

***FIRST-YEAR
SEMINARS:
A FACULTY HANDBOOK***

APRIL 2006

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN _____

*F*aculty members and students come to First-Year Seminars with different agendas. The students, we have learned, like the convenience of fulfilling two general education requirements in one package. As a happy result, they study Composition during their first term on campus rather than postponing it. The promise of an instant network of friends on campus also appeals to our commuting student body. What they probably don't know is that becoming part of a social group on campus improves their chances for academic success, since joining a learning community helps shape new identities as college learners. Success means better retention.

First-year seminars appeal to CASL faculty members because of our commitment to teaching undergraduates. Better yet, the seminars invite faculty members to "teach to their passion," choosing broad topics that unleash their creative energies. These are not just classes in how to use the library and how to develop bibliographies. They help students see beyond grades, credits, and careers, important as they are, to the precious opportunity a university offers to explore the life of the mind, to reflect more consciously and critically about important ideas and issues, and to think and write more thoughtfully.

My own agenda is two-fold. I want to see students become better integrated into the intellectual life on campus and therefore to learn better and graduate sooner. But I also have an agenda for faculty participants. Collaboration on First-Year Seminars enriches our lives as teachers and also our lives as scholars, sometimes in unpredictable ways. The joint planning, the recruitment efforts, and the reflection on what we have and have not accomplished helps us understand our students better, but also lets us learn about one another as scholars. The collaborative work allows for serendipitous inspiration, mutual mentoring, and even joint research projects. Thus First-Year Seminars build learning communities among faculty as well as students-learners all.

Here's to the life of the group that nurtures the life of the mind!

—Kathryn Anderson-Levitt, Dean
College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters

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CHAPTER 1

FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

First-Year Seminars (FYS) were introduced at UM-Dearborn in the Fall of 2003. The seminars are small classes (20-25 students) on interesting topics, designed to introduce new students to critical thinking, to college-level study, and to the culture of the university, while helping them build a community of peers. Each seminar is linked to a designated composition class so that students enroll in both as a single cohort. The ongoing program is headed by a FYS faculty coordinator who is usually a veteran of several FYS semesters. The Associate Dean for College-Wide Programs provides oversight in the CASL Dean's office.

1.1 GOALS OF FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR PROGRAM

Below are summarized seven explicit goals of the First-Year Seminar Program. The First-Year Seminars are designed to:

- create significant interaction between students and faculty;
- create a sense of community and ease the social transition of students to UM-Dearborn;
- provide significant engagement with college-level reading;
- provide significant engagement with college-level writing;
- provide entry-level opportunities for college research and an introduction to the university library and its online resources;
- take advantage of the linkage between a paired seminar and composition class;
- improve students' critical thinking abilities.

There are also a number of implicit or indirect goals of the First-Year Seminar Program. These include improving retention, exciting students about University life, encouraging students to explore University resources, and offering faculty an opportunity to "teach their passion."

1.2 SEMINAR-COMPOSITION LINKAGE

The linkage of a Seminar with a Composition class is an important, deliberate part of the design of the First-Year Seminar Program. The goals of this linkage and models that have been explored thus far are discussed below.

Administratively, as the number of Seminars offered has grown, so has the difficulty of scheduling these pairs. This task has been complicated further as Seminars are linked with Composition classes other than COMP 105. Enforcement of the simultaneous enrollment of students in the linked courses requires resources from CASL Advising and Records. It is important that the faculty in the FYS Program consider carefully how they will develop the linkage between their courses.

1.2.1 GOALS OF COMPOSITION LINKAGE

The explicit goals of the Seminar-Composition linkage include the following:

- to provide a model for the integration of different university courses
- to offer an arena for the development of a shared social and intellectual community
- to help students apply principles of effective writing in non-composition courses
- to give faculty partners occasions for discussing effective methods of incorporating writing, reading, critical thinking, and research across the curriculum

1.2.2 MODELS

In the first years of the First-Year Seminar Program, several models have developed for linking the Composition course and the Seminar. Success at meeting the goals of the composition linkage have been found with various models. Faculty partners are encouraged to develop a model for their courses that best fits their respective pedagogical strengths and the topics of their courses. The most general goal for these paired courses is for students to perceive not only these two courses, but their entire university career, as part of an interrelated whole, rather than as a set of arbitrarily discrete experiences.

Composition courses most often choose a theme that is complementary to (but clearly distinct from) the subject of the seminar. For example, the FYS on Car Culture was paired with a Composition course focusing on popular culture; the FYS on Shakespeare on Page, Stage, and Screen was paired with a Composition course focusing on visual rhetoric. The degree of planned collaboration between the two courses has varied a good deal. One model has the courses running along parallel tracks, without much explicit collaboration; even these pairings do reap some of the benefits of an emergent community among students, who tend to be more relaxed and more open about contributing to class discussions than they might be in other courses. A second model has certain explicit points of contact; perhaps a particular writing assignment in the seminar is discussed in the composition class, or a project drafted in one class is revised with a different purpose or audience in the other class. A third model incorporates substantial shared experiences between the two classes: perhaps the results of student research or a field trip are developed in two distinct projects; perhaps a field trip or other experiential learning opportunity is integrated into both classes; perhaps certain central texts (including films) are studied and used in different ways in the two classes. Faculty partners are encouraged to develop their own creative approaches to this collaboration and to share successes and failures with other faculty in the First-Year Seminar Program.

An ancillary benefit of the linkage between the two courses occurs when faculty share their own approaches to teaching writing, reading, critical thinking, and research with each other. Faculty partners often have knowledge and experience to offer each other regarding effective class presentation and discussion, collaborative student work, and assessment, particularly of writing assignments. Early and continued cooperation between faculty partners will help the collaboration be as positive as it can be for both students and faculty members. The compensation arrangements for the First-Year Seminar Program envision extended discussions in the planning stage for the courses and continued contact during the semester.

One caveat is to be sure that each course has a distinct identity. If the composition class is perceived by students as only a discussion section or tutorial for the main course, both courses suffer. It is particularly useful, for example, for each course to have distinct writing assignments. Finally, it's also important for each faculty member to discuss the principles of effective writing in her or his class, especially the implications of different audiences and disciplinary conventions for determining what constitutes good writing in a given situation.

1.3 BENEFITS

These linked seminar and composition classes offer great benefits to students. Among these are intense classroom interaction with peers and faculty members, active engagement with college-level reading, writing, and critical thinking, related extracurricular activities, and fulfillment of a specific distribution requirement, in addition to their composition requirement.

There are benefits to participating faculty as well. These include an opportunity for close engagement with students at the front door of their undergraduate experience, a chance to teach a favored topic, inclusion in a quasi-“learning community” of cooperating FYS faculty, and an opportunity for creative teaching in a small seminar format. There is some modest funding for associated expenses like field trips and student mentors. There is also some limited support available for faculty members to attend related workshops and conferences.

1.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM

Since the introduction of the First-Year Seminar Program, roughly three courses have been added to the list of Seminars each year. For a table detailing all First-Year Seminars offered so far (the Seminar number and name, the Seminar and Composition instructors, the term the courses were offered, the CASL distribution requirements that the Seminar fulfills, and comments explaining the reason for a course's absence in a given term) see Appendix I. A brief description of the courses can be found in Appendix IV.

As might be expected, offerings have occasionally been interrupted or postponed by sabbatical and medical leaves. In one instance a section was cancelled because of very low enrollments. Nonetheless, faculty members are expected to offer their respective seminar three to five times.

In most instances the seminars have been linked to sections of COMP 105. The offering of LIBS 118 with a COMP 106 link in the Winter of 2006 was an exception, having been postponed from Fall 2005. In Fall 2006 two courses, LIBS 122 and LIBS 113, were purposely linked to sections of COMP 099 and COMP 106, respectively, to test the feasibility of these models. While the FYS Program was designed for first-semester students who typically place into COMP 105, this pilot will allow us to explore offering a seminar experience to the smaller number of freshmen placing into either COMP 099 or into COMP 106.

The decision concerning which CASL distribution requirements may be fulfilled by a Seminar rests with the CASL Executive Committee. It is made, of course, in conjunction with input from the relevant discipline or department, and in response to the proposing faculty member's written rationale.

1.5 COMPENSATION

A call for FYS proposals usually goes out in the early Fall term. Seminar proposals are normally approved by the CASL Executive Committee during the Fall term preceding the first offering of the course, in time to schedule the seminar for the following Fall term. It is assumed that faculty will use the Winter and Summer terms before the first offering to develop their seminars.

Stipends to seminar faculty for developing and offering the seminar are now paid as follows, normally during the middle of the term:

Winter Term Preceding First Offering:	\$1000
Fall Term of First Offering:	\$ 500
Fall Term of Second Offering:	\$ 500
Fall Term of Third Offering:	\$ 500
Fall Term of Fourth Offering:	\$ 500
Fall Term of Fifth Offering:	\$ 500

Payments to composition faculty for offering a linked composition class are \$500 per term. The Faculty Coordinator receives \$500 per year.

The initial faculty stipend of \$1000 is considered to be for course development. If the course is not delivered on schedule, the Dean has the discretion to recall the stipend. Faculty are expected to offer each seminar three to five times. Compensation is linked to the number of offerings. The maximum total stipend is \$3500.

While it is hoped that these courses will offer participating faculty many intangible rewards, the stipends are a direct recognition of the extra duties associated with the First-Year Seminars: submitting and refining a formal course proposal that addresses program goals; planning a highly interactive course; conferring with other FYS faculty; participating in student recruitment events; and sharing assessment duties.

CHAPTER 2

THE FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR STUDENT

2.1 STUDENT AUDIENCE

Based upon past years' experiences a profile of the typical FYS student emerges. The distribution of young men and women in the seminars does not differ substantially from their present gender distribution of 40%-60% within CASL. Similarly, the proportion of minorities electing seminars is not noticeably different than their representation on campus. A significant proportion of the enrollment seems to draw from undecided students.

Average ACT scores for the Freshman Class in Fall 2005 was 23.4, in contrast to a score of 22 for students electing the FYS Program. The average high school GPA for all freshmen was 3.48 versus 3.37 for the FYS students. The performance of FYS students at UM-Dearborn as measured by GPA seems to be tracking about the same as their broader cohort, allowing for removal of the Honors Program admits from the general pool. The same seems to be true for retention figures.

2.2 STUDENT RECRUITMENT

At present the FYS Program at UM-Dearborn is available only to first-semester first-year students. The registration for such students takes place in the Spring and Summer. Since most of these students are unlikely to have heard of First-Year Seminars, faculty participation in the orientation/registration process is *essential* to educate and excite prospective students about these courses. Indeed, participating in aspects of this marketing is part of the responsibility accepted by a faculty member when a course is selected for the FYS Program.

There are a number of ways in which the FYS Program gains exposure. The calendar in the table below broadly outlines when various events take place and what organization on the campus is responsible for them. Each year the FYS Faculty Coordinator will communicate the current year's specific dates and organize a rotation schedule to ensure coverage.

Month	Event	Organization
September or October	Campus Open House	Admissions
December or January	Chancellor's Top Scholars Day	Admissions
May through August	Parent Orientation Student Orientation/Registration	CASL Advising CASL Advising

Faculty are not expected to participate in every activity, but are expected to share coverage of these recruitment events. The **Campus Open House**, the **Chancellor's Top Scholars Day**, and the **Discover Dearborn** events are public relations opportunities. The primary contacts made at these events are parents and prospective students, and they are typically hosted on a Saturday. The **Parent Orientation Sessions** are slightly more targeted in that parents are likely to have a son or daughter about to enroll, and may be able to exert some influence over their child's decision to elect a seminar. These sessions are generally held in the early evening.

By far the most important marketing opportunity for faculty in the Program is presented by the **Orientation/Registration Sessions**. In the Spring/Summer of 2006 there will be eight such sessions. It is here that students are actually deciding their schedules for the Fall term. Typically at these sessions—one in the morning and one in the afternoon—one to three faculty members will make a 10-15 minute power-point presentation to

a group of 30-45 students. Students then break up into smaller groups. Faculty can be helpful in answering questions in these more intimate sessions as well as helping students actually make their course selections.

Based on several years' experience participating in these recruitment events, we now have some presentation samples to use directly or as models. The FYS Faculty Coordinator is a good source of information on how to prepare for these events.

CHAPTER 3

ASSESSMENT

Assessment was built into the original plan for the First-Year Seminars at UM-Dearborn. For example, through the Office of Institutional Research we are able to keep track of the FYS students for comparison with their peers not electing FYS classes. Comparisons can be made between the two groups with respect to, for example, gender, race, declared majors, high school GPAs, and ACT scores. Retention and performance comparisons can also be tracked beyond the first semester. This ability enables us to understand the population we are serving, and gives us some tools to understand what effect the Program is having.

In addition to institutional data, we conduct student surveys, faculty self-assessments, and course evaluations. A report drawing on multiple sources is presented annually to the CASL Executive Committee.

3.1 STUDENT SURVEYS

In the first two years of the Program two surveys were administered to students. These surveys were posted on-line on UM.Lessons, and to guarantee a good response rate students completed them in a session of their Composition class. The first of these, given midway through the term, was directly related to marketing. The primary goal was to find out what factors motivated students to enroll in a seminar. The conclusions drawn from these surveys were:

- Students appreciate the linkage between the Seminar and the Composition course;
- The personal contact with a faculty member at the Orientation/Registration sessions seems to be the most effective tool in recruiting students for the program;
- The promise of greater student-faculty interaction within a Seminar also seems important.

After making a number of presentations directly to the students at the Orientation/Registration sessions, faculty members, based upon their conversations with students, have concluded that the main attractions to students are:

- Convenience of scheduling (two courses back-to-back);
- Fulfillment of two distribution requirements in a single semester;
- Creation of an instant social group (familiar faces in two classes);
- Focus on helping first-year students succeed.

After having the same conclusions reinforced over two semesters it was decided that the marketing survey is no longer needed, and should be discontinued. Accordingly, only the end-of-term survey will continue to be conducted.

This second survey, administered each year, speaks to students' perceptions of how the goals of the Program are being met. This survey takes 15-20 minutes and is also administered in a session of their Composition class. For each goal students are given an opportunity to respond in an open-ended way, followed by an associated numerical ranking of aspects of the goal. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix II.

3.2 FACULTY SELF-ASSESSMENT

At its Fall meeting in 2005, participants in the FYS Program decided to expand assessment efforts to include feedback from seminar and composition faculty members. The goal of this self-assessment was to collect faculty experiences that might inform present and prospective seminar faculty.

To this end, in the Fall of 2005, a "Faculty Self-Assessment Survey" was posted on-line on UM.Lessons. For each of the seven FYS goals outlined earlier, seminar and composition faculty were asked to discuss what strategies they had adopted, how well those strategies worked, and what changes they would make if they were to use these strategies again. The initial results of this polling are presented in Appendix III. The faculty self-assessment survey was designed to elicit candid and helpful observations that future FYS faculty might benefit from.

3.3 DEPARTMENT OR DISCIPLINE ASSESSMENT

In addition to the above mentioned surveys it is expected that FYS faculty members will employ their Discipline's or their Department's standard evaluation form. This does not happen automatically because of the LIBS rubric, and hence the FYS faculty member must take the initiative to see that these forms get distributed and are put on file in the faculty member's department. In this way the routine assessment engaged in by every Department will also include FYS courses.

3.4 ANNUAL REPORTS

In each of the first two years of the Program an annual report entitled "FYS Program: Report and Prospectus" was written by the FYS Faculty Coordinator in cooperation with FYS faculty and the Associate Dean. These annual reports detailed information about the respective FYS student population, noteworthy experiments within Seminars, and plans for expansion of the FYS Program. Oral presentations summarizing the evolution and plans for the program were made to the CASL Executive Committee. The annual reports for Fall 2003 and on Fall 2004 are available through the Associate Dean's office.

The report for Fall 2005 focused primarily on the student survey, itemizing their openended remarks and displaying the quantitative summaries of their perceptions. This report was made available to faculty participating in the Program, and is also available through the Associate Dean's office.

CHAPTER 4

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Seminar faculty and students typically have different questions about First-Year Seminars (FYS) and how they work. In the end, however, it is important that faculty have as many answers as possible. In this spirit we list a number of questions and answers that have been raised by each group.

1. *Is it necessary to set up a link with a composition class?*

Linkages are normally facilitated by the Director of the Writing Program. If there is someone in composition with whom you would like to work, simply make this known to the Director, or ask that the Director identify an interested composition faculty member in the Winter term prior to the seminar's offering.

2. *Is funding available for class-related expenses?*

With advance notice, modest support is available for class-related expenses such as field trips and student mentors. Limited support is also available to faculty who wish to attend workshops or conferences on FYS themes. Consult the Associate Dean for specifics.

3. *What are my obligations in the Seminars?*

In addition to offering your seminar three to five times, you are expected to aid in the recruitment of students for the Program, and to participate in meetings with other FYS and Composition faculty to plan, assess and monitor the Program. For more information on this point, see Section 2.2.

4. *How are FYS classes assessed?*

Students that participate in the FYS Program are tracked and compared with their freshman cohort by the Office of Institutional Research. Student surveys directly relating to goals of the FYS Program are administered during the offering of the seminar. Additionally, discipline or department forms are used so as to not interfere with internal assessment efforts. Finally, faculty are asked to participate in a self-assessment survey at the conclusion of their course. For more information on all of these points, see Chapter 3.

5. *What student recruitment events might I be expected to attend?*

Strong student enrollments in FYS Programs are not automatic nor are they guaranteed. Faculty play an active role in recruitment. For more information on how this has been accomplished, see Chapter 2.2.

6. *What is the compensation schedule for FYS Program?*

At present, seminar faculty members are awarded \$1000 for the initial development of their seminar. Subsequently, both the seminar and composition instructors are given \$500 during the term in which the course is offered. More detailed information on this schedule can be found in Section 1.5.

7. *What requirements do these seminars fulfill?*

Each seminar meets at least one of the distribution requirements for students in CASL, and for most students in the School of Management. While CECS students are not prohibited from taking the paired Seminar/Composition classes, engineering counselors advise against such an election. The rationale is to preserve a three-to-one balance between technical and non-technical courses for entry-level engineering students in a given term; CECS views First-Year Seminars as non-technical courses and not on a pre-approved list of non-technical options.

8. *Who may sign up for a seminar?*

At present, only first-year first-semester students are eligible for seminars. Normally Seminars are not offered in the Winter terms, so the Fall term represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

9. *Is each seminar paired with a COMP 105 course?*

In the Fall 2006 term all but two of the seminars will be paired with a COMP 105 course. There is one seminar that term that will be paired with a COMP 099, and one that will be paired with a COMP 106. — both on a pilot basis. See Appendix I for a summary of past practice.

10. *How many seminars are there to choose from?*

As of this writing, there are eleven seminars in the rotation. In the Fall 2006 term only nine of these will be offered. Programatically, we should be able to accommodate as many as 225 students in the Fall term. We attempt to bring on three new seminars on board each Fall. Some early seminars are about to be retired or revamped for different venues (e.g. Honors Tutorials).

11. *Where do I get more information?*

Contact the Associate Dean for College-Wide Programs, in 2019 CB.

**APPENDICES TO
FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS:
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1 APPENDICES

1.1 APPENDIX I — OVERVIEW OF SEMINAR OFFERINGS

In the table on the following page are outlined the Seminar number and name, the Seminar and Composition instructors, the term the courses were offered, the CASL distribution requirements that the Seminar fulfills, and comments explaining the reason for a course's absence in a given term.

LIBS	Topic	Seminar Instructor	Comp. Instructor	CASL Offered	Distribution	Notes
111	To Infinity and Beyond	Lachance Lachance Lachance Lachance	Woodland Woodland Woodland Daniels	F'03 F'04 F'05 F'06	Math	
112	Car Culture	Smith Smith	O'Meara Lynn	F'03 F'04 F'05	Letters History Beh&Soc A Beh&Soc B	Sab.
113	World in a Grain of Sand	Amin Amin	Rohan Rohan	F'03 F'04 F'05 F'06	History	Sab. Canc.
115	Shakespeare: Page, Stage & Screen	Arora Arora Arora	Meyers Meyers Meyers	F'04 F'05 F'06	Letters	
116	Fast Food Nation	Pietrykowski Pietrykowski	Rohan Rohan	F'04 F'05 F'06	Beh&Soc A Beh&Soc B History	N/O
117	Conscious Brain	Swift Swift Swift	Daniels Daniels Daniels	F'04 F'05 F'06	Science Beh&Soc A	
118	Venus & Mars	MacAuslan	Lynn	W'06	Beh&Soc A	Del.
119	Culture Wars	Moran/Miller Moran/Miller	Brooks Brooks	F'05 F'06	History	
120	War & Rememb.	Lunn Lunn	Duda Duda	F'05 F'06	History	
121	East Meets West	Sklar	Brooks	F'06	History	
122	Not Animal House	Rohan	Meyers	F'06	Letters	

Sab. = Sabbatical
N/O = Not Offered

Canc. = Cancelled
Del. = Delayed

1.2 APPENDIX II — STUDENT SURVEY

The First-Year Seminars were designed to introduce you to academic life and ease your transition to UMD. This survey seeks your comments and feedback about specific aspects of these goals. Your responses will be anonymous and will not be seen by any of the instructors until after the semester is over.

1. In which First Year Seminar are you enrolled?

- LIBS 111 To Infinity and Beyond
- LIBS 115 Shakespeare
- LIBS 116 Fast Food Nation
- LIBS 117 Conscious Brain
- LIBS 118 Venus, Mars
- LIBS 119 Culture Wars
- LIBS 120 War and Remembrance

2. The Seminars were to provide significant interaction in the classroom. In several sentences please elaborate on your perception of the amount and level of interaction among you, your classmates, and the instructor in your Seminar. How did this compare with your other classes this semester at UM-Dearborn?

In summary, the level of interaction . . .	Low	High
a) . . . among classmates was	1 2 3 4 5	
b) . . . with instructor in Seminar was	1 2 3 4 5	
c) . . . compared with other UM-D classes was	1 2 3 4 5	

3. The Seminars were to provide significant engagement with college-level reading. In several sentences please elaborate on your perception of the amount, type, and difficulty of reading assignments in your Seminar. How did these compare with your other classes this semester at UM-Dearborn? Do you feel you improved as a reader in the Seminar?

In summary, the reading . . .	Low	High
a) . . . quantity in the Seminar was	1 2 3 4 5	
b) . . . difficulty in the Seminar was	1 2 3 4 5	
c) . . . assignments compared with other UM-D classes were	1 2 3 4 5	
d) . . . assignments affect on my reading skills was	1 2 3 4 5	

4. The Seminars were to provide significant engagement with college-level writing. In several sentences please elaborate on your perception of the amount, type, and difficulty of writing assignments in your Seminar. How did these compare with your other classes this semester at UM-Dearborn? Do you feel you improved as a writer in the Seminar?

In summary, the writing . . .	Low	High
a) . . . quantity in the Seminar was	1 2 3 4 5	
b) . . . difficulty in the Seminar was	1 2 3 4 5	
c) . . . assignments compared with other UM-D classes were	1 2 3 4 5	
d) . . . assignments affect on my writing skills was	1 2 3 4 5	

5. The Seminars were to provide engagement with college-level research and an introduction to the university library and its online resources. In several sentences please elaborate on your perception of amount, type, and difficulty of the research assignments and projects in the Seminar? Do you feel you improved as a researcher in the Seminar? Do you feel comfortable about using the library and its online resources?

In summary, the research . . .	Low	High
a) . . . quantity in the Seminar was	1 2 3 4 5	
b) . . . difficulty in the Seminar was	1 2 3 4 5	
c) . . . assignments compared with other UM-D classes were	1 2 3 4 5	
d) . . . assignments affect on my research skills was	1 2 3 4 5	

6. A significant part of the design of First-Year Seminars is based upon the linkage between the Seminar and the Composition class. In several sentences please elaborate on your perception of the linkage between your Seminar and your Composition 105 section? Did you feel this linkage was helpful? What suggestions would you make to improve the linkage between the Seminars with Comp 105 sections?

In summary, the linkage . . .	Low	High
a) . . . between the Seminar and Composition class seemed	1 2 3 4 5	
b) . . . benefits were	1 2 3 4 5	

7. The Seminars were to ease your social transition to UM-D by enabling you to interact closely with a group of students and the two instructors. In several sentences please elaborate on this aspect of the Seminars. Did you interact with other students and the instructors outside of class? How did the amount and level of interaction compare to your other classes this semester at UM-D?

In summary, the quality of social interaction . . .	Low	High
a) . . . within the Seminar and Composition classes was	1 2 3 4 5	
b) . . . compared with other UM-D classes was	1 2 3 4 5	

8. Overall, how would you rate your experience in the Seminar? Do you feel you benefited from taking one? Do you feel more prepared for college as a result of taking a Seminar? Would you recommend a Seminar to others? What changes, if any, would you recommend?

In summary, . . .	Low	High
a) . . . I would rate the overall Seminar experience	1 2 3 4 5	
b) . . . I feel better prepared for college as a result	1 2 3 4 5	
c) . . . I would recommend a Seminar to a friend	1 2 3 4 5	

9. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences in the First-Year Seminar?

1.3 APPENDIX III — FACULTY EXPERIENCES

First-Year Seminars have been in place on the UM-Dearborn campus since Fall 2003. At this stage a considerable amount of experience has been developed. In an attempt to have this experience inform the development of subsequent seminars, we have asked both seminar and composition faculty to comment on their efforts to address the goals of the FYS Program.

The following is a summary of informal extemporaneous comments made by participating faculty with respect to each of the First-Year Seminar goals. We include them here for the purpose of mentoring and collegial exchange. A candid assessment each year by participating faculty shares successes and challenges for the common good. In this way new FYS faculty can gain an understanding of what methods have been explored.

For each of the seven goals, faculty were asked to respond to the following points:

1. What strategies did you adopt?
2. How well did those strategies work?
3. What changes you would make if you were to use these strategies again?

Numerical references within the comments refer to these points.

Significant Interaction

The First-Year Seminars were to create significant interaction with and among students.

- *The class had interaction through pair interaction in three peer review sessions on their writing. More importantly, there were weekly small-group (4-5) discussions on articles in the text (with suggested-questions handouts). They were often animated and served to get students thinking about ideas that often became part of their written work. The presentations at the end of term brought both teachers together to encourage feedback and questions from the audience. Some students show hesitancy during peer review and presentation feedback. More modeling and explanation of purpose of both will be helpful.*
- *I have a number of group activities where the students collaborate inside class and to a lesser extent outside of class. They like the hands-on stuff in class enough to comment about it. As for the outside work, the collaborate on a paper, a poster, and an oral presentation. The theme (substance) is the same for each activity so they focus on the new incarnation of the task (process) as a group. Their cooperation becomes central rather than the subject.*
- *1) Lectures providing thematic overviews, followed by discussion of films aired in class and/or readings of oral histories and other selections. Students were also asked to write a paragraph summarizing a central point they hoped to raise during the discussion. This was also critiqued by me as a composition to improve their essay style. / 2) Fairly well according to the final essays and student evaluations, but there is also considerable room for improvement. / 3) I was*

frankly surprised by the social dynamics of teaching a seminar composed exclusively of 18 year olds, which initially seemed like teaching 13th grade. Student responses to their situation (as well as their skill levels) varied widely—ranging from confident self-expression, to boisterous male imbecility (designed to impress the girls), to reticence and painful cases of shyness. In future I expect to address the social dynamics more directly and to focus on drawing out those most reluctant to participate. I also think this process could..

- *1. Had students work in groups when reading the Darwin book and present chapters as groups. 2. Quite well. The students were asked to read the chapters for the main idea. Most groups accomplished this. Two of the students simply would not work and would not work with the other students. 3. I might simply have each group meet with me before class and present their ideas.*
- *1) Several strategies were adopted: (a) discussion-based classes (approximately 85% of class time) (b) assigned discussion leaders (one student was assigned responsibility to lead discussion and create discussion questions for most readings) (c) group presentations / 2) The class discussions were, for the most part, high quality, focused, lively and usually text-based and text-driven. In fact, the discussions matched or surpassed those in my previous Honors' Seminars in terms of breadth of student participation and quality of discussion. Overall they were a mighty impressive group. The discussion leaders were always prepared. Admittedly the choice of questions to discuss was varied and uneven but with some steering (by me) the conversations usually moved in productive directions. The group presentations built up a spirit of esprit de corps and were taken very seriously. 3) Really none since things worked out well this time. The use of discussion leaders was a change from the previous year's FYS.*
- *I did not change my strategies/process for teaching Composition in any particular way.*
- *Students made oral presentations about chapters, working in pairs. Also, students who had chosen similar topics for their term papers made presentations together, and answered questions together. / There was no real requirement that students work together in any sense; I think more of an effort should be made next time to meet with the students in small groups to help facilitate working together.*

Community & Social Transition

The First-Year Seminars were to create a sense of community and ease the social transition of students to UM-Dearborn.

- *In addition to the regular discussions, the text itself (The Minds I) provided a good mix of writing styles and content that often crossed the academic/popular border.*
- *The small section, which had two classes together, naturally became a small community in which students knew one another by name, made friends, and looked to one another for guidance and assistance.*
- *I have done little to enhance the Seminar-Composition design. The design was intended to promote community and (according to the self-reporting of my students) seems to be having the desired effect.*
- *1-2) I sought to offer praise to each individual and to foster a sense of camaraderie among the classmates. This was successful in most cases—as evidenced by social interaction among them during breaks—but, unfortunately, not in all. 3) See previous commentary.*
- *1) The students worked in small groups when dealing with the reading assignments. These worked quite well, except for a couple of student who refused to do the work. One, a student from a different cultural background from the others refused to work with the other students - especially the female students whom he felt should not express their opinions. 2) Quite well 3) No changes*
- *1) I required students to purchase Browne and Keeley's Striving for Excellence in College. We read the book during the first two weeks of class and discussed it (ex. how to deal with "low frustration tolerance" and how to avoid feeling the need to be entertained in the classroom) in class. In written assignments I would require that students refer to the chapters on evaluating and argument. 2) Hard to tell except to assess the demeanor of students and their willingness to engage with difficult material. They were serious, conscientious and willing to deal with material that was difficult and frustrating for them (ex. economics). 3) Maybe work with the Comp. instructor to better integrate these type of social acclimation strategies. 4) To ease the social*

transition I often asked students to talk informally and off the record about their courses, pressures, exams etc. We also had food in class along with the group presentations and that helped to facilitate social relations.

- *There was no formal plan to accomplish this. I tried to adopt a fairly informal tone in class, but I think that more can be done. A field trip is one possibility, but there did not seem to be any obvious relevant ones.*

College-level Reading

The First-Year Seminars were to provide significant engagement with college-level reading.

- *The Comp section used the standard writers handbook for technical aspects and the mixed selection of essays edited by Dennett and Hofstadter previously mentioned as pretexts for discussion and writing. Humorous dialogs, science fiction excerpts, and science journalism on topics such as evolution and reductionism gave the class a varied reading experience. This was complemented by the hefty textbook by Koch that Dan Swift used in the other half of the course. Along with the individual outside reading done for final papers and topic presentation, I felt that changes here are not essential.*
- *Rather than employ a reader that supplied a miscellany of readings, we focused most of our attention upon a single book, Pascal Boyer's "Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought." This is a serious, recent academic book that attempts to organize the scientific research that has been done in a number of fields into a cohesive theory of what religion is and why humans have religious ideas and practices. As such, it neatly combines the two aspects of the "culture war" the seminar was designed to address - religion and evolution. We also read "Inherit the Wind," by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. The Boyer book was challenging for these students, both in that it was a difficult text, relative to what they were used to, and in that it required them to open their minds to thinking about religion in a way other than the way they had been taught in their families and by their various religious institutions. Although I believe that, by the end of the semester, most students had . . .*

• In addition to Maor's book, I have the students read a poetry anthology "Against Infinity", the 1884 classic "Flatland", and the contemporary novel "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time". Underscoring the linkage between my Seminar and the Composition class, among the many readings required in their Composition class are the books "Zero" and "A Brief History of Time". Randy is the one who has made the whole integration-thing work. His attitude toward my subject area has been fab. I don't know how to conduct a discussion.

• 1-2) I sought to develop skills in critical thinking and essay exposition through class discussion and short paragraph length weekly essays, as well as more formal 5 to 7 page papers. The later were graded, but the former were simply critiqued and given credit for being completed. I sought by this means to offer instruction without penalizing the weaker students. 3) In future I will probably offer a letter grade on all but the paragraph essays except perhaps the first one. Unless they are given a letter grade for assignments, some students don't take the assignments seriously.

• 1) The students read several texts. We worked extensively with the student on how to read the texts for the main ideas. 2) Very well 3) No significant changes

• 1) We read a lot but really the focus of the class was to teach students how to read differently. In fact we covered less material this year than last but the quality of discussions and papers was much higher this year. Students read a variety of genres and disciplinary perspectives: social history, novel, journalistic accounts, social science research and an economics textbook (of sorts). I made sure to provide them with an early assignment wherein they were required to evaluate an author and their argument so that they could begin the process of recognizing that texts are embodiments of particular sets of ideas and interests. 2) Overall well for a start. I'd like to follow up with more assignments that tied more closely to themes and strategies associated with Comp 106. 3) Not sure yet.

• In addition to an upper-level text book, there was a term paper assignment with an emphasis on primary sources. I worked extensively with many students on an individual basis to help them, and I think it worked reasonably well.

College-level Writing

The First-Year Seminars were to provide significant engagement with college-level writing.

• The papers in the Comp section allowed students to come to terms with new and unfamiliar material that is both academic and experiential (in the folk psychology sense). Their third paper was a science fiction except or parable to illustrate some idea(s) regarding brain/consciousness. This generated some imaginative visions and more pages and discussion than any other assignment. The research topic paper for Dan Swift was revised with popular audience in mind for the final paper in Comp. Some students managed this showing full understanding and some made relatively minor (but needed) changes. This assignment could use more background prep to make most (all?) the students better realize the connections between writing and audience.

• We wrote five papers, all related to the "culture wars" theme in different ways. Paper 1 allowed the students either to make up their own "creation story" or to rewrite a traditional one. Some of these stories and retellings were exceptionally creative, and the process of writing them was fun and rewarding enough to help counteract the disappointment new freshmen tend to experience when they realize how mechanically deficient their writing really is. Three of the remaining papers called upon students to write based on the Boyer book: an analysis of part of it, a personal response to it, and an explanation of a real or imaginary religion based on Boyer's principles. All of these papers addressed the fundamental academic challenge of understanding a text and writing a coherent and intellectually sound response to it. Students learned what it means to read a text seriously, and the difference between puffery and genuine critical writing. The other paper was a response to a literary work, "Inherit the W. . ."

• In response to the reading assignments, students react in writing and discussion to the poetry readings, and compose poems of their own; write a book review arguing for the benefit of a school board whether the novel "Flatland" should be required high school reading; discuss how different the thought processes of a 15-year old autistic protagonist are from their own. Weekly reflective writing assignments via

Course Tools gauge their reactions to the course and its content. I don't know how to grade written assignments, how to provide appropriate feedback, how to insure that the exercise is of value to the student. At this stage I rely heavily on Randy to provide that feedback.

- *In response to the reading assignments, students react in writing and discussion to the poetry readings, and compose poems of their own; write a book review arguing for the benefit of a school board whether the novel "Flatland" should be required high school reading; discuss how different the thought processes of a 15-year old autistic protagonist are from their own. Weekly reflective writing assignments via Course Tools gauge their reactions to the course and its content.*

- *1-2-3) See Goals 3 and 4 for paragraph essays. The 5 to 7 page essays were also variable and may have improved for the weaker students, although this process takes time. In future, I would try to coordinate the writing assignments in my class with the composition class. Although Ray Duda and I made an effort to do this increasingly during the semester (including attending each other's classes), as we grow more familiar working together there is still room for improvement.*

- *1) We worked extensively with the students on developing the ideas for the major paper that was due at the end of the semester. Although not writing pre se the students made oral presentations on chapters in the Darwin book. The students were provided with an excellent text on writing in history and this text was constantly referred to throughout the course. 2) It worked very well. We were, however, disappointed at their failure to incorporate a significant source(trial transcripts) into their papers. 3) Perhaps we should read through the trial transcripts in class and make it clear that they must include refernce to the transcripts.*

- *1) I tried to provide students with a variety of writing assignments including (1) short reaction papers; (2) a paper evaluating an argument (minimum wage for fast food workers), the author, and opposing points of view; (3) comparative restaurant review; (4) review of the film "Supersize Me" in which the students were to locate and include two academic sources supporting the filmmakers*

claims and two academic sources opposing the claims made in the movie (I handed out a sheet describing various types of sources "scholarly" "popular". . .); (5) two essay exams based on close readings of he texts. 2) The variety of assignments kept student interest high and the students did a great job incorporating class discussions into their essays. 3) I think that I have a good mix of writing assignments now. I required a longer research paper last year (in addition to the exams and other writing assignments) but cut-back and I think the balance is much better now.

- *The term paper assignment was to do formal, scientific-style paper, focussed on answering a research question. I required a first version, and gave them a lot of feedback, so that they could make revisions. It worked well.*

Research and Resources

The First-Year Seminars were to provide entry-level opportunities for research and an introduction to the university library and its online resources.

- *The class had one library section at Mardigian and several in-class internet and edatabase search sessions via the overhead projector. They were also introduced to online bibliographies in the subject area. It was a successful first pass, but convincing them to keep looking for new material during the revision process is difficult when time is a factor.*

- *The UMD freshman writing sequence is designed to focus on writing in 105 and research in 106. Accordingly, this 105 class, while in part designed to build the kind of reading and analysis skills needed to conduct research, expressly avoids any attempt at teaching students to conduct research. I think this is appropriate, because incoming students have many basic reading and writing issues that ought to be addressed before they are sent to the library to do research. This may create some difficulties if the students are expected, in the other half of the seminar, to conduct substantive research in a subject area. My suggestion would be that any seminar that includes 1st-semester freshmen taking Comp 105 should not have as one of its goals providing opportunities for research. If this is an essential part of the seminar concept, then perhaps the seminars should include a 106 class rather than a 105 class.*

• *There is one major research assignment that bounces back and forth between the Seminar and the Composition class. Each student is assigned one of a half dozen quotes from a biographical figure on the subject of infinity. After an orientation session with a research librarian, they learn more about the figure and the context of the quote, drafting a paper for the Seminar. The small group of students who share the same assigned quote then pool their research efforts, and collaborate in the Composition class to develop a final paper. Each of these groups then prepare a poster and a power point presentation to share in the Seminar. Finally, each group develops a website in the Composition class whose content reflects all of these efforts. I really like this construct, and feel that it offers a lot of flexibility and opportunity for new directions. It also promotes Randy's and my working together.*

• *1-2) Aside from the incorporation of secondary sources (either from the UL or internet), there was comparatively little scope for using scholarly research resources. 3) I might consider holding a class meeting in the UL and ask Teague Orblych to discuss research resources, as I do in my history senior seminar. I am, however, most concerned with helping my students improve their critical thinking, their essay composition, and their self confidence.*

• *1) The texts and references we used were all excellent sources. Using primary sources is a critical part of writing in history and we did exactly that. Also, the text we used on writing in history describes the various types of sources for research in history - primary vs. secondary - and this was a major component of our discussions regarding research materials. 2) The writing in history text is excellent and the students quickly understood the various types of resources that a researcher might use. 3) I think it worked very well.*

• *1) For the mini-research assignment on the minimum wage, students needed to find two on-line sources supporting Thomas Sowell (con min. wage) or two sources supporting the other authors (pro min. wage). They were also to use the web to evaluate the authors and the publications in which their articles were published. For the film review students also needed to find on-line sources (see answer in previous question). I requested that students print out and turn in the sources that they found. Of course these assignments were*

preceded by an introduction to on-line resources available at the UM-D Library. 2) The students were fairly astute and were able to use the electronic resources. They seem to also have a better handle on how to evaluate urls than did students in last year's FYS. 3) I think these strategies work. I'd of course like to get additional ideas from others.

• *The previous two answers are relevant here. There was an emphasis on primary sources, and both Dennis Daniels and I helped them use standard data bases to find the sources.*

Seminar/Composition Linkage

The First-Year Seminars were to take advantage of the linkage between a paired seminar and composition class.

• *I would have liked to coordinate more closely with the biology and history instructors. I did meet with Prof. Moran prior to the semester, at which time we discussed texts and plans and concepts. I made use of the information he provided in designing my own course.*

• *Each of us (in different terms) has used the other's class period to show an extended film. When one or the other of us was out of town, the other was able to use the shouldbe cancelled class period. Randy has made reading assignments in his class that dovetail precisely with topics being discussed in my Seminar. I have done little to contribute to his curriculum.*

• *1) We studied the Scopes trial from the historical context. The students read Inherit the Wind in composition class. The paper they were assigned was designed to analyze the difference between the myth of the Scopes trial (Inherit the Wind) and the reality of the Scopes trial (historical text of the trial as well as the actual transcripts) 2) I thought it was excellent. 3) More emphasis on the transcripts.*

• *1) Liz and I talked about the readings we would use. Early in the semester students used some class time to continue to watch movies started in Liz's class. Most important, students were able to make connections between the two classes in class discussion. I made references to these shared topics and I actually think that the cross-cutting themes were a bit more clear to students this year. (2) They worked*

fairly well but it continues to be a struggle to create anything resembling a seamless transition. (3) More talking and perhaps a shared reading or two wherein we script our discussions (ex. Liz focuses on one aspect of an article while I then highlight a totally different perspective). In this way students might be able to see how different professors from different disciplines can read the same article differently and gain new meanings from the same text.

- There were significant areas of linkage: 1) The content of the comp section focussed on philosophical issues of mind and brain, dovetailing nicely with the seminar. 2) The term paper assignment in the comp section was on the same topic as for the seminar, but with the requirement that it be written for a general audience as opposed to a scientific audience. 3) Oral presentations on the term papers were made in joint sessions. 4) There was a joint session to discuss the role of religion in the scientific and philosophical understanding of mind-brain issues. All together, I think the linkage worked quite well, and I don't see need for improvement.

Critical Thinking

The First-Year Seminars were to improve students' critical thinking abilities.

- The text essays modeled various argumentative approaches to engage students critical thinking: Socratic dialog, analytic/scientific presentation and assertion, and overview of and dealing with objections to a position (Turing's article on the possibility of machine intelligence). More is done on this in other writing courses, but questions of evidence and belief were often issues in the class (Is there a soul?)

- The principal means of addressing this was our semester-long engagement with the Boyer book. Students learned that they needed to read, reread, think, write, and rewrite if they were to have any chance of demonstrating the level of critical thinking expected from them in their weekly writing and in their papers. As I said in my answer on Goal 3, I think that a serious and extended engagement with a reasonably weighty text is the best way to awaken students to the need for and the possibilities inherent in genuine critical thinking. My experience this past semester has reinforced my beliefs on this subject, which apply regardless of whether the 105 class is part of a "seminar."

- We discuss the difference between the verbs 'feel', 'think', 'believe', and 'know'. We discuss what questions are worth asking, and who will pursue them. My greatest failing in these areas is knowing how to illicit genuine, heart-felt comments from my students. I don't know that I challenge their thinking the way I'd like, or if they are just polite. I don't know how to crank things up a notch.

- 1) Constant written and oral critiques of their expression of causation, trying to hone their logical linkage and provide examples to support their contentions. 2) Variably: some students made significant progress in their abilities; others did not appear to fare as well. 3) Continue to emphasize the paramount importance of learning to think critically at every opportunity; otherwise I'm open to suggestions.

- 1) I think this was covered: critical evaluation of an argument and author was the highlight of all the assignments. Even in the group presentations I urged students to, like Eric Schlosser (author of *Fast Food Nation*) look into the dark side of the restaurant they were examining. Eg. Students included a presentation of the "Boot the Bell" campaign waged last year against Taco Bell on college campuses. Also, Browne and Keeley are well-known proponents of critical thinking so using their text from the start helped tremendously. 2) I think they worked quite well. 3) This is a strength of the course, I think.

- I am not sure that specific strategies were adopted. However, the whole seminar was in a sense an exercise in critical thinking. Issues of brain and consciousness are far from settled theory, and evaluation of evidence and interpretation were a constant part of the course.

Final Thoughts

The First-Year Seminars were to improve students' critical thinking abilities.

• This last ties into the general issue of the roles of science and religion. Given the seminar topic, some students religious background and theological explanations for soul consciousness kept them from considering materialist (non-dualistic) approaches patiently. Near the end of term there was a combined session on the general topic, but I plan to introduce the issue through readings and discussion at the beginning of the term in the future.

• This was very much a learning experience for me as well as the students. Overall, I prefer teaching more advanced students, though this experience—despite the much enhanced work load it entails if you take it seriously—is not without its rewards. Overall, I expect to hit my peak efficiency in the FYS between the third and fifth offerings; thereafter it is possible I may experience burn out with this format and that new instructors unfamiliar with these offerings might prove more effective. I also think it is important to track the progress of these students to see if the FYS are having an impact and, if so, which professors and what pedagogical techniques are proving especially successful.

• My strong suite is not class discussion area. It's still a struggle to give up control and yet be in charge of the flow and direction of the class. On the other hand I think it's vitally important to give first-year students a voice and a chance to take some ownership of their own education. So this is still a difficult tightrope walk for me.

• One suggestion is to have more frequent meetings amongst instructors with the goal of trading ideas and suggestions for accomplishing the goals covered in this survey.

1.4 APPENDIX IV — BRIEF SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

Following is a brief description of First-Year Seminars that are currently or have recently been offered to our students.

LIBS 111 - To Infinity and Beyond

A photon with zero mass, an infinitely dense black hole, and the four dimensions of the spacetime continuum are physics concepts employing the notions of zero, infinity, and dimension in subtle and important ways. In this seminar we explore the emergence and evolution of concepts surrounding zero, infinity, and dimension. These mathematical topics are introduced in a historical context as the by-products of human enterprise. We begin with the study of the foundations of number systems, with particular emphasis on the emergence of the zero. How, for example, could the Romans manage without a zero? Beyond the obvious meaning of “not finite,” we will study many different interpretations of the symbol, including different sized infinities. Finally, we explore the concept of dimension, expanding beyond three dimensions to four, and studying fractals, objects with fractional dimensions. The purpose of these investigations is to establish an intuition about abstract but real concepts, and to develop visualization skills, creating a tangible experience with abstract mathematical objects and concepts. Selected readings and videos will help stretch your mathematical imagination.

LIBS 112 - Car Culture

Ever tried to imagine what life in America would be like without cars? This course won't try to answer THAT question, but it will investigate the automobile's role in American society and the American imagination. We will examine the human and cultural factors involved in inventing, designing, making, selling, driving, and regulating cars. And since Dearborn and Detroit are the home of the auto industry, the course will incorporate some famous local landmarks and institutions, such as The Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village, the Henry Ford Estate, the Diego Rivera "Detroit Industry" murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Ford River Rouge Plant, and the Woodward Dream Cruise.

LIBS 113 - The World in a Grain of Sand: America in the Middle East

In this course we will begin with a single artifact and analyze it to build our understanding of a larger historical process. Our grain of sand this term is a letter from The Project for the New American Century regarding Iraq and addressed to President Clinton on 26 January 1998. We will spend the rest of the course building the historical context in which to understand the significance of this artifact. We will examine additional artifacts (and texts), scholarly writings and in-depth journalism to build our understanding of America's relationship to the Middle East especially with respect to two countries: Iran and Iraq.

As we hone our research skills, we will develop our own academic conference on America in the Middle East. Conference panels will be organized around your research questions. Your final task will be to offer your informed comment, to borrow a phrase from Juan Cole, on some aspect of American foreign policy in the Middle East. Are you ready to actually understand what is going on with American foreign policy in the Middle East? Are you ready to know what questions to ask your congressperson or favorite pundit (and how to judge their answers)? Then this First-Year Seminar is for you.

LIBS 115 - Shakespeare on Stage, Page and Screen

What has made the plays of Shakespeare so central to a well-rounded education in universities around the world for nearly 200 years? In the late 16th and 17th centuries the plays were performed exclusively by male actors and the audience included commoners and royalty. In the 18th century the plays were published in book form and read by the educated classes. In the 19th century Shakespeare became an integral part of a liberal arts education. With the advent of cinema in the 20th century the Shakespeare play moved from the heights of Ivory Towers to the public spaces of cinema halls. Making radical departures from 16th century theatrical conventions, the Shakespeare play has become a medium for exercises in gender-bending and larger social critique. The course will include a weekend field trip to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario, Canada.

LIBS 116 - Fast Food Nation

Fast food is something we take for granted. Yet, it has helped shape our culture as well as our economy, and it is a key symbol of the American lifestyle to the rest of the world. In this course, we examine the history of the fast food industry, the nature of work in the fast food sector, the global reach of corporations like McDonalds and Starbucks, the environmental impact of food production and the rise of the slow food movement. Are you what you eat?

LIBS 117 - The Conscious Brain

The central premise of this course is that consciousness, formerly the sole province of philosophers, can now be studied using scientific methodologies. This does not mean that we will be able to provide all the answers, but some progress has been made.

Consider the Necker cube, first described by its namesake, a Swiss crystallographer in 1832. It is termed bi-stable, because even though it is a unitary figure, there are two equally plausible percepts associated with it. When the percept flips (interestingly the flipping appears to be at least partly under conscious control), no apparent physical event takes place. The only possible location for such a physical event is in the brain. Further, by studying the nature of the changes in brain state, we begin to determine what in the brain is associated with consciousness. There are many such figures and demonstrations; when taken together, we have enough data to begin to answer the what and where of consciousness.

The main tool for studying consciousness will be human vision, so a side benefit of the seminar will be greater insight into such fascinating areas as color perception, stereoscopic 3D vision, blindsight (people who claim to be blind but can walk around and not walk into objects), etc.

LIBS 118 - Venus, Mars? Bringing Gender and Close Relationships Back Down to Earth

Focusing on gender and close relationships, we will examine how pop culture tend to construct gender as a naturally occurring dichotomy, emphasizing the vast differences between women and men. For example, John Grays relationship self-help book title *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* has sold millions of copies and has helped to perpetuate the idea that women and men are so different as to be considered different species. Students will learn to examine the ways that gender and close relationships are portrayed in our society.

LIBS 119 - Culture Wars: The Scopes Trial in American Educational, Religious and Cultural History

What candidates would you nominate for the trial of the 20 th century? The O.J. Simpson trial? Not really. How about the trial of Adolf Eichman or perhaps the Lindbergh child kidnapping trial or the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg? Certainly, the Nuremberg war crimes trials would be on most lists. But, what about a trial that took place in Dayton, Tennessee in July 1925? School teacher, John T. Scopes, was on trial for teaching evolution in the Tennessee public schools. This was the first trial ever broadcast over the radio waves. Journalists came from far and wide to write about the trial and the spectacle it generated. It was a national sensation. Among the prosecutors was William Jennings Bryan a three-time candidate for president and former Secretary of State. Among the lawyers for the defense was Clarence Darrow, the most famous defense lawyer of the time. At issue was science versus religion, but more importantly the control of the curriculum in the public schools.

Given the rise of religious fundamentalism in the United States in the mid-century and the continuing debate over whether evolution should be taught in the public schools, this trial is even more relevant now than it was in 1925. The focus of this course is the Scopes monkey trial and the fundamental questions it raised. We will examine Darwins theory of evolution, the circumstances that led up to the trial, as well as such current issues as academic freedom, the control of the public school curriculum and the separation of church and state.

LIBS 120 - War and Remembrance: The Second World War and the American Cinema

This course explores how the Second World War has been depicted to American film audiences during the previous half century, and how it is remembered by them. It focuses on ten major filmsfive made during the conflict and five made during the fifty years since it endedthat all received major Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director and, in one instance, Best Documentary. The first half of this course examines a series of

themes uppermost in the minds of Hollywood studio executives, directors, and the Office of War Information during the conflict, including:

- the wars impact on beleaguered Britain during the Blitz
- the need for American intervention to fight Nazi aggression
- the character of the conflict once America became involved in the fighting
- the reintegration of returning servicemen into American life

Films presented in this section include: Mrs. Miniver (1942), Casablanca (1943), Why We Fight (1943), The Battle of Midway (1944), and The Best Years of Our Lives (1946).

The second half of this course will explore how the legacy of the war has been presented and remembered during the previous half century. Care will be taken to examine how the mood of Americans at the moment these films were released was at once reflected and yet also reinforced by them. Themes include:

- commemorating those who died during the war, at Pearl Harbor and elsewhere
- perseverance in the face of adversity during combat in Europe and elsewhere
- remembering the Holocaust
- honoring the sacrifices of the generation that fought the war

Selected movies include: From Here to Eternity (1953), Patton (1970), Schindlers List (1993), and Saving Private Ryan (1998).

This cinematic record will be complemented by readings from three books: John Keegans military history, The Second World War, C.R. Coppes and G.D. Blocks study of wartime censorship, Hollywood Goes to War, and Studs Terkels, The Good War, a compendium of oral histories by people who were active participants in the events depicted in the films. In addition to attending weekly lectures and screenings, participating in seminar discussions, and composing brief paragraph length summaries of major themes they noticed in the films, students will also be expected to submit two five to seven page papers incorporating outside research, and to make short oral presentations to the class about the topics they choose.

LIBS 121 - East Meets West: Global Connections

Students taking this class will study key texts and artifacts from East Asia that deal with global connections and exchanges, work through key theoretical issues tied to thinking about global interactions, and learn basic research and interpretive skills that will help them succeed in college and prepare them for living in the interconnected world which we all share.

After completing the course, students will know some basic ways to find out about, think, and interpret exchanges and interactions in world history, and be able to make East Asian materials part of their research and thinking. This will not just help them live a fuller and richer life, but also help produce a fuller and richer view of our global world.

LIBS 122 - Not Animal House

In this class we will look at how our own experiences conform to or challenge popular myths and narratives about the historical and contemporary college experience in America. We will study how college life is constructed in novels, diaries, letters, personal interviews, essays, textbooks and films. While reading and writing about the college experience, we will address the intersection between fact and fiction and explore how print and visual representations might shape our perceptions of our world. Overall, class participants' own stories as college students will be crucial to the class's investigation, assessment and production of college life narratives. Participants will write several short informal papers about the assigned reading and films. They will also complete three small writing projects: they will conduct and write about an interview with a UM-D alumnus, they will keep and reflect on a journal of their experiences as college students at UM-D over the semester and they will write a short creative essay, short story or script about college life based on their experiences and the experiences of other UM-D students, past and present.

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