

Teaching a First-Year Odyssey Seminar at UGA FYO Faculty Guidelines

Goals of the First-Year Odyssey Seminar Program:

Goal 1: Introduce first-year students to the importance of learning and academics so that we engage them in the academic culture of the University.

Goal 2: Give first-year students an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with a faculty member to encourage positive, sustained student-faculty interactions.

Goal 3: Introduce first-year students to the instruction, research, public service, and international missions of the University and how they relate to teaching and learning in and outside the classroom so that we increase student understanding of and participation in the full mission of the University.

1. FYO faculty will include the three goals of the First-Year Odyssey seminar program in their course syllabi and design their seminar objectives, activities, and student learning outcomes with these goals in mind.

2. FYO faculty should choose seminar topics relevant to their research and teaching interests so that they may excite students by the passion they feel for their work.

3. FYO faculty will promote learning that is appropriate and manageable.

FYO faculty should use judgment in selecting meaningful yet manageable readings and outside activities that support the objectives, activities, and assignments for which the seminars are designed. Although workload might vary within a seminar from week to week, the recommendation is two hours of work outside of class for every one hour in class.

4. FYO faculty will include meaningful writing activities to capture intellectual dialogue.

Writing-to-learn activities should center on in-seminar activities, required reading(s), or contemplation on campus event(s). Writing activities should encourage students' thinking and provide opportunities to sustain conversations or dialogues that follow direct classroom activities. Examples of such exercises include journals, blogs, reflective writing and sharing, short readings with short written responses to encourage in-class discussion, peer reviewed writing, "quick" writings, writing for different audiences, and written documentation of intellectual dialogue between the FYO faculty and student in the preparation of a poster presentation, an oral presentation, a mathematical proof, or other sorts of projects. Optimally, writing activities should be assigned early enough in the semester to allow feedback and dialogue with students.

5. FYO faculty will remind students about the requirement to participate in at least three campus events during their FYO experience. Goals of the FYO program include making students aware of the considerable opportunities available on campus and encouraging them to become engaged in the intellectual and cultural life of the University. There are many events to choose from, including musical performances, films, and visiting speakers. Students may participate in five hours of service to the community through VolunteerUGA as one event. At the end of the semester, students will be asked in the course evaluation which events they attended and asked for their input about the events.

- FYO faculty are not required to verify that students have attended campus events or to incorporate events into the seminar content.
- FYO faculty may wish to connect events to the seminar content or use the requirement as the basis for assignments, such as low-stakes writing assignments.
- FYO faculty may consider attending these events with their students.
- Resources are available from FYO to support these events for FYO faculty and students.