



Class: GBAA 1101

Class Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00 – 1:50 PM

Instructor: Philamer C. Torio

Office: MAB 309-E

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Credit: 1

Location: BAB 318

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Office Hours: TBA

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.

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

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.

Course Materials-Required: Blackboard Ultra access (via personal device or SRSU computer labs); SRSU email address (firstname.lastname@sulross.edu)

Supplemental Materials: (Provided through SR Blackboard)

Course Mission: The mission of the First Year Seminar is to provide first-year students opportunities to:

1. develop knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes that promote successful academic and non-academic participation, and
2. appreciate multiple perspectives and value intellectual and cultural perspectives within and beyond college.

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

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.

7. Develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
8. Develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

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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 7 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%.* The instructor reserves the right to change the penalty for late assignments as he deems fit. 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: Class participants will be treated as mature individuals who have developed a sense of responsibility for their education. As such, 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.

Evaluation Components:

Attendance & In-Class Participation: Regular attendance and participation are important to success in this course. Throughout the semester, you will take part in discussions, workshops, and other in-class activities. Students will receive credit for class meetings in which they are present and participate in the scheduled activity. At the end of the semester, the percentage of class meetings completed will determine the Attendance & In-Class Participation grade out of 100 points.

Syllabus Quiz: During the first week of class, you will complete a short quiz in Blackboard covering important information from the course syllabus. *The Syllabus Quiz is due by 11:59 PM of August 30 and is worth 25 points.*

Introduction Post: During the first week of class, you will complete a brief introduction post in Blackboard to introduce yourself to the class and become familiar with the discussion board. *The Introduction Post is due by 11:59PM of August 30 and is worth 25 points.*

Email Assignment: Early in the semester, you will practice professional communication by writing and sending an email to your instructor using your SRSU email account. The assignment will focus on organization, clarity, tone, and appropriate email etiquette. *The Email Assignment is due by 11:59PM of September 14 and is worth 50 points.*

Career Fair Reflection – Attend the Career Fair at the Morgan University Center on August 26, 2026, from 11:30AM – 2:30PM. *Reflection is due by 11:59PM of September 2 and is worth 25 points.*

Instructor Meeting Assignment: Each student is required to meet individually with the instructor during the semester. You will be given several weeks to schedule and complete the meeting. *Your meeting should be scheduled by October 5 and completed by October 16.* Additional instructions and scheduling information will be provided in class and on Blackboard. *The Instructor Meeting Assignment is worth 100 points.*

SMART Goal and Action Plan: You will develop a SMART goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound. You will also identify practical steps, possible barriers, and resources that can help you make progress toward your goal. *The SMART Goal and Action Plan is due by 11:59PM of October 1 and is worth 100 points.*

Research Skills Bibliography: You will use SRSU Library resources to locate and evaluate sources related to a topic of your choice. The assignment will ask you to demonstrate your ability to find appropriate sources, identify different source types, evaluate their usefulness, and create citations. *The Research Skills Bibliography is due by 11:59PM of October 13 and is worth 175 points.*

Career Exploration Activity: You will complete a career assessment and investigate a career that interests you. The activity will ask you to explore areas such as education requirements, skills, salary, job outlook, and how the career connects with your interests and goals. *The Career Exploration Activity is due by 11:59PM of October 25 and is worth 100 points.*

Registration Activity: To prepare for the Spring 2027 semester, you will meet with your advisor to review your academic progress and planned courses. You will complete the appropriate advising and registration steps and submit documentation of the completed activity. *The Registration Activity is due by 11:59 pm on November 22 and is worth 100 points.*

First-Semester Reflection: At the end of semester, you will reflect on your first semester of college, including your successes, challenges, habits, and progress toward your goals. You will use what you have learned to develop a plan for continued success in the Spring semester. *The First-Semester Reflection is due by 11:59PM of December 9 and is worth 200 points.*

Evaluation Points:

Attendance & In-Class Participation	100
Career Fair Reflection	25
Syllabus Quiz	25
Introduction Post	25
Email Assignment	50
Instructor Meeting Assignment	100
SMART Goals & Action Plan	100
Research Skills & Bibliography	175
Career Exploration Activity	100
Registration Activity	100
First-Semester Reflection	200
Total	1,000

Evaluation Scale:

900 – 1000 points	A
800 – 899 points	B
700 – 799 points	C
600 – 699 points	D
Below 600 points	F

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)

1. Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.;
2. 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.
- Enjoy this class!

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.
- Enjoy this class!

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:

1. No food will be allowed in the classroom.
2. You may bring a non-alcoholic drink with an appropriate lid to class. This privilege WILL be suspended if abused.
3. SRSU has adopted a Tobacco-Free policy. The University prohibits smoking and use of all tobacco products on all University property. (SRSU APM Policy 2.05)

4. Professionalism, including professional attire when presenting, is expected.
5. Cell phones, tablets, laptops and other devices used for class involvement are encouraged. 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:

- 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 on BlackBoard) – be sure to allow 48 hours turnaround time for a writing assignment.

Planned Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics	Preparation/Assignments
1	8/25	Course introduction, syllabus, and course expectations	- Virtual meeting – Log in thru course's Blackboard webpage - Read course's syllabus - Syllabus Quiz, Introduction Post – Due by 11:59PM, 08/30
	8/26	Student Engagement & Career Fair	Attend at Morgan University Center (11:30AM – 2:30PM) Career Fair Reflection – Due by 11:59PM, 09/02
2	9/1	SRSU Techno	- Virtual meeting – Log in thru course's Blackboard webpage
	9/3	No class	
3	9/8	Email Workshop	IN CLASS – FROM HEREON Email Assignment – Due by 11:59PM, 09/14
	9/10	Note Taking in College	
4	9/15	SRSU Traditions	SRSU Traditions Quiz (in-class)
	9/17	Academic Integrity for Students	Academic Integrity Survey (in-class)
5	9/22	Types of Academic Dishonesty	Academic Honesty Quiz
	9/24	Setting Goals	Goal Setting Assignment – Due by 11:59PM, 10/01
6	9/29	Goal-Setting Exercise	
	10/1	Library Resources	
7	10/6	Library Research Workshop	Start instructor meetings Research Skills Bibliography – Due by 11:59PM, 10/13
	10/8	Effective Writing & Proper Citation	
8	10/13	Research Bibliography Exercise	
	10/15	Career Planning	Instructor meetings to end by 10/16
9	10/20	Career Exploration Workshop	Myers-Briggs Test Career Exploration Activity – Due by 11:59PM, 10/25
	10/22	Financial Aid	
10	10/27	Budgeting & Managing Your Money	
	10/29	Planning for the Next Semester	
11	11/3	Registration Workshop	Registration Activity – Due by 11:59PM, 11/18
	11/5	Managing Your Time	
12	11/10	Prioritizing Your Time	
	11/12	Studying Effectively	
13	11/17	Stress Management	
	11/19	Preparing for Finals	
14	11/24	Looking Back at the First Semester	
	11/26	No Class	
15	12/1	Planning for Next Semester	

	12/3	Wrap-Up	
16	Finals Week		<i>Final Refelections – Due 11:59PM, 12/9</i>