

TCNJ First Seminar Program
Academic Learning Goals
Fall 2013

- To foster intellectual curiosity in the students;
- To introduce students to college-level assignments and college-level expectations in terms of writing, reading, research, and oral presentations;
- To improve the students' ability to think critically about their world, their culture, and their own beliefs;
- To foster a student culture of intellectual engagement outside the classroom,
- To encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning;
- To introduce students to the concept of a well-rounded education based on a breadth of knowledge that goes beyond their immediate professional or academic field; and
- To accomplish the appropriate Liberal Learning domain goals and any appropriate interdisciplinary concentration goals for the course.

Goals for Living and Learning Communities
Fall 2013

- To assist first-year students in forming peer communities and healthy social bonds,
- To create an academically supportive residential environment,
- To encourage socializing around academic interests and unmoderated intellectual discussions in the residence halls,
- To foster intellectual community as an integral part of the peer communities formed by first-year students,
- To encourage students to take greater responsibility for conditions in their community and their nation,
- To encourage the presence and involvement of faculty in the residence halls,
- To promote cooperation between faculty and Student Life staff, and
- To make group work, study sessions, film screenings, writing workshops, field trips, and other similar learning activities for the FSPs easy to organize and effect.

TCNJ First Seminar Program

Standards for FSP Courses and Proposals Fall 2013

The *First Seminar* is the cornerstone of the Liberal Learning program. The seminar is designed to provide all first-year students with an intellectually exciting and challenging experience taught by full time faculty. Topics are selected by instructors and announced in advance so students may select according to their interests. Seminars are open to all first-year students regardless of major. Classes are speaking and writing intensive and are capped at eighteen students. First seminar courses cannot be the first course in a major, nor can they be counted toward the fulfillment of a major program. However, the seminar counts as one course and may be applied to the fulfillment of students' breadth requirements, and to no more than one civic responsibility category (or two if one of them fulfills the community engagement category).

All proposals for first seminar sections should meet the following standards:

- Above all, seminars should pique students' intellectual curiosity and be led by faculty members intellectually engaged with the questions at hand.
- Seminars should strengthen students' intellectual skills. They should require approximately 20 pages of written work, preferably in the form of 4 to 6 shorter papers, with feedback and opportunities for revision.
- Seminars should deal with questions or points of view about areas of knowledge or controversies within areas of knowledge, not simply with the areas themselves.
- Students should engage in a free exchange of ideas involving both discussion and oral presentations. Mutual criticism of a constructive and civil nature is expected.
- Seminars should not be survey courses in a field of knowledge, nor may they count for the first course in a major. They should provide students with an early experience of scholarship more like that expected in upper-level courses, but without required prerequisites.
- Seminars should combine opportunities for students to engage in independent and group research. They are limited to 18 persons.