

1. What did you find most beneficial about the First Year Seminar?

- The support: The Zimmer and Partners In Health (Furin?) talks, ROAM performances (which the students loved), and the 3 books (Zimmer, Kidder, and Schlosser). (They were really engaging books)
- The opportunity to affect students thinking and learning styles at the earliest possible time. Interaction with faculty colleagues in planning and teaching the course.
- Lot's of contact/interaction. High quality of work.
- The selected readings were very good. Evolution and Mountains were excellent. Fast Food Nation was quite slanted and biased.
- Sharing ideas in orientation. Sharing syllabi. I missed week first week of orientation, so I can't say how much more that would have helped me. The events – speaker etc. were great and really helped to spark discussion in class.
- I very much liked the texts – I always feel FYS challenges and expands my teaching style. I also like the give-and-take with professors from other disciplines. I liked being able to pick a fourth text. I liked Jen Furin the best as a speaker.
- It is a nice change of pace from my other teaching.
- Meeting faculty from other departments and having pedagogical discussions with them. Teaching students outside my discipline and having interdisciplinary class discussions. Introducing students to expectations of university course work.
- The workshop last spring. It really helped me understanding the spirit of FYS.
- The opportunity to teach freshman and to read some good books.
- Working with freshman who need a lot of guidance and support.
- Mountains Beyond Mountains. Evolution – text and videos. Jen Furin.
- It was a way to start “thinking outside the box” for me as well. It is not good to be entrenched only in one's own discipline. Working with scientific issues forces humanities faculty to stretch themselves. The information presented was very informative and interesting this year and I think it was a good choice of books. Thank you to colleagues who included me on Botanical Garden field trip!
- Students reading and discussion controversial (to them) topics that challenge their assumptions about life.
- Working with a “different” sort of student than I'm used to. By that, I mean, not primarily pre-meds.
- Reading Evolution by Zimmer. Interacting with freshmen.
- It provided an opportunity to get to know more about JCU freshman than what I am able to do in my regular classes.

2. What did you find least beneficial about the Seminar?

- Given the fact that I regularly participate, having to prepare a new topic every two years. I would favor four year, or even three year cycles.
- Lots of work – difficult to get it all graded.
- Attempting to teach an area that is clearly not my expertise. I often had difficult filling up class time trying to cover areas that are not in my field.
- I know this is probably unreasonable, but 20 students is a large class in which to foster discussion. Smaller class size would be great. How about meet twice a week but smaller

sizes? Book choice is also a problem. I thought the current books were great, but some of the previous selections would have been very difficult for me.

- The workshops this year were less helpful than in other years – I liked when we used to split up the texts and did presentations on them, and on pedagogical strategies.
- It deviated too much from the original proposal so that there was no coherent theme.
- Some public talks pitched too low and gave the impression that the university has low expectations of students. I think that is a mistake.
- The music-related activities.
- Feeling that I am not teaching in my area of expertise. That my years of training in my specialty were not being put to good use. I am a better teacher of that which I know about.
- Teaching the evolution book.
- Movie – Election. Speaker – Elder.
- Nothing really. The only major complaint I heard was from a student Freshman advisee (not in my own FYS section) that her professor for FYS did not schedule any outside lectures or field trips, etc., only in-class discussions. She felt her section was “deprived” when the students assumed others in other sections were getting “perks” that they were not.
- The spring workshop!
- None.
- Joceyllyn (sp?) Elders.
- Too many “special lectures and events that seemed irrelevant to even this session’s overly broad topic of “democracy, science, and capitalism.” There seems to have been little, if any effort made by the FYS chair or subcommittee to explain why they chose to include these events or how they envisioned them as enhancing FYS’s topic. The events seemed to be there to just fill up time.

3. To what extent did the First Year Seminar attain its goals? (Fostering critical reading, writing, listening, spoken and active discussion; making connections between academic disciplines; augmenting the intellectual life of the campus; *et al.*).

- It definitely met the goals of “making connections between academic disciplines” and augmenting the intellectual life on campus. Not so sure about the others.
- With a very few exceptions of students who simply refused to participate actively in the course, most made at least some, and a few a great deal, of progress as critical readers, thinkers, and writers, improved their oral communication skills, made at least some interdisciplinary or con-disciplinary connections. The extra events scheduled clearly augmented the intellectual life of the campus, even if only a few outside the program took advantage.
- Did it all and then some. Eg.: discussed self, identity, responsibility and current topics.
- Probably achieved these goals (somewhat) with the better students.
- I think it did pretty well. I got the impression that students were talking about the topics outside of class – especially Evolution and Fast Food Nation. Very topical and thought provoking topics.

- I think it really does – this was a quiet class, but they began to really open up and talk, and from this and the papers, I got the sense of some careful reading.
- I think it attained these goals quite well.
- I thought FYS met all of these goals.
- I think it did so fairly.
- I think all of these goals are daily met in regular courses. All students eventually take courses that foster many, if not all, of the above intellectual goals. There is no need for an FYS course to accomplish those goals. FYS should not be a vote of “no confidence” in disciplinary courses to achieve intellectual aims.
- It does a good job in this area.
- All accomplished to some degree, but my section was one of the least active for class discussion, ever!
- Yes, overall I believe it did. But of course, each student gets out of it what he or she puts in – and same goes for faculty! I especially like that students were required to go to outside lectures, so they won’t think that “learning” is just 50 minutes of class time, a little homework, and that’s it!
- This is really impossible to answer. I suppose the best I can say is that it made attempts at the goals that are listed.
- Based on my student evaluations, I’d say that critical thinking / discussion / connections / interdisciplinary thought skills were improved.
- Very limited.
- I feel relatively successful in meeting the goals I set, although the real measure of their success will be how the students apply them to other courses.

4. Did you encounter any difficulties in teaching the FYS?

- Yes, I did not plan enough in-class activities that would compel or inspire participation by students. I relied too much on instructor-led discussion when students did not have too much more to say.
- No more than usual.
- Discussions lagged if students failed to read. This happened a few times, but the threat of quizzes usually brought them back into the text.
- My class was on the quiet side with Evolution, so I need to figure out another strategy with that text.
- Not particularly. I just went with the flow.
- The biggest difficulty was probably the competing expectations of other faculty – I think it is a bad idea to claim that there is no unity to FYS in terms of theme, context, etc. There is unity and it is our job to explain it.
- Although my room was high tech, it did not connect to Dolan at the time of our lecture and documentaries.
- Yes. I feel that I am not “qualified” to teach the book on evolution. It was hard to stimulate discussion on such a fact-based book. More scientific knowledge is needed to lead a discussion about the books contents.
- Teaching evolution was difficult not having a science background.

- More technical and factual background on science topics: Evolution, MDR TB, etc. is needed.
- I would have preferred a classroom with the technology podium (for Internet, films, etc). I got OC 214 which was near my office but if I wanted to incorporate technology I had to ask Jeff LaFavre to import it all for me. I heard some FYS colleagues were able to download the 5 minutes or so videoclips from the Evolution website to start their class every day, and I would have liked to do that too.
- None.
- None.
- ① Many students develop the attitude that the course is irrelevant. ② This is clearly related to having faculty teaching outside of their disciplines with limited context from establishing standards for students, learning, class discussions, etc.
- No significant difficulties in teaching FYS.

5. Did teaching in the FYS affect your teaching in other courses and in general?

- Yes. The topics (books) were absorbing.
- It has definitely helped me to improve and significantly increase the amount of active learning in my classes.
- Indirectly – it was kind of ‘radicalizing.’
- Yes. I spent a decent amount of time preparing for this course and it definitely impacted the time I could focus on research and my other courses.
- Not appreciably. I use the discussion in other classes already. I might bring some more ideas regarding over-consumption into my ecology classes, but I was covering these topics already
- Yes, exercises and strategies I used this fall I plan on using again.
- Yes, I always feel a boost of enthusiasm from the freshmen.
- Yes, positively.
- Yes, and made more aware of the condition of the students when they enter college.
- The inordinate amount of time needed to prepare myself for the course (because I am so unfamiliar with evolutions, US government intervention in Haiti, etc) drained energy from my regular courses.
- No.
- No.
- I enjoyed interacting with colleagues in other disciplines. Getting the students to speak and voice their opinions and ideas was a challenge!
- Not really!
- No.
- No.
- I was able to try out new discussion techniques which I might apply to my other courses.

6. Suggestions for improving the FYS.

- Use a textbook with activities and theme that would draw the course together. Course relied too much on each instructor to make course cohesive resulting in too much

variation among classes. That is, in addition to the other 3 books. Attached is a couple of texts that might work.

- New topics less frequently. Maybe begin to repeat same, such as *The City*.
- Drop the ‘field trips’ are ‘high school.’ They do little to promote learning and convey the wrong image of university. Drop the ‘smorgasbord’ of speakers and others. Again it conveys the wrong image – we have many speakers on campus, already – send them there.
- Have people that have an expertise in the area(s) covered teach the course. Perhaps go to a large-lecture hall for coverage of the topics and smaller break-out sessions for discussion. I was quite uncomfortable covering areas that are not my expertise – and thus I believe it is unfair to the students.
- ① Student evaluations need to be transparent. How are students viewing the FYS? Is it working? ② Book choice – to get more faculty interested, we may need to provide more choices of books to read.
- A better spring workshop that focuses less on (sorry! But) rather esoteric discipline-specific issues with an anthology I didn’t end up using anyway.
- More money all around.
- Pitch higher at public talks!
- Don’t do the creation/evolution debate. Place concerts in the right context. More documentaries. Make movies mandatory and allow the instructors to discuss them in advance.
- Better speakers – many were poor speakers or off topic. More speakers. More coherent theme – these large, sweeping themes are difficult to sustain intellectually.
- Use summer session not to become a Philosophy course – but to bring: ① Scientist in to teach evolution. ② Nutritionists in to help with *Fast Food Nation*.
- Better speakers and movies.
- Some of the films should be mandatory, in particular Supersize Me, to go along with Fast Food Nation. Also, I would reinvite Nancy but I would ask her to: 1) digitize here slides – they were way too small and dark for all except those in very front rows, and 2) include the descriptive material on voodoo, which she left out when she talked on Haiti.
- Require all instructors to give tests of some sort – especially a final. Get some better AV equipment for Kulas.
- Contrary to Dr. Lauritzen’s letters to the faculty, strive to make the curriculum more academic and less advocacy. I chose to start with the relatively leftish texts and said “so, what do you think of that?” at least it forces the conservatives to move against the flow. Often, their rhetoric was quite thoughtful. I don’t believe other sections did that as much (based on student comments to me).
- ① Eliminate it. ② Failing that, offer the course fall and spring to allow faculty to teach back to back semesters and cut numbers of faculty roughly in half. ③ Eliminate it (did I mention that already?) ④ look FYS doesn’t have to be bad, but as currently structured it is unsound. ⑤ Could I chew on razor blades instead?
- I felt that when it came to developing techniques to engage the students we were left to re-invent the wheel. Even though the FYS topic and readings change, the stated goals (“fostering critical reading, writing, listening, spoken and active discussion; making connections between academic disciplines; augmenting the intellectual life on campus; *et*

al.”) remain the same. I would like to have heard from faculty from earlier FYSs on what they did to try and engage the students, what assignments and activities they used, and what they felt the students responded to most or least. While I would not feel compelled to adopt their techniques, it would provided me with a better understanding on how to approach FYS and make it as meaningful as possible for my students.

7. Would you be willing to teach in the FYS again?

- Probably
- Yes.
- Yes.
- No – unless I am forced to do it.
- These books – yes.
- Yes.
- Yes!
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Yes! I love teaching FYS.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- Yes.
- I agreed to teach FYS in 2004-05. I will probably teach it again only if and when it is required by department commitments.

8. Other comments.

- Let’s not let the naysayer destroy this program.
- ‘Evolution’ does not belong in this theme: ‘democracy – capitalism – service.’ I liked it, but it should be paired with something else or a theme of its own.
- We need more presentations in Dolan center – class really seem to get a lot out of the sessions.
- Course needs more material on Capitalism and Democracy.
- Good job! – Paul and Bob! It is a huge amount of work to coordinate all this, and I don’t think all colleagues realize and appreciate this! Thank you fro the Friday Faculty Get-Together at the end, and the book certificate too.
- I appreciated the “hands-off” approach of the director (towards my – and all others-teaching).
- I think the University needs to re-think its commitment to FYS. Three events epitomize its interest in the program: ① In the workshops, the FYS chair often chose to deliver information not standing in the front where all could easily hear and see, but seated at a corner of the seminar table, where he was hard to hear and hidden from half the attendees. (While such an casual affectation may work in a philosophy class, faculty who give-up their time to participate deserve better.) ② At more than one presentation in the Dolan Center, those in charge had not bothered before hand to learn how dim the lights, make sure the slides were clearly visible, or even use the microphone to introduce the

speaker. (In fact, the production values of the presentations all seem amateurish.) ③
Faculty did not get a \$250 pay bump for their efforts, unlike previous years.