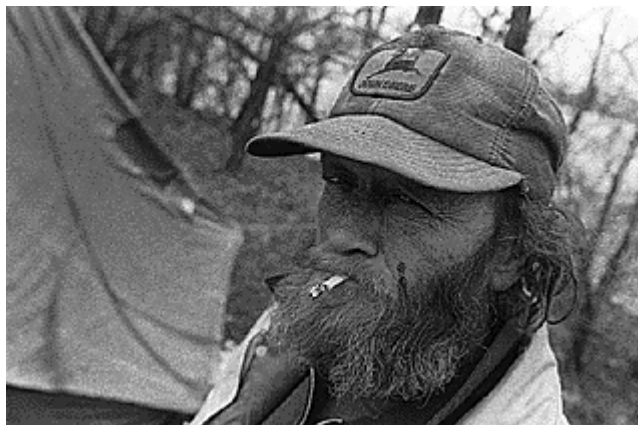


FYS 198-2:

Tryin' to find a way back Home:

An Introduction to the Literature and Legacy of Homelessness in America



The First Year Seminar as part of the First Year Experience

How is the First Year Experience related to the First Year Seminar?

For many years, most First Year students completed the First year Experience (FYE) program in addition to and distinct from the efforts they put into their First Year Seminars (FYS). This year, the students in this seminar are being given the opportunity to participate in a combined program which blends the goals and requirements of the FYE program with those of the FYS.

The FYE is largely about the individual student's roles, rights, and responsibilities in the college community. Since this is a course about active citizenship and community engagement in a scholarly context, it was not at all difficult to find points of confluence between the expectations of the FYE and the requirements of the FYS; furthermore, the combination of these two programs promises to alleviate pressure on student schedules, since students in this course have many out-of-class requirements which in the past often have led to conflicts with FYE sessions and to the duplication of effort and of programming.

How will the First Year Experience Program be implemented in this First Year Seminar?

First-Year Experience Sessions for this FYS will occur **every Thursday** from September 2nd to November 18th **from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

In general, the FYE program consists of a number of sessions where attendance is tracked. The more FYE sessions you attend, the more likely you are to earn a higher lottery number for your sophomore housing. Lottery number will be assigned based on both the number of sessions attended and GPA.

Since the bulk of the substantive FYE topics are built into the Thursday Sessions, your only other FYE requirements outside of this course will include the two sessions over Orientation Weekend and one Monday night Community Meeting per month.

Who will be involved?

The members of this FYS include the students, the instructor, our Fearless PLA Danielle “Auntie Dani” Blackaby,” your Beloved RC Danielle “I ain’t Your Auntie Dani!” Gonnella, and our FYE partner, Dean Julie Ramsey.

How will the Thursday Sessions benefit you?

You benefit through this integrated program because the class incorporates a great many of the FYE meetings you would have been expected to attend in any case and structures them around aspects of the FYS you would have been taking anyway. In addition, a great deal of class time in this course is expended upon reflective discussion concerning our community-service experiences throughout the term, and many of the Thursday Sessions will be dedicated to exactly this kind of activity.

Since students in past iterations of this course regularly have noted both the need to have even more such reflective discussions and the desire to minimize conflicts with the demands of the FYE program, the Thursday Sessions seem very likely to prove a useful addition to the course. The assignments you complete as part of the Thursday sessions thus will integrate the FYE program into your FYS, will bolster your overall course grade in the FYS, and will increase your chances of a high lottery number for sophomore housing.

What is the Schedule of the Thursday Sessions?

In addition to our regular MWF 9:00-9:50 meeting times, unless otherwise noted FYS 198-2 will convene in the Paul Lounge each Thursday until Thanksgiving to explore the following topics:

- **Thursday, 2 September:** “Why are we here?” Purposes of College Assignments and Discussions
- **Thursday, 9 September:** “Why are we here?” Purposes of College Assignments and Discussions
- **Thursday, 16 September:** “So? How’s it goin’?” Local Service Reflection Session
- **Thursday, 23 September:** “What am I good at?” Strengths-Finder Exercise
- **Thursday, 30 September:** “I wish I knew then what I know now!” Upper-Class Former FYSers Panel
- **Thursday, 7 October:** “I’m a little nervous....” Pre-DC Reading Days Trip Reflection Session
- **Thursday, 14 October:** “It’s over already?” Post-DC Reading Days Trip Reflection Session
- **Thursday, 21 October:** “So? How’s it goin’?” Local Service Reflection Session
- **Thursday, 28 October:** “Who ARE these People?!?” Faculty Interview Assignment/Presentation and Discussion
- **Thursday, 4 November:** “Research, Research, Research!” Library instruction Session in the LIR
- **Thursday, 11 November:** Fall Convocation in the Chapel
- **Thursday, 18 November:** “Where do I go from Here?” Wrap-up Reflection and Trajectory of College Experience Discussion

What do I need to do to prepare for each Thursday Session?

For some of our sessions, reflecting deeply and in advance upon the topic of the day may be ample preparation; when specific related assignments are involved, you will receive detailed instructions well in advance. Some of our discussions, moreover, require careful advance preparation:

“Why are we here?” Purposes of College Assignments and Discussions

Read, think about, and be prepared to discuss assigned selections from:

Bok, Derek Curtis. *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Bok, who was president of Harvard University for many years, has outlined 8 fundamental purposes of college. Students should be prepared to discuss which of these (if any!) motivated their desire to attend college in general (and Gettysburg in particular) and which of Bok’s goals seem surprising or novel.

“What am I good at?” Strengths-Finder Exercise

Each student will receive an individual access code to the Strengths Finder Instrument on line. Students need to complete the instrument in one sitting – they can’t save partial results and go back to it later.

A student should be able to complete the exercise in 20-30 minutes at the most.

Students are asked to record their strengths and to email their top 5 strengths to Fee & Ramsey by the evening before the designated discussion. They should also bring a copy of their top 5 strengths to class with them.

“Who ARE these People?!?” Faculty Interview Assignment/Presentation and Discussion

Each student will interview a member of the Faculty at Gettysburg to understand their views on the goals and purposes of a Gettysburg education. What does the faculty member think are the most important goals students should attempt to accomplish in their 4 years at Gettysburg? Why are these goals important to that faculty member, and why should they be important to students? How does the faculty member suggest that these goals best be attained? What characteristics does the faculty member look for in a model “Gettysburg student,” if there is such a thing? Students should come to the relevant Thursday Session prepared to discuss their discoveries. What surprised you? What did not? What most interested you about this faculty member’s views?

“Where do I go from Here?” Wrap-up Reflection and Trajectory of College Experience Discussion

What is your definition of active and engaged learning? How will you ensure that you remain (or become) an active and engaged learner during your remaining years in college?

How has your understanding of “what college is for” evolved over the course of the last semester? How might this “new and improved” understanding shape your choices about college in the coming semesters?

What have you learned about yourself, your talents, your kind of intelligence and your learning style over the course of the semester? How does your self-awareness of your learning style help to shape your learning goals, strategies and vision for the next four years?

What ideas and experiences presented in the course did you find most compelling in thinking about your own approach to active learning? Why were these ideas and experiences especially meaningful to you?