

## **I. FRESHMAN SEMINAR**

Two semester course, each semester = 1 course unit

### **FIRST SEMESTER:**

#### **1. LEARNING GOALS:**

- a. Reading, interpreting, analyzing, contextualizing, and evaluating information
- b. Organizing concepts and effectively communicating them to others
- c. Very strong emphasis on writing, plagiarism, correct citation
- d. Developing information literacy
- e. Familiarity with academic policies and procedures
- f. Understanding of the College mission (liberal arts) and emphasis on interdisciplinarity
- g. Introduce academic life, instill curiosity and love for learning
- h. Developing a sense of membership in the Albright community

#### **2. STRUCTURE:**

- a. 4 contact hours per week
  - o 2-3 contact hours with instructor: discussion of readings, overview of curriculum and general studies requirements, development of critical thinking and speaking skills
  - o 0-1 contact hour with mentor leading (instructor still present) – discussion of student concerns and questions, time management skills, information literacy lessons, review and tutoring on class assignments
  - o 1 contact hour with writing fellow – review feedback on writing assignments, extensive rewriting
- b. Taught by a single instructor with an upper class mentor and a writing fellow assistant
- c. Course is linked to two other freshman seminars
- d. Experience events offered and theme-required assignment associated with events.

#### **3. THEME/CONTENT: Knowing Self and the World**

- a. Topic chosen by faculty member based on connection to theme, personal interest and expertise, and ability to connect with two other seminar topics

**QUESTION: What might be some example themes and topics?**

- b. Emphasis on primary reading, reflective writing, and discussion
- c. Required assignments:
  - o 15 pages of writing (revisions expected)
  - o one oral presentation
  - o information literacy assignments
  - o experience event assignment
  - o draft of course application plan (CAP) with supporting argumentation (to be stored electronically)

## **SECOND SEMESTER:**

### **1. LEARNING GOALS:**

- a. Reading, interpreting, analyzing, contextualizing, and evaluating information
- b. Organizing concepts and effectively communicating them to others
- c. Further developing information literacy
- d. Introduction to interdisciplinary and integrative studies:
  - i. Identifying similarities, differences, and complementarities among different fields of study and practice
  - ii. Appreciating the diversity of theories, interpretations, and creative expressions within disciplines

### **2. STRUCTURE:**

- a. Three first semester seminars will meet together as one larger seminar
- b. Three instructors from those first seminars will teach the course together
- c. Contact hours:
  - o 2 contact hours with instructors: discussion of readings, bringing different disciplinary perspectives to bear on the topic, development of critical thinking and speaking skills
  - o 1 contact hour with mentors leading (instructor still present) – discussion of student concerns and questions, time management skills, information literacy lessons, review and tutoring on class assignments
  - o 1 contact hour with writing fellow – review feedback on writing assignments, extensive rewriting

ALTERNATIVE: meetings with mentor and writing instructor would be done in smaller groups.

- d. Experience events offered with theme-required assignment associated with events

### **3. THEME/CONTENT: Ways of Knowing: Disciplines and Interdisciplinarity, progressing to multi-disciplinarity and trans-disciplinarity**

- a. Topic chosen by faculty members based on connection to theme, personal interest and expertise, ability to build upon topics of three first year seminars

**QUESTION: What might be some example themes and topics?**

- b. Emphasis on primary reading, reflective writing, and discussion
- c. Required assignments:
  - o 15 pages of writing (revisions expected)
  - o one oral presentation
  - o information literacy assignments
  - o finalized application of curriculum application plan (CAP) – concentration/co-concentration and cluster selections, experiential learning selection, extra-curricular activities, career exploration (would include documentation concerning conversations/information regarding above)
  - o experience event assignment

#### 4. LOGISTICS:

- a. Instructor of first semester seminar would serve as students' first year academic advisor. Students would not officially declare areas of concentration until the end of second semester. All students will be viewed as "alpha" in the first year. In the case of students who are planning to concentrate in areas where intensive advising in the area of concentration is needed in the first year, instructor will provide that or send student to appropriate faculty member. Will require ensuring all course requirement sheets are up-to-date.

ALTERNATIVE: Keep current system where some students can declare area of concentration upon entry.

- b. First year seminars would be limited to no more than 15 students
- c. Teams of three instructors would be expected to work collaboratively on developing seminars and creating linkages between them
- d. Each team of instructors would be responsible for sponsoring one experience event during course of year (approximately 2/month)
- e. Students would select topics of interest prior to matriculation, however, second semester assignments would be determined by the seminar they took in the first semester. That is, they are automatically enrolled in the seminar comprised of the first section seminar and the two others. Their primary instructor in the second seminar could be either the same instructor from the first seminar or one of the other two instructors.

ALTERNATIVE 1: Students would be allowed to select their second semester seminar, as they did the first.

- f. Writing fellows – each writing fellow would be responsible for three seminars and bi-weekly meetings with students. This would equal approximately 15 contact hours per week (est. meeting time 30-45 minutes) in addition to grading writing, developing writing workshops, etc. Fellows must have at least a masters degree and be trained in composition. This component of the curriculum would be overseen by the Director of Writing across the Curriculum.
- g. Mentors – upper class students in good academic standing who are also fully engaged in the community. Must have excellent mentoring skills (ability to listen, motivate, and assist students with concerns), academic skills, and understanding and commitment to interdisciplinarity and the liberal arts. Mentors will run one hour of class per week, which will focus on the academic skill and community goals of the course. May include out-of-class social events.
- h. Instructors must commit to teaching the first year seminar for two years. At the end of two years, the sequence will count as five courses, thus the instructor would have one less course in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester. [If possible, the instructors would receive one course release for first year taught, to reflect development of course. So in first cycle, the instructor would have a five course load both years, in subsequent years, the instructor would have a five course load only in the second year. Instructor would be expected to meet weekly with other instructors and mentors for course preparation.]

ALTERNATIVE/ADDITION: Equalize to the greatest extent possible the number of advisees each advisor has. This would help with the load.

- i. Based on FTE, each department would be required to provide a certain number of first year seminar instructors in each two year cycle.
- j. Identify and provide necessary faculty curriculum instruction and advising support.

II. DISTRIBUTION COURSES: Introductions to the four divisions. Students would be required to take 3 of the 4, excluding only their major division. These can be drawn from existing courses, or divisions might wish to develop new courses. Each of these courses would have a common set of goals developed by the division. [Jennifer]

### III. CLUSTERS

- a. ALT 1: [Steve]  
2 clusters, 5 or 6 courses each.  
Of the total, at least one must be from each division  
Each cluster would contain courses across divisions
- b. ALT 2: [Fouad]  
4 clusters, 2 courses each  
Each cluster would represent one division – NS, HUM, FA, SS. (not necessarily only taught by faculty in that division)  
Under this model Component II would be eliminated
- c. ALT 3: [Kennon]  
1 cluster, 3 courses each.  
Each course must be from a different division

IV. OTHER REQUIREMENTS NEEDED [Dan – flesh this out, explain its purpose and how it relates to component III]

If not already fulfilled in clusters or concentrations, would need to take courses to fulfill following requirements:

1. **Quantitative and logical Reasoning**
2. **Foreign Language (competency at level of 201 required; language and culture?)**
3. **Cross Cultural Understanding (Exploring the history...)**
4. **Ethical values and social and global responsibility (Fostering discernment...)**

ALTERNATIVE 1: Ethics course

**Question:** How are the fine arts defined? Should there be a creative artistic expression (drawing, creative writing, music performance, drama) requirement? Or will the fine arts include these type of creation-oriented classes AND art history, music history, etc.?

**Question:** do cluster courses need to be coordinated by faculty?

**Question:** what is a culture and what counts as “another culture”? Does it have to be non-Western? How would we define it? Should we use terms like other, difference, or diversity? What courses would fulfill this requirement? (Exploring intensively...)

V. SENIOR SEMINAR [Fouad and Kennon]

VI. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING