

**REGISTRATION EXERCISE:** To facilitate and incentivize early Spring 2025 registration, you will be earning 100 points for completing registration by December 4. The instructions and a rubric are provided on Blackboard.

**FINAL PRESENTATION-FYE PORTFOLIO:** At the end of each class, you will be asked to write down the two most important things you learned from that day's class, as well as 1-2 items you plan to put into action. These, along with other assignments and in-class self-assessments, will all be compiled into a FYE Portfolio. At the end of the semester, you will present the highlights from your portfolio, as well as update the class on whether or not you completed each of your action items.

**EXAMS:** The final exam for this class is a presentation of your FYE portfolio.

W	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	Aug. 28	First Day Blackboard, OneDrive, Office 365, College vs. HS	<b>Read Syllabus</b> <b>Syllabus Quiz</b> <b>Introduction Post on BB</b>
2	Sept. 4	Fall on the Mall: Student Engagement Fair	<b>Student Involvement Discussion Board</b>
3	Sept. 11	Goal-Setting & Resources (Basic needs, Opportunities)	<b>Letter to Self and Mission Statement Activity/Discussion Board Post</b>
4	Sept. 18	Workshop: Counseling (Location: Marshall Auditorium)	Email Assignment & Visit with a Professor Due
5	Sept. 25	Note-Taking & Test-Taking, Reading, FTF vs. Online Classes	<b>In class exercises only</b>
6	Oct. 2	Time Management & Academic Integrity	In class exercises only
7			
8	Oct. 9	Library Resources	

9	Oct. 16	University Leadership Structure & Campus Traditions	<b>In class exercises only</b>
10	Oct. 23	Support Networks & LoboOnline	<b>Check your Mid-term grades Support Network Discussion Board</b>
11	Oct. 30	StrengthsFinder, Sigi3, or MBTI inventory	Review your results (bring them to the next class)
12	Nov. 6	Career Planning/Exploration	In class exercises only
13	Nov. 13	Financial Literacy	Financial Literacy Discussion Board
14	Nov. 20	Community Service: Campus Clean-Up	Service Event
15	Nov. 27	No class	
16	Dec. 4	DegreeWorks, HB2504, Registration Tools	<b>Registration Exercise</b>
17	Dec. 6, 12:30 p.m.	Final Presentation-FYE Portfolio	

**Other important dates:**

- 8/29, Last day for registration and schedule changes
- 9/2, Labor Day Holiday, no classes
- 9/11, Last day to drop a 16 week class without a record
- 9/17, National Voter Registration Day
- 9/27, Community Meal on the Mall
- 10/7, Last day to register to vote in the November election
- 11/5, Election Day
- 11/8, Last day to withdraw with a “W” (16 week classes)
- 11/27-11/29-Thanksgiving Holiday (no classes on these days)
- 12/4, Last class day before finals
- 12/5, Dead day
- 12/6 & 12/9-12/11, Final Exams

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME:**

- I will provide email responses within 24 hours of receipt during the hours of 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday.
- I will provide grades and feedback for assignments **within one week of the submission due date.**
- I will provide clear and concise instructions on how to complete the course requirements.
- I will provide a range of opportunities to engage in the course content in a meaningful way.
- I will approach this class and all interactions with you with since care and concern for you and your classmates.

### **WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:**

- You will familiarize yourself with the course syllabus, policies, assessments, evaluation, grading criteria, and course design.
- You will acquire the tools necessary to be successful in this class. This includes paper, writing utensils, reliable Internet access, and a device other than your phone for completing assignments.
- You will complete all coursework by assigned due dates.
- You will take the time to review feedback I provide to avoid repeating mistakes.
- You will engage in the course, with your peers, and with me, using open, appropriate, and respectful communication
- You will be diligent about using communication in a way that shows respect to me and your classmates.
- You will submit college-level work that has been checked carefully for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation (using a free extension like Grammarly is recommended).
- You will respond to communication from me and your classmates in a timely manner (within 24 hours).
- You will not plagiarize the work of others or yourself.
- You will reach out to me immediately if you are having trouble in the class or with access to course materials. For general access issues or technical help, please call the Help Desk--888.837.6055.

### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES & RESOURCES**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid engaging in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as 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. Students should also avoid using generative AI tools ***unless permission is expressly given*** for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing

assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

As an SRSU student, it is your responsibility to read and understand the university's expectations about academic integrity. All violations will be taken seriously and handled through the appropriate university process. The policy can be found at:

<https://www.sulross.edu/about/administration/university-policies/>

**In addition, please note that plagiarism detection software will be used in this class for written assignments.**

If you have any questions about this, please ask!

### **CLASSROOM CLIMATE OF RESPECT**

Big Three:

- Show up on time.
- Be present for the 50 minutes we are together.
- Be respectful to other classmates.

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.

### **LATE WORK:**

I have been very intentional about how I have designed this course and distributed the content to optimize your learning and comprehension. Trying to cram weeks of work into a few days or waiting until the end of the semester to do everything isn't conducive to learning. For this reason, you must have an extenuating circumstance and approval from me to submit late work. If you submit late work without an approved extension from me, I reserve the right not to grade it. IMPORTANT NOTE: Since university-related travel (e.g., travel for athletics competition) is planned in advance (with a few exceptions), make sure to plan ahead. Please consult with me if you have concerns about how your university-related travel will impact a submission deadline. This needs to be done BEFORE you leave and before the deadline.

### **COURSE BLACKBOARD RESOURCES:**

There are several resources on the course Blackboard page. You are expected to review and familiarize yourself with the items in Blackboard in the first week of class. NOTE: Please post general, course-related questions to the discussion board forum I have set up for this. Typically, if one student in the class has the question, others do as well. Please allow 24 hours for a response, and then feel free to email me or call me directly with your question.

## **ADA STATEMENT**

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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 Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director, at 432-837-8203 or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/sulross). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

## **SRSU LIBRARY INFORMATION**

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/](http://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](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting [library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/](http://library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/) or ask a librarian by emailing [srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu).

## **SUPPORTIVE STATEMENT**

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may 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 a supportive 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.

## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

The Support Desk is where you can direct your more technical questions. For example, the Support Desk can help you if you are having issues submitting a document, getting videos to play, or using BlackBoard. The support desk is open 24 hours a day/7 days a week for your convenience.



You can reach the support desk:

- By calling 888.837.6055
- Via email [blackboardsupport@sulross.edu](mailto:blackboardsupport@sulross.edu)
- Using resources from the Technology Support tab within blackboard
- Clicking the Support Desk graphic on the course homepage

### **TUTORING:**

- a) Tutoring and Learning Center located in the library (call 432-837-8982 for a reservation with a tutor)
- b) Tutor.com (online tutoring services available—access via BlackBoard Tools) – be sure to allow 48 hours turnaround time for a writing assignment

### **GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION (VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON)**

SOURCE: Center for Teaching and Learning. (2020). Sample discussion board ground rules. Retrieved from <https://ctl.wiley.com/sample-discussion-board-ground-rules/>

- **Ask questions.**  
If you find something confusing or want to know more, do not hesitate to ask questions. Make sure to post your questions in the appropriate thread.
- **Participate.**  
Do not hide in the background; it is not fair to lurk and let others do all the work. Contribute to discussions to get as much as possible from the course and to maintain your participation grade.
- **Do not dominate a discussion.**  
Share your knowledge, but not to the point of excluding others. If you have something to offer, please share it, but allow everyone to contribute equally to a discussion.
- **Be intellectually rigorous.**  
Do not excuse sloppy or illogical thinking. Challenge yourself and one another.
- **Be tactful.**  
Be critical of ideas but remember there are other people involved. Be tactful and kind. You can hurt the feelings of a person reading your post.
- **Forgive other students' mistakes.**  
Do not correct others, even if you follow the rules of netiquette and use good manners. Just because you do not agree with a student's post does not mean that he or she is wrong. Instead, offer a different perspective to encourage further discussion.
- **Read the whole thread before posting.**  
Read all the posts in a thread before responding so you don't repeat what others have already said. Try to contribute clarifying information or a new idea to a discussion.
- **Be concise.**  
Do not waste people's time by posting basic, repetitive information. Make your point clearly and quickly.
- **Reread and check your posts.**  
Practice professionalism. Be mindful of how you look online; others will likely judge the tone and quality of your writing. Reread your posts and edit for clarity and mechanics.
- **Cite your sources.**

If you use a source, cite it properly. Give credit where credit is due. Include links where appropriate.

- **Maintain confidentiality.** Respect your classmates' privacy. Do not repeat the personal information that others share.
- **Report technical problems.** If the platform is not working properly, please let me know as soon as possible