

SS 1101
First Year Seminar
Fall 2026
Mondays & Wednesdays, 1-1:50 p.m., LH 200



Professor: Jessica Velasco, DPA

Office Hours: M (12-1, 2-3), T (2-5), W (12-1) and by appt

Office Location: LH 210

Phone: 432-837-8742 (office)

Email: jessica.velasco@sulross.edu

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.
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.

Course Materials:

All of the reading materials for this class will be provided in class or on Blackboard. You will need to access Blackboard on a personal device or on a computer in the library.

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

Attendance & Participation	200 points
DB-Introduction Post	50 points
Syllabus Quiz	20 points
Email Assignment	50 points
Office Meeting with Professor	100 points
Student Engagement & Career Fair Card	50 points
Career Assessment	100 points
SRSU Activity Sheet	80 points
Class Service Activity	100 points

Registration Exercise	100 points
Final Presentation	150 points
Total	1000 points

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION/CLASS ENGAGEMENT: Attendance and participation are worth 200 points in this class. Please come prepared to participate. Being prepared to participate means:

- You have paper and writing utensils to take notes
- You have removed ALL distractions—computer and phone are off and stowed away, earbuds are removed, etc. (unless otherwise directed or approved through accommodations)
- **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 BOARD—INTRODUCTION POST: To better familiarize you with Blackboard and each other, you will need to post an introduction post to the discussion board during the first week of classes. Instructions and rubrics are on Blackboard. This is due by Friday by 11:59 p.m. in the first week of class.

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 and facilitate the scheduling of your meeting with a professor, you will need to complete an email assignment by 11:59 p.m. on 9/4. Please see the instructions and rubric on Blackboard.

OFFICE MEETING WITH PROFESSOR: By September 16, you will need to complete your meeting with a professor. Please see the instructions on Blackboard. This is worth 100 points.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & CAREER FAIR CARD: On 8/26, instead of having class, we will be meeting at the University Center so you can attend the Student Engagement and Career Fair. In order to get credit for this, you must complete the card. These will be handed out when we meet, and you will submit them before you leave the fair. These are worth 50 points.

CAREER ASSESSMENT: Around the mid-term mark, we'll be doing a career assessment during class to help inform class discussions that week and the following weeks. The career assessment is worth 100 points.

SRSU ACTIVITY SHEET: 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 16. Instructions and rubrics are on Blackboard. This is worth 80 points.

CLASS SERVICE ACTIVITY: During Homecoming Week, we will be taking a walk to the desk and collecting trash (on 10/14). This is worth 100 points. If you have physical limitations that will prevent you from completing this activity, please let me know as soon as possible so I can provide other options.

REGISTRATION EXERCISE: To facilitate and incentivize early Spring 2027 registration, you will be earning 100 points for completing the registration activity by November 30. The instructions and a rubric are provided on Blackboard.

FINAL PRESENTATION: At the end of the semester, you will present reflections on the semester, as well as highlights from the class and what you learned in your first semester as a college student. Instructions and a basic presentation outline are provided on Blackboard. These presentations will take place during the scheduled exam time for this class.

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

Week	Date	Topics	Preparation/Assignments
1	8/24	Introduction to the Course & SRSU Technology Essentials (Blackboard, Email, OneDrive, Office 365, DB, uploading a document)	- Read the Syllabus - Complete Syllabus Quiz - Post an introduction post
	8/26	Student Engagement & Career Fair (meet on main campus at University Center)	Attend the fair and complete the Student Engagement & Career Fair activity card
2	8/31	College vs. HS/ The importance of the Syllabus/ Getting to Know the Area	Email assignment due on 9/4 (by 11:59 p.m.)
	9/2	Goal Setting, Opportunities, & Resources (SSS, McNair, Honors, etc.)	
3	9/7	Labor Day Holiday – No Classes, University Closed	
	9/9	Time Management & FTF vs. Online Classes	
4	9/14	Relationships, Support Networks, & Counseling Information	
	9/16	Academic Integrity & AI Literacy	Meeting with a Professor Due
5	9/21	Reading & Note-taking	

	9/23	Test Taking (& Installing Lockdown Browsers) & Feedback Literacy	
6	9/28	Motivation	
	9/30	Library Resources & Voter Registration	Meet at Library
7	10/5	Career Assessment (in class)	
	10/7	Career Assessment Results (review & discussion)	
8	10/12	University Leadership Structure & Traditions (Homecoming Week)	
	10/14	BASS Walk to the Desk & Pick up trash	Meet at Hancock Hill Trailhead
9	10/19	DegreeWorks & Registration Tools	
	10/21	Financial Literacy, Budgets	
10	10/26	Communication	
	10/28	Communication	
11	11/2	Anthropology	
	11/4	Anthropology	
12	11/9	Psychology	
	11/11	Psychology	
13	11/16	History	SRSU Activity Sheet Due
	11/18	History	
14	11/23	NO CLASS	
	11/25	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Classes, University Closed	
15	11/30	Political Science	Registration Activity Due
	12/2	Political Science	
16	Finals Week	Oral Presentations	

Other important dates:

- August 24, First Day of Classes
- August 27, Last day for registration and schedule changes
- September 7, Labor Day Holiday, No classes
- September 9, Last day to drop a 16-week class without creating an academic record
- October 5, Last day to register to vote in November elections
- October 19, First day of early voting
- October 30, Last day of early voting
- November 2, Registration for Spring 2027 begins
- November 3, Election Day
- November 6, Last day to drop a 16-week course with a “W”
- November 25-27, Thanksgiving Day Holiday (begins after last class meets on Tuesday)

- December 2, Last class day before finals
- December 3, Dead day
- December 4, 7-9, 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 sincere care and concern for you and your classmates.

WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:

- You will check your SRSU email daily and your course Blackboard shell at least every other day.
- 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. ***In this course, every element of class assignments must be fully prepared by the student. The use of generative AI tools for any part of your work will be treated as plagiarism.*** 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!

LATE WORK:

All assignments in this class have due dates, and you are expected to submit work by those due dates. If you have an extenuating circumstance, you need to communicate with me ASAP, and we will discuss any due date adjustments that are appropriate. 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 Blackboard in your course shell. 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 designated 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.

ACCOMMODATIONS

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.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

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 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://timelycare.com/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.

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/. 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 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/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

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
- 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