



K-STATE 1 FIRST

First-Year Seminar Faculty Guide 2014



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K-STATE



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Chapter 1: An Introduction to K-State First

K-State First Mission

K-State First is an integrated effort to create an outstanding university experience for every first-year student at Kansas State University. The program provides new students with a transition to college-level learning and college life in four important ways:

- By fostering campus community and feelings of belonging.
- By offering opportunities for diverse activities and interactions.
- By raising academic expectations with engagement and compassion.
- By empowering students with a strong sense of personal responsibility and social agency.

Bringing together exciting small classes taught by exceptional faculty with a vibrant student life experience, K-State First helps students establish the foundation for a successful college career.



We know that the first year of college is a big deal for our incoming students. A positive transition to university-level learning and the college experience in general can set students on the path to academic success, degree attainment, and satisfaction and achievement in their careers and personal lives. The first year is also the place where students are most likely to encounter obstacles that could deter them from the learning and degree they seek.

Core Programs

K-State First has four core programs for first-year students:

- Connecting Across Topics (CAT) Communities
- First-Year Seminars (FYS)
- Guide to Personal Success (GPS)
- K-State Book Network (KSBN)

K-State First is also an advocate for first-year students and an important source for connection and communication among the various programs and opportunities for incoming students.

CAT Communities

Designed around students' academic interests, these learning communities allow first-year students to meet friends and work with experienced faculty in a specialized area of study. The same 22 students are enrolled in two general education classes together and a one-hour connections class.

FYS

A small group of 22 students fulfill a general education requirement while making the academic and social transition to college life.

GPS

A mentoring program, GPS matches a student with a faculty, staff member or graduate student to serve as a professional point of reference throughout the student's first year.

KSBN

An all-university reading program that selects a common book for the academic year, KSBN connects all first-year students at K-State. It provides incoming students with a shared academic experience that helps open the conversation with professors, staff, administrators and other students.

History

In 2008, we piloted a first-year experience model by offering First-Year Seminars, small classes designed to help first-year students adjust to university life and expectations. In 2009, we introduced our mentoring program, GPS, by pairing incoming students with faculty and staff. We officially launched K-State First in 2010, introducing then KSBN and CAT Communities.

In 2013-14, more than 1,400 students took K-State First classes. That same year, more than 350 students participated in the GPS mentoring program, and more than 3,500 received a copy of the KSBN common book, *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline.



Chapter 2: Purpose of First-Year Seminars

First-Year Seminar Philosophy

All First-Year Seminar (FYS) courses at K-State have common elements and goals within the classroom. We ask you to help us meet these aims. The purpose of the FYS program is to help students make the transition to university courses and college-level learning. As part of this effort, FYS classes focus attention on the intellectual and social skills students need to flourish at the university. As a place to ask questions about the university and practice the skills needed to succeed as a first-year student, these courses provide support for the transition into college life and the K-State community.

Emphasis on first-year students

Only first-year students can enroll in these small, 22-person classes. We want these courses to be a place for first-year students to connect with each other and with a faculty member from their first semester of college.

Academic content

Each seminar is a special section of a regular, academic, general education class. Although the academic content varies among the seminars, each seminar focuses on a distinctive, college-level academic subject. The most important goal of these seminars is to provide fundamental support to K-State's academic mission and its focus on student learning.

Common elements

The FYS classes are connected to each other as part of a larger FYS Program. All seminars are designed to introduce students to the academic standards of college-level work and K-State's undergraduate student learning outcomes. They emphasize critical thinking, communication, community building and the application of learning. First-Year Seminars also provide students with the opportunity to attend at least three co-curricular activities.

High-quality instruction

The FYS Program has a strong, skilled and dedicated faculty. These faculty members are part of a team of instructors who are coordinated at the university-level and work with each other to plan, design, teach and assess the FYS Program. These instructors, drawn from all over campus, are pedagogically excellent, experienced and interested in undergraduate education at K-State. They are among the best instructors at the university.

Active learning

With their small size and community focus, the First-Year Seminars invite and encourage an active learning environment. The seminars devote significant portions of class time to hands-on learning, group discussions, problem solving, inquiry-based learning, and activities that provide students with opportunities to develop their critical thinking and communication skills. The FYS's are also academic spaces that encourage students to collaborate, interact and develop relationships with their peers and professors.

Common Components for All FYS

1. Syllabus including common Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
2. An attendance policy
3. Regular use of active learning pedagogy
4. Participation in common reading program (KSBN)
5. Attendance at least one program-wide event, one course-specific event, and one other event



Student Learning Outcomes

All FYS share four basic Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): critical thinking, communication, community building and application of learning. Our program-wide SLOs (listed below) should appear on your FYS syllabus. You may tailor them to fit your particular academic content or goals for the course.

Upon successful completion of a first-year seminar, students will be able to:

Think critically

Explain the implications and/or significance of material learned in the course.

Communicate effectively

Express their own understanding of course content in respectful dialogue with others and with engagement, imagination and self-reflection.

Build community

Interact effectively with faculty and peers to learn and to help others to learn.

Apply learning

Use the skills and knowledge learned in the class to solve new problems, answer questions or identify areas for further investigation.

Assessing SLOs

All K-State First faculty are encouraged to participate in K-State First's SLO assessment plan. Assessment methods may vary between courses, and further information can be found on the K-State Online faculty site. Results will be combined with all other courses assessing the same outcome to create an aggregate report of student learning for each SLO.

Sample Course Description

Here is a sample course description.

"Welcome to Great Books! In most respects, this section of ENGL 287 will be similar to the other sections offered at K-State. In a few, hopefully exciting ways, however, our class will be a little different. It's smaller (22 students), and it's a class designed for first-year students only. The smaller class size should encourage an active learning environment throughout the semester. The focus on first-year students means that we should be able to use this class to talk about the transition to college-level learning and college life."



Sample Attendance Policies

Here are two sample attendance policies.

1. "In addition to careful reading, I expect good attendance and active participation in class exercises and discussions. As a First-Year Seminar, Great Books emphasizes active learning, student involvement, and student experiences. You will be at the center of the teaching and learning that happens during our open, student-centered class conversations and activities, and your attendance is absolutely essential to the learning that happens here."

"Thus, I take roll religiously. I believe in class attendance. Irregular attendance will hurt your grade and may cause you to fail. I understand that every once in a while circumstances may make it impossible for you to attend. If you miss one or two classes during the semester, don't worry about it. If you miss more than that, your attendance will hurt your grade. To be specific, students who miss no class and no events will earn five extra credit points. Students who miss two weeks of class or six class sessions will receive zero points for attendance (10 percent of your grade). Students who miss more than three weeks of class (nine or more classes) automatically fail the course."

2. "Attendance and Participation: The Psychology of Prejudice CAT Community is designed to provide a relatively small number of students with the opportunity to learn about and discuss issues related to stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. This information cannot be acquired by students who do not attend or who do not engage in class. For that reason, student participation and engagement will count heavily in the course grade. To earn full points, students must attend every class and be engaged in the day's topic. This does not mean that students must make a certain number of comments or ask a certain number of questions, but it must be obvious that students are on task and paying attention. Two points may be earned in each class for attendance (1 point) and participation (1 point) such that 30 course points may be earned for attendance and participation over the 15 class periods."

Examples of Current First-Year Seminars

Interpersonal Communication
K-State Culture
Principles of Macroeconomics
Introduction to Literature
Insects and People
Earth in Action
History of the U.S. to 1877
Introduction to Moral Philosophy
Introduction to Political Science

Introduction to Women's Studies
Art, Architecture, and Culture of India
Innovation and Creativity
Survey of the Hospitality Industry
War and the Holocaust in 20th-Century Literature
Introduction to Greek Mythology
Introduction to Music of the World
Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy



Chapter 3: Thinking About the Classroom

Best Practices

As no two First-Year Seminars are alike, we cannot provide a step-by-step guide that delineates exactly how you should plan your course. However, we can offer a list of practices that have worked well.

In general, a FYS classroom should invite first-year students into the university community while engaging them academically and socially. To accomplish these goals, suggest the following strategies:

Encourage active learning.

- Host lively discussions.
- Arrange field trips.
- Engage students in research.

Challenge students, but offer support.

- Hold high expectations.
- Help students reach realistic learning goals.
- Encourage risk-taking but offer clear feedback.

Have a holistic approach to student success.

- Understand that students have lives apart from the classroom.
- Develop opportunities for both cognitive and social development.
- Create an environment for students to mutually support one another.

In addition to these components, FYS classes also should promote student development through college success strategies. Examples of such strategies are:

- Time-management skills
- Study skills
- Note-taking skills
- Professional demeanor
- Email etiquette

Activities and lesson plans that address these types of success strategies can be found in the additional resources listed on page 10.

Ideas for Your FYS Class

1. Connect your class with real-world situations or design activities around the pre-professional interests of your students.
2. Infuse your class with the student success ideas, lessons and practices that will help your students to learn the skills and the knowledge they need to succeed in your course and your discipline.
3. Use your access to MAPWorks: Take a look to share information about how your students are adjusting.
4. Do something with your students early in the semester. Get course work from them early and give some feedback right away. The first three weeks can be crucial for success.



Planning a Field Trip

Field trips are a great way to get students engaged in their community and practice their skills. Consider taking them to the Beach Museum of Art or an off-campus site within the state. Funding is available to help pay for the cost of your field trip.

Funding request forms are available from Greg Eiselein (eiselei@k-state.edu), and hard copies of the form will be distributed at August Orientation and the professional development workshops.

Field Trip and Co-Curricular Event Awards

K-State First has a fund to support field trips and other out-of-class co-curricular events for students in the CAT Communities and First-Year Seminar courses.

Faculty members may request these funds by completing a short application that provides information about the event and its purpose, date, number of students involved and anticipated expenses. The kinds of expenses that may be covered include a motor pool vehicle, museum tickets or certain student research expenses. We will not be able to pay for food or items that might be borrowed without cost, such as video equipment available for checkout from iTAC. Application forms are available from Greg Eiselein (eiselei@k-state.edu).

Each KSF event award will cover costs up to \$10 per student per section. Thus, a section of 22 students might receive as much as \$220 for an event. Event awards will be distributed until the fund is exhausted. For any monies that have not been allocated by Nov. 1, a faculty member may apply once for a second award.

Using the KSBN Book

The KSBN book is a great way to open the conversation with your students because most of them read it during the summer. You might consider emailing them before the semester begins, asking them to read the book prior to the first day of class.

The 2014-15 KSBN common book is *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World* by Steven Johnson, who will be speaking at McCain Auditorium on the evening of Thursday, September 11, 2014. All K-State First students will be provided a free ticket to attend this exciting and important campus event.

For specific ideas about using the book, please check out the KSBN resources page at www.k-state.edu/ksbn/faculty.html.

Past KSBN books include:

- *Ready Player One*, 2013
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, 2012
- *Zeitoun*, 2011
- *The Hunger Games*, 2010



Creating Community and Engaging Students

Research demonstrates that students learn best in an environment where they feel connected with those around them and are asked to become co-constructors of their learning through active classroom engagement. Here are some ideas for creating classroom engagement. Here are some ideas for creating classroom community and designing active learning experiences.

“Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.” –From *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* (Chickering and Gamson, 1987).

Consider seating arrangements: When possible, have your students sit in a circle or a horseshoe arrangement. These types of arrangements promote face-to-face interaction among students and enhance student-teacher interactions. These arrangements also ensure that every student sits on the “front row” of the class, which makes them more likely to participate in the learning.

Structure lessons to promote engagement: Start with something at the beginning of the lessons to intrigue students about the day’s content. Interweave content with challenging activities or opportunities for engagement. End with a review of the material as a way to help students draw connections with what they have learned.

Incorporate activities that are both “hands-on” and “minds-on:” Classroom activities are not just a way of entertaining students or keeping them awake – they are excellent teaching methods to keep students challenged and engaged. There are countless types of activities or projects that can be effective, but below are a few simple ideas to get you started:

- **Journal or reflective writing:** Give students a question or writing prompt related to the day’s topic, and ask them to write down their initial thoughts in one or two minutes. This can be used to kick off a class discussion, or as time for students to review something they have learned.
- **Think-pair-share:** This is a simple, easy way of inviting discussion. Present a question or discussion topic. Give students a few seconds to formulate their own answer, then have them turn to a partner and discuss their thoughts. You can then have students share their ideas with the rest of the class or use their pair-share discussion as the foundation for your next activity or large group discussion.
- **Scenario-based learning:** Present students with a difficult real-world challenge, and ask them to apply theory or concepts learned in the course to determine a solution.
- **Minute speeches:** Distribute slips of paper to students. Each slip should contain one topic, such as a concept from an article they have read or a term they should review for an exam. Give students five minutes to prepare a one-minute speech on that topic. They can use their books or notes, or even work in partners if you choose. Then, have students share their mini speeches with the class.
- **Illustrative quotes:** Bring in copies of an article (or any text) you would like students to discuss. Have students spend the first 10 minutes or so reading through the article and highlighting/underlining quotes that they especially agree with, disagree with, find interesting or find particularly difficult to understand. Whether you discuss in groups or the whole class, students now have something to contribute. They can discuss/question/affirm the points they’ve underlined.
- **Inside-outside circles:** Divide students into two even groups. Have one group stand in a circle facing the outside of the classroom, and the other group stand in a circle facing the inside of the classroom. Everyone should have one person standing directly in front of them. Provide students with a discussion topic, either verbally or through a note card. They should discuss the topic with the person across from them for 30-60 seconds. Then, ask the members of one circle to rotate one person to the left. Students can repeat the same activity, only with a different partner or topic. Looking for more great ideas? Visit the CAT Faculty page on KSOL, request a copy of a student success book from the K-State first team, or visit <http://www.sc.edu/fye/toolbox/index.html>.

-Note: Some information and activities included in this section have been adapted from the University of South Carolina’s University 101 handbook, from the chapter titled “Teaching and Learning.”

Chapter 4: Additional Resources

Campus Events and Activities

To help get your students involved in campus events, here is a list of places to find out about what's going on at K-State.

Week of Welcome: wow.k-state.edu

Landon Lecture Series: k-state.edu/lectures/landon

Lou Douglas Lectures: k-state.edu/ufm/LouDouglas.htm

Campus Support Offices

Here is a list of offices on campus where you can direct students if they require additional support.

One Stop Shop for Student Success, Division of Student Life: k-state.edu/onestop

Student Access Center: k-state.edu/accesscenter

K-State Healthy Decision: k-state.edu/hd

Counseling Services: k-state.edu/counseling

Office of Student Activities and Services: k-state.edu/osas

Office of Student Life: k-state.edu/studentlife

Additional Reading

Angelo, Thomas A., and K. Patricia Cross. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook For College Teachers*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Bain, Ken. *What the Best College Teachers Do*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2004.

Kuh, George D., et al. *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Pascarella, Ernest T. and Patrick T. Terenzini. *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

Optional Textbook Suggestions for your Course

Bedford/St. Martin's Insider's Guide to College Etiquette. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2011. Print.

Gardner, John N., A. Jerome Jewler, and Betsy O. Barefoot. *Your College Experience: Strategies for Success*. 9th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.

Harrington, Christine. *Student Success in College: Doing What Works!* 1st ed. Boston: Cengage, 2012.

GENERAL TIMELINE

SPRING

- Attend K-State First faculty development workshops, including a May Information Meeting."

SUMMER

- Consider contacting your students prior to the beginning of the semester.
- Send a copy of syllabus to Greg Eiselein at eiselei@k-state.edu.

FALL

- Sign and return your IDEA form.
- Attend K-State First faculty meetings.
- Attend program-wide KSBN event.
- Participate in K-State First's SLO assesment plan

WINTER

- Consider evaluating the semester in preparation for next fall.
- Enjoy your break!



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..... **FACULTY CONSENT FORM**

IDEA REPORTS

K-State First has committed itself to an ongoing study to assess the effects of first-year seminar courses and learning communities on student learning. The seminars and learning communities will be unique in that the maximum enrollment will be 22 students each and limited to first-year students. An emphasis will be placed on communication, critical thinking, and community building.

Your participation in this pilot study will give us the opportunity to utilize end-of-semester student ratings collected via the IDEA System. We intend to use IDEA Reports as part of the endeavor to observe what effects these first-year seminars have on student learning. We will look at individual sections as well as a group report for all sections. No individual faculty member's IDEA Report will be shared with the public. Aggregate findings will be shared with K-State First faculty members, the university community, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association and others (as applicable).

The following person may be contacted with any questions regarding one's rights regarding research protocol: Rick Scheidt, Committee Chair, Institutional Review Board, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-3224, or you may email the Committee Chair at rscheidt@k-state.edu

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I, _____, agree to release a copy of my Fall 2014-15 IDEA Report for the following course, _____, to the Office of Assessment at Kansas State University. I understand that the Fall 2014-15 IDEA Report will be used for the purposes designated above for the ongoing study of student learning in K-State First seminars and learning communities. I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I will receive a copy of this informed consent form to keep for future reference.

Participant's signature

Date

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