

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR : ARTS AND HUMANITIES

AH 1101 - 001

FALL 2026

INSTRUCTOR: Mo Eldridge

COURSE FORMAT:

SCHEDULE : Monday and Wednesday 1-1:50

OFFICE HOURS : MAB 100

Monday - Thursday 3:30- 5 or by appointment

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.

Throughout the semester students will engage in a deeper understanding of the fields housed within the studies of Arts and Humanities. In general areas of study that explore creativity, values, history and human culture. The semester is divided into two equal parts of emphasis: communication within the context of the classroom and outside arts/community experience.

Course Goals: All First-Year Seminars have five common goals for every student enrolled:

Expand and deepen their understanding of the world and of self,

Enhance their ability to read and think critically,

Enhance their ability to communicate effectively, in writing, speech, and other appropriate forms,

Develop the fundamentals of information literacy and library research,

Work closely with the class instructor.

Course Mission: The mission of the First Year Seminar is to provide first-year students opportunities to: develop knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes that promote successful academic and non-academic participation, and appreciate multiple perspectives and value intellectual and cultural perspectives within and beyond college.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course students will:

Implement personal time management strategies based on short and long-term goals.

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.

Describe the institution, department, and course requirements to earn a college degree and be able to identify SRSU policies in relation to them.

Identify and utilize college resources, activities, and events and demonstrate the use of SRSU technology: student e-mail, SRSU website, Blackboard, and Lobo Online.

Exhibit financial literacy in relation to college and beyond.

Discuss the importance of SRSU in the larger community

Develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.

Develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

Academic Expectations: According to SRSU Undergraduate Academic Regulations, students must:

- A. be regular and punctual in attending classes;
- B. be well prepared for classes;
- C. submit required assignments in a timely manner;
- D. take exams when scheduled;
- E. act in a respectful manner toward other students and the instructor and in a way that does not detract from the learning experience; and
- F. make and keep appointments when necessary to meet with the instructor.

In addition to the above items, students are expected to meet the additional course and behavioral standards as defined in this syllabus.

Academic Integrity: Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. You are 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. On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment

Academic Writing: Unless specifically noted otherwise, all written work submitted must be in Microsoft WORD™, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, pages numbered, and have 1" margins on all sides. All work submitted should follow APA guidelines for formatting and bibliographical citations. Peer review of written work is an excellent practice and highly encouraged prior to submission of written assignments.

The University does not recommend or endorse any specific AI tools or resources. Students should be aware that many generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot) store user input and may use this data to train future models. For this reason, students should never upload or share personal, confidential, or identifiable information—such as names, ID numbers, health data, or assignment submissions containing such details—into any generative AI platform. When using AI tools, students should verify whether the tool complies with student privacy standards as indicated by the University. Faculty may recommend specific tools that better align with institutional data privacy policies, but ultimate responsibility for data protection rests with users. Students are encouraged to use faculty-recommended platforms when engaging in coursework involving generative AI. The University is not liable for any adverse experience or impact when students interact with these tools.

This class will strive to create an environment that fosters learning, critical thinking, and effective communication. To achieve these goals, I have decided to prohibit the use of Generative AI tools during this course. While these can be powerful and useful tools in certain contexts, I believe that relying on them for this course undermines the learning objectives. I want you to develop your skills in independent thinking, problem-solving, and engagement with the subject matter. By restricting the use of AI language models, you will utilize your knowledge, creativity, and critical analysis to complete your assignments and actively participate in class discussions. I understand that technology plays an increasingly prominent role in various aspects of our lives, and I acknowledge its potential benefits. However, in the context of this course, I believe that relying on personal effort and intellectual exploration will enhance your learning experience and contribute to your long-term development as a knowledgeable and well-rounded individual. It is important to note that this requirement applies to all aspects of the course, including assignments and any form of communication related to the course content. Any use of AI language models during these activities will be considered a student conduct code violation. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this course expectation, please feel free to discuss them with me. I am here to support and guide you throughout this educational journey.

Accommodations for Students: 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 [SRSU's Counseling and Accessibility Services Office](#) at 432-837-8203. Office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Add /Drop Policy: This course will follow the University add/drop policy and timeline.

Assignment Policy: It is expected that assignments will be submitted on or before the specified due date. Assignments may be submitted after the due date and will be assessed a percentage penalty; submitted within 7 days = 15%; submitted 8-14 days = 30%; submitted 15 days & beyond = 50%. Incompletes will only be assigned under extreme circumstances. The last day to submit any late/revised assignment is the last regular class day of the semester.

Assistive/Service Animal Protocol: At Sul Ross State University policy, assistive animal and service animals are under differing rules. Assistance animals are not permitted in classroom/labs; service animals, as defined under the ADA, are permitted anywhere on campus. For additional clarification reference the [SRSU Assistance Animal/Service Animal policy](#).

Attendance: You will be held accountable for all material covered in class, despite valid reasons for absence. Attendance will be recorded at each class session. In the case of emergency, students should contact the instructor as

soon as possible after the emergency situation has been resolved. Documentation of a “university excused absence” will allow the student to make up missed work, but WILL NOT count towards earned attendance points.

Health-Related Absences: Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and other on-campus events if you are ill. Students who miss class due to illness will be given opportunities to access course materials online. In the event of contagious illness, please do not come to class or to campus to turn in work. Instead notify the instructor by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that accommodations can be made. Please note that documentation (a Doctor’s note) for medical excuses is not required.

Classroom Climate and Respect: It is my intent, as course instructor, that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and beyond the course, and that the multiplicity students bring to this course be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of all students. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of this course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

At SRSU, we support learning environments where individual and cultural differences are appreciated, recognized, respected and understood. We shall hold each other accountable to demonstrate diligence in recognizing and respecting differing behaviors, perspectives and worldviews. In addition, in scheduling assignments, I have attempted to avoid conflicts with major religious/cultural holidays. If, however, I have inadvertently scheduled a major deadline that creates a conflict with your religious/cultural observances, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make other arrangements.

Collaboration: Unless otherwise specified, students may not collaborate on graded material. Any exceptions to this policy will be stated explicitly for individual assignments. If you have any questions about the limits of collaboration, you are expected to ask for clarification.

Copyright Notice for Course Materials: U.S. copyright laws protect this syllabus, course presentations, all Blackboard™ materials and any other course materials provided throughout this term. Students enrolled in the course may use materials for their own educational purposes within the Educational Fair Use policy of the U.S. Copyright Office. However, reproducing, selling or otherwise distributing these materials in any manner or medium without written permission of the copyright owner is expressly prohibited.

Electronic video and/or audio recording is not permitted during class/lab unless the student obtains written permission from the instructor. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited

Course Communication: Communication is a two-way interaction. Students are encouraged to stop by my office during posted office hours to ask questions, check-in or simply say hello. I also encourage you to call (phone number listed on p. 1) or email (also listed on p. 1). During the work week, I will check email multiple times through the day and will commit to responding to your communication within 48 hours. Weekend communication (noon Friday-8:00 AM Monday) will not be answered until Monday mornings after 8:00 AM. I request the same respectful commitment from you.

Library Information: The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend 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). 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/texshare

Plagiarism: Paraphrasing or quoting another's work without citing the source is a form of academic misconduct. Even inadvertent or unintentional misuse or appropriation of another's work (such as relying heavily on source material that is not expressly acknowledged) is considered plagiarism. You are strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself and to use the Originality Report feature in Blackboard to determine if you have inadvertently plagiarized or incorrectly cited a source. If you have any questions about using and citing sources, you are expected to ask for clarification.

SACSCOC Learning Outcomes (SACSCOC)

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

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

Shared Expectations:

You can expect me to:

Provide learning opportunities that advance your knowledge and development in becoming a successful college student.

Be available to provide assistance and answer your questions.

Be fair in my grading and assessment of your work.

Provide you with timely, constructive feedback on your work.

I will expect you to:

Complete all assignments thoroughly, in a timely manner.

Look at each assignment as an occasion for you to learn, and make the most of every learning opportunity.

Be honest and submit your own original work.

Participate in class discussions and activities; this helps you as well as all of your classmates.

Student Demeanor: Sul Ross State University expects all students to conduct themselves as honest, responsible and law-abiding members of the academic community and to respect the rights of other students, members of the faculty and staff and the public to use, enjoy and participate in the University programs and facilities. For additional information, reference the [SRSU Student Handbook](#).

Students are full partners in fostering a classroom environment conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class; students are prohibited from engaging in any form of

behavior that detracts from the learning experience of fellow students. Inappropriate behavior will result in a request for the offending student to leave class.

Opposing perspectives are welcomed and encouraged. Nevertheless, class participants are expected to treat one another with the respect and dignity to which all community members are entitled. Nothing less than such democratic behavior will be acceptable. I support an inclusive learning environment where diversity and differently-abled individuals/groups are appreciated, recognized and respected. All SRSU community members will demonstrate diligence in understanding how peoples' perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews enhance us all as individuals and as a community.

Hands-on participation is essential for successful completion of this course; therefore, each class member must come prepared, both physically and mentally, to take part in each class activity. Through experiential activities, students will individually and collaboratively solve problems, make decisions, reflect on past and current practices, and engage in dialogue. For this pedagogy to be successful, student participation is critical. Each student enrolled must access course content through Blackboard AND review the assigned materials PRIOR to attending class. Other specific classroom rules will be discussed as appropriate.

General Rules for Classroom:

No food. No computers. No use of phones. Audio or video recording during class is prohibited. Use of headphones/earbuds is prohibited unless you have the accompanying documentation for such an accommodation.

Student Records: All records related to this course are confidential and will not be shared with anyone, without a signed, written release. If you wish to have information from your records shared with others, you must provide written request/authorization to the instructor. Before giving such authorization, you should understand the purpose of the release and to whom and for how long the information is authorized for release.

Student Wellness: SRSU strives to create a culture of support and recognizes that your mental health and wellness are equally as important as your physical health. We want you to know it is OK if you experience difficulty, and there are several resources on campus to help you succeed emotionally, personally, and academically. Please know that if you choose to confide in me, I am required by the university to report to the Title IX Coordinator, as SRSU and I want to ensure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. You are not required to respond to outreach from the university if you do not want to do so. You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the [SRSU Title IX Report Form](#).

Our university has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free online counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](#). 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.

Tutoring:

Tutoring and Learning Center located in the library (call 432-837-8982 for a reservation with a tutor)

Tutor.com (online tutoring services available on BlackBoard) – be sure to allow 48 hours turnaround time for a writing assignment.

Course Structure & Expectations

You are responsible to attend four out of class activities through a student organization, an on-campus event, or a local art event.

You will be expected to have a journal for the semester. You will turn the journal in at midterms and at the end of the semester. Each week a discussion topic will be presented as a topic of inquiry. You are responsible to write a two page free write in response. These topics will be discussed in-class and a follow up discussion will appear on Blackboard.

Complete all Blackboard discussion prompts.

Attend all sessions. If you must miss class, notify your instructor. The course structure depends on student roles and participation.

This course will serve as both a space for discussion, a space to examine the basics to succeeding and staying organized in college, and a place to explore ways students personally want to engage with the Arts and Humanities at SRSU.

Every student will have at least 1:1 meeting with the instructor to overview personal goals and strategies to integrate into SRSU campus / community.

Assessment & Grading Criteria

You can earn up to 1000 total possible points. The number of points needed to earn the following grades are:
900-1000=a, 800-899=b, 700-799=c, 600-699=d, 0-599=f.

PRE PROGRESS REPORT—5%	(50)
WEEKLY PROMPT RESPONSE — 40%	(400)
EXTERNAL EVENT REPORT— 20%	(200)
FINAL JOURNAL — 30%	(300)
POST PROGRESS REPORT—5%	(50)

Tentative Class Schedule

WEEK 1

8.24 Introduction: syllabus / text / structure / expectation

8.26 Student engagement & career Fair (meet on main campus at University Center.)

WEEK 2

8.31 Introduction to Values Assessment (how do your values relate to engagement)

9.2 writing emails / professional communication

WEEK 3

9.7 Labor Day — No Classes, University Center Closed

9.9 Pre-progress report

WEEK 4

9.14 Museum of the Big Bend as a reference to cultural place

9.16 relationship between belonging and place

WEEK 5

9.21 Academic reading

Living, Thinking, Looking — On Reading

9.23 Academic Integrity & AI

WEEK 6

9.28 defining goals— challenge report.

9.30 Making lists— observations as organization recall.

WEEK 7

10.5 Introduction to the Chinati foundation.

10.7 Ways of seeing— ways of seeing art.

WEEK 8

10.12 Chinati weekend report back.

10.14 Time management & career assessment

WEEK 9

10.19 Visiting the herbarium w/ Dr. Powell

10.21 Notes on taking Notes

WEEK 10

10.26 On loneliness

Technology and Loneliness / The Lonely City, Olivia Laing

10.28 Reflections on the Lonely City

WEEK 11

11.2 The library and research.

11.4 citing sources

WEEK 12

11.9 Asking question— interview as inquiry

11.11 Strategic plan assignment.

WEEK 13

11.16 Writing your mission with a partner.

11.18 Art Walk

WEEK 14

11.23 Museum of the Big Bend Trappings visit

11.25 Thanksgiving no classes

WEEK 15

11.30 Preparing for Finals— mental states.

12.2 post assessment.

WEEK 16

FINALS WEEK

Connecting with Students for Success

As a part of a research study, I am committed in this course to the following:

- I will know your name
- I will provide user-friendly, timely feedback on your assignments
- I will hold high standards and support you to achieve them
- I will hold an individual meeting with each student during the semester