

First Year Seminars

2021-2022 Faculty Handbook

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Calendar of Important Dates & Events

2021-2022 Academic Calendar

Fall 2021

July 15 (Thu)	AY21-22 FYS Syllabus Workshop (10a-12n, virtual)
August 23 (Mon)	Fall FYS Instructor Workshop (9a-12n, virtual)
August 24 (Tue)	Fall FYS Instructor Workshop (1-4p, in-person)
August 30 (Mon)	First Day of Fall Semester Classes
Early September TBA	FYS Faculty meeting #1
September TBA	Core Program Event (Safiya Noble)
October 11-12 (Mon-Tue)	Fall Break
Late October TBA	FYS Faculty meeting #2
November 24-26 (Wed-Fri)	Thanksgiving Break
December 3 (Fri)	Last Day of Fall Semester Classes
December 20 (Mon)	FYS (S/U) Grades Due at Noon PDT

Spring 2022

December TBA	Spring FYS Faculty Workshop
January 17 (Mon)	MLK Holiday (no classes)
January 18 (Tue)	First Day of Spring Semester Classes
February 1	Writing Portfolio Moodle Site Open
February 21 (Mon)	Presidents' Day (no classes)
Early February TBA	FYS Faculty meeting #1
March 1 (Sun)	Writing Portfolios due at 5pm PT
March TBA	Core Program Event/Dungan Lecture
March 7-11	Spring break (no classes)
Early April TBA	FYS Faculty Meeting #2
April 19 (Tue)	Founder's Day (no classes)
April 26 (Tue)	Last Day of Spring Semester Classes
May 16 (Mon)	FYS (S/U) Grades Due at Noon PT

Update Summary for 2021-2022

This section has a summary of the changes to the program for the 2021-2022 year.

Return to In-Person Instruction

There are many changes to in have been made due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Primary among these is the fact that all instruction in will be **in-person**.

COVID Requirements

Faculty may require all students to wear masks in classes that are held indoors. Faculty may not have a COVID-restriction policy which is more lax than the College's policy.

Course Caps

Typically, first-year seminars are capped at 16 students. Last year when instruction was completely virtual, the class size was reduced to 12 however this year with a return to in-person instructor it has back to **16**.

Name Change and Articulation of Purpose

The program for years was known as the CSP or Cultural Studies Program despite the fact that seminars could be on any topic selected by faculty. The program name has changed to FYS (First-Year Seminar) program and the purpose of the program has been articulated and approved by the faculty.

FYS Courses Are Ungraded

In order to facilitate a focus on the learning outcomes and especially the writing process, FYS courses will be ungraded. That is there will only be two grade modes (S or Satisfactory) and (U or Unsatisfactory). Students with U grades will not receive credit for taking the class and automatically will not complete the First-Stage Writing Requirement. The U grade is equivalent to an "F."

Common Summer Reading Merges With Community Book Program

The Community Book Program has merged with the Core Program's Summer Reading. All Oxy students, alumni, faculty and staff are encouraged to read [*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*](#), the 2021 *New York Times* bestseller written by Heather McGhee. All first-year students will be expected to read it and the Core Program will make copies available to all FYS Instructors.

CSP Lectures (Core Program Events) Are No Longer Mandatory

Previously, when the assessment of the First-Stage Writing requirement included a Timed Writing Exercise, students were required to attend CSP Lectures (which later became Core Program Events). Students are now strongly encouraged to attend Core Program Events as a way of becoming acclimated to the shared intellectual experience of the College, but they are not mandatory. Core Program Events will generally be held during the regular FYS class time (12:15-1:10pm MWF) and will have a connection to the annual theme and the Community Book.

A New Approach To Academic Misconduct: Shared Academic Integrity Commitment

The Academic Misconduct Policy has been re-envisioned and replaced by a Shared Academic Integrity Commitment. Full documentation of how the new policy is being implemented will be communicated over Summer 2021.

Overview

1. Introduction

Occidental's First-Year Seminars (formerly the Cultural Studies Program-- CSP) were introduced in Fall 1994, the latest in a series of first-year programs dating back to a required "History of Civilization" course that was first implemented in 1947. In the early years, students could choose from five "colloquia," each with a distinct topic and taught by an interdisciplinary team of faculty. These colloquia were packaged with linked seminars, totaling 8 units in the fall semester and an additional 4 units in the spring. Maintaining teams of faculty committed to regularly co-teaching colloquia became increasingly difficult, especially as financial woes at the College became more pronounced in the late 1990s. In Fall 1998, the curriculum was reorganized, with a larger number of small seminars being offered with a greater range of topics.

The First Year Seminar is the centerpiece of Occidental's Core Program. The Core Program is the name given to Occidental's general education curriculum. It is a cross-disciplinary array of courses required to be completed by all students in order to graduate that provides the intellectual foundation for the College's commitment to its mission of excellence, equity, service and community. Core courses ask students to engage in analytic and creative thinking: posing questions from different points of view, solving problems, formulating hypotheses, gathering evidence to support claims and arguments, drawing appropriate conclusions, and expressing ideas clearly.

Usually First Year Seminars (FYS) are 4-unit courses capped at 15 or 16 students and taught during the 12:15-1:10 p.m. MWF time slot. (A few 4-unit seminars are offered at other hours.) Additionally, we frequently offer special programs called "FYS Plus" courses. Much like the colloquia of the past, FYS Plus courses offer a more immersive academic experience, typically involving more faculty instructors, more students, and more units of credit. FYS Plus courses often consist of a regular FYS linked with another 4-unit course that can potentially satisfy other Core Program (and major) requirements. First Year Seminars themselves only satisfy the FYS Core Program requirement.

All first-year students are required to take a First Year Seminar in both semesters of the first year at the College as part of the Core Program requirements for graduation. (Transfer students are not required to and cannot take First Year Seminars.) Each semester approximately 35 seminars are offered that are each designed and taught by faculty members from almost all of Occidental's academic departments and programs. While the instructor chooses the topic of each seminar, the seminars serve a critical role in the College's first-stage writing requirement and, as such, we ask that they all follow the curricular requirements detailed in the pages that follow.

A list of the current seminars can be found at <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/core-program/first-year-seminars>

2. FYS Mission, Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The Core Steering Committee in the 2020-2021 academic year successfully created and circulated a document that was approved by faculty that contained a mission statement, designation criteria, course objectives, semester emphases and learning outcomes for all FYS courses.

Mission

The mission of the FYS (First-Year Seminar) program is to prepare all first-year students for success at Occidental College. In FYS courses, students engage in shared intellectual experiences that develop effective college-level writing and enhance critical thinking. FYS courses also assist students with the transition to college and include an introduction to scholarly inquiry.

Semester Emphasis

- **Fall:** In addition to the primary goals of all FYS courses to develop effective college-level writing and enhance critical thinking, Fall FYS courses pay attention to and provide assistance with navigating the transition to college life; the writing focus in this semester is thesis-driven essays.
- **Spring:** In addition to the primary goals of all FYS courses to develop effective college-level writing and enhance critical thinking, Spring FYS courses center scholarly inquiry and research that includes an introduction to information literacy; the writing focus in this semester is the production of a long (10-12 pages) research paper.

Course Objectives

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

1. **Effective College-Level Writing.** Students will demonstrate proficiency in expository essay writing as they gain and refine their knowledge of the conventions of academic discourse.
2. **Critical Thinking.** Students will be provided with opportunities to develop, strengthen, and demonstrate their ability to think critically and engage in academic discourse.
3. **Scholarly Inquiry.** Students will demonstrate understanding of the practices of scholarly inquiry by identifying research questions; collecting, evaluating, and interpreting evidence; and communicating the findings.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

4. **Transition to College.** Students will become familiar with the norms of college academic life and demonstrate knowledge of the curricular and co-curricular resources available to promote their academic success.
5. **Information Literacy.** Students will be introduced to the concept of information literacy and be expected to understand how to find and evaluate academic sources. They will also learn about scholarly citation methods and purposes, and become aware of the importance of academic honesty.

Learning Outcomes

- **Effective College-Level Writing Outcome 1.1:** Students will develop writing that responds with insight and originality to the criteria and requirements of the assignment, demonstrating their understanding of the course materials and topics through the use of specific examples and evidence from scholarly sources.
- **Effective College-Level Writing Outcome 1.2:** Students will develop writing using features appropriate for college-level expository papers including: thesis or main idea, clarity of focus, organization, and conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and usage.
- **Critical Thinking Outcome 2.1:** Students will have the ability to clearly and accurately represent the precise question, problem, or issue under discussion.
- **Critical Thinking Outcome 2.2:** Students will have the ability to identify assumptions, implications, and practical consequences of the question, problem or issue under discussion.

- **Scholarly Inquiry Outcome 3.1:** Students will gain experience in crafting research questions, locating and evaluating sources, deploying evidence and situating their scholarly inquiry within scholarly conversations.
- **Scholarly Inquiry Outcome 3.2:** Students will construct well-reasoned conclusions or solutions with regard to the question, problem or issue under discussion, and test these conclusions or solutions against relevant criteria and standards.
- **Transition to College Outcome 4.1:** Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge about academic and co-curricular resources and support services.
- **Transition to College Outcome 4.2:** Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge about academic support services that aid in the transition to college from high school.
- **Information Literacy 5.1:** Students will be able to identify their information needs and match them with appropriate search strategies and tools.

3. Professional Development Opportunities

Workshops: The Core Program provides and strongly recommends orientation/training workshops for new and veteran instructors of First Year Seminars, covering topics like assignment design, techniques for evaluating writing, in-class writing exercises, and integrating content and skills instruction. These workshops are typically held in August (open to Fall and Spring FYS Instructors) and December (for Spring FYS instructors). The August workshops are open to all FYS instructors, while the December workshop is focused specifically on topics relevant to the Spring seminars. Participants receive stipends for attendance.

Thursday July 15 (10a-12n PT) Faculty Workshop (Online with Synchronous and Asynchronous Content)

Monday August 23 (9a-12n PT): FYS Faculty Workshop (Online with Synchronous and Asynchronous Content)

Tuesday August 24 (1p-4p PT): FYS Faculty Workshop (In-Person with Lunch!)

Staff Meetings: The Core Office also arranges regular FYS faculty meetings for each semester's staff for the presentation of information, discussion of teaching techniques and sharing feedback. It is highly recommended each faculty member attend these meetings. Since some instructors are prevented from attending these meetings due to schedule conflicts, important announcements will also be sent out via email. Every semester, faculty teaching FYS seminars are added to either the FCORE-L or SCORE-L mailing lists to facilitate communication.

4. Annual Theme, Summer Reading, and Core Program Events (formerly CSP Lecture Series)

Each year the Core Program chooses an annual theme, a common summer reading and produces Core Program Events (formerly known as the FYS Lecture Series). There are often one to three Core Program Events in each semester, usually scheduled in the FYS timeslot with the expectation that all first-year students will attend them. (When these events were called CSP Lecture Series, first-year students were required to attend all events.) The permanent theme for the Core Program is the four cornerstones of the Mission of the College: "Excellence, Equity, Community and Service." The annual theme for the 2021-2022 academic year is "community."

The Core's Common Summer Reading and the Community Book Program merged in the 2020-2021 year.

This year's common summer reading is Heather McGee's [*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*](#). The Core Program has purchased electronic copies of this book and will provide them to FYS instructors at no cost. All instructors need to do to obtain their copy is contact the Core Program by email at coreprogram@oxy.edu with the subject "FREE COPY: SUM OF US" and we will send you an email with a 16-digit code that allows you unlimited access to the book in the RedShelf app or at <https://oxybookstore.redshelf.com/>

For more information about the annual theme, common summer reading, community book program and Core Program Events, check out these resources:

- <https://www.oxy.edu/about-oxy/community-book-program>
- <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/core-program/annual-theme/summer-reading>
- <http://www.oxy.edu/annual-theme>
- <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/core-program/core-program-events>

Instructors are strongly encouraged to try to connect and incorporate ideas from the annual theme, common summer reading, and Core Program Events in their seminars as much as they can. The hope is that FYS instructors can take advantage of these opportunities to enhance the shared academic experience the first-year seminars can provide.

Curriculum Guidelines and Writing Requirements

1. Occidental's Writing Requirements

(From the 2021-2022 *College Catalog*)

At Occidental College, we believe that regardless of the specific academic path students choose, it is necessary to be able to write well. To encourage academic excellence—one of the cornerstones of Occidental's mission—across disciplines, we have a Two-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement of all students. The writing requirements provide students with opportunities to improve both their writing processes and products, as they gain knowledge of writing as part of a liberal arts education and within a specific discipline. Completion of this Two-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement is a college degree requirement.

The First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement is designed to introduce students to college-level writing expectations, as they learn to enter a scholarly conversation, enhance their abilities in writing expository essays, develop skills in expressing critical analysis, and communicate knowledge to an audience using specific rhetorical conventions. The First-Stage Writing requirement aims to prepare students for more complex writing tasks within an academic discipline. Thus, it is expected that students will complete the First-Stage Writing requirement before they complete the Second-Stage in their major. (See the *College Catalog* for more Information about the Two-Stage Writing Proficiency Requirement.)

For all students who enter Oxy as first-time first-year students, the First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement will be determined through their performance in both First Year (FYS) seminars and through an evaluation of a writing portfolio, which includes essays written in the fall and spring First Year Seminars. Information about the writing portfolio will be sent to all first-time first-year students at the start of fall semester. Students who receive an assessment of "Completed" on their portfolio and who pass both First Year Seminars have completed the First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement. Students who receive an assessment determination of "Not Completed," or who fail at least one First Year Seminar, will be required to take and pass with a grade of "C" or higher WRD 201: The Art of Essay Writing.

2. FYS Writing Goals & Outcomes

The First Year Seminars, while providing opportunities to introduce students to Oxy's range of departments and disciplinary forms of knowledge, also function as the first-year writing experience for students.

There are writing-specific FYS student learning goals and outcomes that we ask you to include on your syllabus (along with any other learning goals and outcomes you have). Please keep these goals and outcomes in mind as you design your writing assignments and plan your writing pedagogy for the course:

Goal 1: Effective College-Level Writing. Students will demonstrate proficiency in expository essay writing as they gain and refine their knowledge of the conventions of academic discourse.

Outcome 1.1: Students will develop writing that responds with insight and originality to the criteria and requirements of the assignment, demonstrating their understanding of the course materials and topics through the use of specific examples and evidence from scholarly sources.

Outcome 1.2: Students will develop writing using features appropriate for college-level expository papers including: thesis or main idea, clarity of focus, organization, and conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and usage.

3. The First-Stage Writing Requirement and Portfolio Assessment

The First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement is assessed through a **Portfolio** of student writing from the fall and spring FYS courses and we use the above FYS writing goals and outcomes in the assessment of portfolios. To ensure an equitable process in the submission and assessment of student portfolios, it is imperative that FYS instructors foreground writing pedagogy in their course plans and design writing assignments that will enable students to meet the Portfolio submission requirements, as outlined below. Information about the college-wide Writing Proficiency requirements and the First-Stage Writing portfolio can also be found at: <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/writing-program-requirements>.

Students are required to submit these documents as their portfolio materials:

1. Reflective Introduction Essay (aka: RIE)
2. Three essays from a First Year Seminar (any three essays from fall or spring)

These portfolio materials must be **submitted by the student no later than March 1st at 5:00 p.m.** (electronically through Moodle) and **meet the below criteria. Please review the Portfolio Guide, which include the below criteria, with your students in the first week of class (and frequently throughout the semester):**

- At least one of the three essays submitted from the FYS courses must be thesis-driven, with features of conventional expository essays. The features of expository essays are:
 1. A clear and concise thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph (the Introduction) of the essay;
 2. Body paragraphs that include all of the necessary "parts": topic claim, evidential support for the thesis, and development/analysis of the ideas and evidence used;
 3. Clear and logical organization of paragraphs and ideas; clear and logical transitions between the Introduction, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusion;
 4. A conclusion that does not merely restate the thesis, but instead revisits it in light of the evidence

provided.

- At least two of the three essays submitted from the FYS courses must demonstrate use and integration of evidence from academically-credible, scholarly sources.
- Total word count for the final Portfolio of documents, which includes the three essays and the Reflective Introductory Essay: 5,000-7,500 words.
- Formatting: 12 pt. conventional font, double-spaced, word count at the top of each essay.
- Submission format: all materials must be formatted as one PDF document with the RIE first.

As noted above, the criteria used to evaluate the Portfolios aligns with the FYS writing-specific learning goals and outcomes and includes:

- Writing Knowledge: Self Reflection and Process (as demonstrated especially in the Reflective Introduction Essay)
- Focus: Responsive to the Assignment and the Thesis-Argument
- Organization: Cohesion of Ideas and Paragraph Structure
- Evidence and Development: Use of Sources and Development of Ideas
- Writing Features and Presentation: Grammar, Mechanics, Citation

Portfolios will be submitted through a Moodle website, which students will be able to access on February 1st until the **March 1st** deadline. After the assessment process is completed (by the first day of advising week in spring term), students will be able to see their final assessment determination in GAR (Grades & Academic Record).

Students will receive complete information about the First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement and instructions for the First-Stage Writing Proficiency Portfolio in early fall semester and reminders until the **submission due date of March 1st at 5:00 p.m.** The Writing Center Director will also hold several info sessions to guide students through the portfolio instructions and answer their questions. The [Writing Program & Requirements website](#) also contains all of the information about the Portfolio, including the Portfolio Guide, a sample RIE, and an FAQ. We recommend that FYS faculty familiarize themselves with this website, share a link to the website on the syllabus, and review the website at least once with students during the semester.

All faculty also have access to the same information about the First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement and instructions about the First-Stage Writing Proficiency Portfolio through the College Catalog. A copy of the Portfolio guidelines and instructions for students, including the Assessment Rubric used to evaluate Portfolios, is also included in this FYS Faculty Guidebook.

4. FYS Writing-Specific Curricular Requirements

Both Fall and Spring

- **Writing Guide:** All FYS students are required to purchase the *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*, 5th edition, by Turabian, Colomb, Williams, Bizup and FitzGerald (Chicago University Press, 2018). Desk copies will be made available to all FYS instructors at no charge. Please make every effort to use the Turabian book in your writing instruction.
- **Writing Assignment Prompts:**
 - ✓ Students should be given access to assignment prompts in written form, which helps to ensure an equitable learning environment for all students in the course (and is a central principle in universal design for learning).
 - ✓ If you choose to have students design their own prompt, the prompt should be in response to an assignment you have planned in alignment with your course learning goals (e.g., "write a 3-

4-page paper using a text from this segment of our course”). Please put this assignment prompt in writing.

- ✓ Assignment prompts should be posted on Moodle or another class management system.
 - ✓ Assignment prompts should include an explanation of the writing task, a description of how the assignment will be evaluated, and a clear statement of deadlines.
 - ✓ Assignment prompts need to include a 1-2 sentence summary of the assignment. Students will need to include this summary of the assignment prompt in their RIE.
 - ✓ Please take time to discuss all writing assignments when distributed, which can be done in a number of ways: in a synchronous and recorded class session; in homework asking students to respond with questions or a summary of the assignment; in a short recording (audio or video) explaining the assignment, etc.
- **Draft & Revision Sequence:** At least one formal writing assignment should require students to submit a draft, which will receive feedback from the instructor, followed by a revision for final grading. Please build adequate time for a draft-revision sequence (typically two-three weeks) into your course plan.
 - **Peer Review:** At least one writing assignment should ask students to engage in peer review. Please provide students with clear guidelines and instructions to support their peer review process.
 - **Use of Portfolio Rubric in assessment:** Please try to use the Portfolio Rubric as you design your own feedback and assessment of student writing in your FYS course(s) to better align students’ writing outcomes in the FYS course with the writing outcomes of the First-Stage Writing Proficiency assessment.

Fall FYS – Writing Requirements and Guidelines

- **20 (double-spaced) pages of polished, completed writing** from each student, distributed across formal (graded) and informal (low-stakes) writing assignments.
- Structure the course to include **4 graded writing assignments** (at least one of these must allow students a draft-revision sequence).
- **At least one** of the 4 graded writing assignments must be a **thesis-driven expository essay** (see the above definition of the expository essay).
- **Other writing** in the course can include informal or low-stakes writing assignments.
- FYS faculty should keep in mind the requirements of the **First-Stage Writing Proficiency Portfolio** and design writing assignments that provide students with opportunities to write **essays** that meet the submission requirements.

Spring FYS – Writing Requirements and Guidelines

- **20 (double-spaced) pages of polished, completed writing** from each student, distributed across formal (graded) and informal (low-stakes) writing assignments.
- At least **one shorter formal expository essay must be assigned and graded before February 15th**. Note: assigning and returning an essay to students early in the spring semester will give students the opportunity to submit this paper as one of the three in their First-Stage Writing Portfolio. It is **vital that instructors assign and grade at least one paper by this February deadline**.
- The **research essay assignment (10-12 double-spaced pages)** should be distributed before spring break and staged to allow students opportunities to work on the process of writing a longer essay (i.e., research question; preliminary thesis; annotated bibliography or exploratory essay; draft component, etc.).

5. FYS Writing Instruction: Quick Tips

Along with information provided at the FYS faculty support workshops about how to incorporate writing pedagogy into your FYS course, here is a short list of writing activities or approaches you might consider:

- Sequence assignments so that they focus on specific writing tasks and build upon one another.
- Hold peer review sessions and provide students with guided instruction for “how to” peer review.
- Assign informal or low-stakes writing assignments to give students opportunities to work on their

writing practice and process.

- Share sample writing to illustrate your writing expectations, pedagogy, and the features of expository essays.
- Hold required student conferences at any point during the writing process: prewriting, drafting, or grading conferences.
- Discuss assignment rubrics in class; students can also be included in developing grading rubrics for their assignments.
- Discuss plagiarism so all students have knowledge of how and why to cite sources.
- Teach students the citation style you want them to use for the essays in your class.
- Use the Turabian book, *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*, to help supplement your writing instruction and as a reference resource for students.
- Consult the resources on the Oxy Writing Center website and in the Moodle site "Writing Resources for Faculty."

6. Prepare Students to Turn in the Writing Portfolio

- Review the Portfolio Guide with students several times during the semester.
- Ask students to put the word count for their essays on the first page when they turn them in to you (as students are required to put the word count for their essays when submitting the portfolio).
- Consider using the time in one of the writing conferences to discuss the essays the student may want to include in their Portfolio.
- Assign a practice RIE and return these to students with feedback.
- Use at least some of the Portfolio Rubric criteria when assessing students' writing in your course. The goal is to align the FYS Writing Goals & Outcomes (which are reflected in the Portfolio Rubric criteria) with your feedback and grades (specifically on writing).
- Encourage your students to attend the Portfolio Info sessions and other writing workshops offered by the Writing Center.

Other Requirements and Expectations

Because the First Year Seminar is an introduction to academic habits and practices, and often the first course in which an Occidental student develops a significant relationship with a professor, we ask faculty to address a number of issues in addition to the specific writing skills and subject matter of the course.

- **Academic Ethics:** Please become familiar with Occidental's academic ethics and misconduct policies reproduced in the final sections of this handbook (and also available at <http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics>). It's important that you mention them in your syllabus and that you discuss plagiarism in some detail with your students when giving writing assignments. Many will not have much familiarity with conventional academic standards of ethics.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Occidental complies with ADA guidelines and provides various kinds of accommodation for students with documented disabilities. Such students should be registered with the Dean of Students' office, which will provide specific accommodation information to their instructors.
- **Library Research:** FYS Instructors are encouraged to work with the Center for Digital Liberal Arts (CDLA) to introduce students to library research skills. The CDLA offers standard in-class workshops: *Finding and Evaluating Sources* (Fall) and *Developing a Research Strategy* (Spring) and can consult with faculty on the design of research assignments. Contact: Jacob Alden Sargent (sargent@oxy.edu)
- **SEAN Academic Concern:** If students begin to get into trouble in your seminar (by missing classes, failing

to hand in papers, etc.) please respond rapidly, by contacting them directly or, if that fails, by filing SEAN reports from the my.oxy.edu page (under the “Academic Info and Advising tab,” in “Advising Links”). Or you may contact the Dean of Students office directly about problem students. Please be observant: the FYS instructor is frequently the “first responder” to student problems.

- **Informal advising:** Students may ask you for informal advice ranging from course selection to dealing with personal problems, and you may be able to help them. Please feel free to contact the Core office for advice on these situations.
- **Parents:** Remember that information about a student’s performance in your class is protected by FERPA and college policy. If a parent contacts you asking for such information, please direct him or her to the Core Director or Registrar’s Office. Representatives of the college are not permitted to discuss the educational records of students with any third parties unless a waiver signed by the student is on file in the Registrar’s office.
- **Uncover the “Hidden Curriculum”:** We encourage instructors to think about the implications of the fact that their students are taking First Year Seminars in their very first semester in college. Please recognize that students arrive at Occidental College with varying degrees of cultural capital and familiarity with the norms, expectations and unwritten rules of our academic community (often referred to as “the hidden curriculum”). We strongly recommend that FYS faculty endeavor to make their expectations as explicit as possible, even about things you might not typically think to give instructions about in other courses you teach. Examples include discussing the importance of attending office hours, explaining what office hours are, providing students with suggestions for time management, clarifying what term they should use to refer to you (e.g. “Professor” or “Doctor” or something else) and explicitly setting rules and norms for classroom behavior (use of electronic devices, whether food or drink can be consumed, how to address other students, et cetera).

Resources and Support

1. Writing Resources

Additional Pedagogical Resources for Faculty

FYS instructors will be provided with an instructor's edition of the Turabian et al book, *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers* (4th edition). In addition, the Core Program will provide interested instructors with copies of John Bean's *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*, a useful compendium of tips for teaching writing, and Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, a short book that helps students identify the key rhetorical moves of academic writing and practical advice to implement these strategies as they develop their own arguments. If you are interested in getting a copy of *Engaging Ideas* or *They Say/I Say*, please contact the Core Office.

Faculty also have access to the Moodle site "Writing Resources for Faculty," which contains handouts to use in designing in-class writing workshops and writing-specific pedagogical materials, sample syllabi and assignments, and more.

We also strongly recommend that faculty attend the FYS workshops and pay close attention to emails sent from the Core Program office and the Writing Program Director. The Core Directors are available to meet to discuss any matter related to your FYS; the Writing Program Director can meet with you to discuss any writing-specific matter (including requirements and the student portfolios). Feel free to reach out to us anytime!

On-Campus Writing Support Resources for Students

The Writing Center offers peer writing tutoring Sunday-Thursday (check the WC website for details about hours). Students can also schedule an appointment to work with a faculty writing specialist from the Writing and Rhetoric department (hours vary M-F). **Please note: as of the date of the finalization of this handbook, the WC hours for fall 2021 have not yet been set (given the complexities of shifting back to an in-person environment). The Writing Center website will be updated before the first week of the fall semester.**

The Writing Center website also includes numerous handouts and materials students can consult to improve their writing process and products (many of these materials are also in the Faculty Writing Resources Moodle).

For more information see the Writing Center website: <https://www.oxy.edu/writing-center> or contact the Writing Center Director, Julie Prebel (jprebel@oxy.edu).

2. Information Literacy/Research

Students who need help finding and navigating library resources may schedule appointments with librarians and disciplinary specialists of the CDLA by using the "Research Appointment" link on oxy.edu/library. Peer Research Advisers are also available on a drop-in basis Sunday to Thursday evenings on the ground floor of the Academic Commons.

3. Center for Teaching Excellence

The College's Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) provides materials and assistance to faculty related to pedagogy, assignment design, syllabus creation, and more. Many useful resources are available on the CTE Moodle page: <https://moodle.oxy.edu/course/view.php?id=9480>

Contact Carmel Levitan (levitan@oxy.edu), CTE Director, for more information.

Funding and Other Support

Core Program Funds

Each First Year Seminar has funding of up to \$200 in support of activities that further the learning objectives and/or encourage interaction between the instructor and students. Please retain all *original* receipts for full compensation. All funding requests should be directed to the Core Program Assistant and all forms and documentation should be turned into the Core Office *no later than the last day of finals week of the semester in which the expenditure was made.*

Remsen Bird Funds

In addition to the Core funds, each FYS has a \$200 allotment of Remsen Bird funds which can be used for speakers brought from off-campus. Please contact the Core Program Assistant for details on requesting these funds.

LA Encounters Fund

Additional funding may be available for activities and projects that bring FYS students off campus to locations around Los Angeles. For more information, please see <http://www.oxy.edu/core-program/la-encounters>

Copies/Xeroxing

To request copies please bring documents to the Core Program Assistant. Remember to include the number of copies needed as well as your intended pick-up date.

Suggested Things to Include on Your Syllabus

- Consult the Academic Year 2021-2022 Syllabus Template When It Is Released by the Dean's Office
- Dates of all Core Program Events
- **FYS Objectives, Learning Goals and Outcomes**, especially the below Writing LGOs:
 - Goal 1:** Effective College-Level Writing. Students will demonstrate proficiency in expository essay writing as they gain and refine their knowledge of the conventions of academic discourse.
 - Outcome 1.1:** Students will develop writing that responds with insight and originality to the criteria and requirements of the assignment, demonstrating their understanding of the course materials and topics through the use of specific examples and evidence from scholarly sources.
 - Outcome 1.2:** Students will develop writing using features appropriate for college-level expository papers including: thesis or main idea, clarity of focus, organization, and conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and usage.
- **Writing Center statement:**

The Writing Center (located on the Ground Floor of the Academic Commons) offers students from all disciplines two types of support to work on their writing: peer-to-peer, drop-in and appointment-based consultations with knowledgeable Writing Advisers, Sunday through Thursday, and appointments with Faculty Writing Specialists from the Writing and Rhetoric department. Information about the Writing Center and its open hours, including a link to the appointment system, is on the WC website: <https://www.oxy.edu/writing-center>
- **Portfolio Information:** Include a link to the [Writing Program & Requirements website](#), and provide a brief outline of the requirements of the Writing Portfolio (including March 1st due date, requirement of a PDF with the RIE + 3 FYS essays, and any other information you believe is useful to highlight about the Portfolio submission & review process).
- **Reserve Book Statement** (if applicable):

The textbook for this course is available on reserve in Academic Commons. You can check out the book for up to 4 hours at a time. In-library use only. Brought to you by Associated Students of Occidental College.
- **Credit Hour Policy:**

This First Year Seminar is a 4-unit course. It is expected that students in this class will be devoting at least twelve (12) hours a week (including in-class time) on average for a total of 160 hours of student work in the semester.
- **Title IX statement, and statement of role of faculty member as a mandatory reporter ([Link to Title IX](#))**
 - In the event that you choose to write or speak about having experienced sexual or interpersonal violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation or any other form of sexual harassment, as a designated Responsible Employee, I must notify the Title IX Office. They will contact you to let you know about accommodations and support services at Oxy and reporting options both on and off-campus.

If you do not want the Title IX Office notified, instead of disclosing this information to your instructor, either through conversation or a class assignment, you can speak confidentially with the following people on campus:

- Survivor Advocate, Project SAFE (survivoradvocate@oxy.edu)
- Emmons Counseling (For appointments, call: 323-259-2657)
- Rev. Dr. Susan Young, Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (young@oxy.edu)

The sexual misconduct policy, along with additional resources, can be found at: <http://www.oxy.edu/sexual-respect-title-ix/policies-procedures>.

If you would like to contact the Title IX Office directly, you can email Title IX Coordinator Alexandra Fulcher at afulcher@oxy.edu or call 323-259-1338.

- **Language on Special Accommodations/Learning Differences** ([Link to Disability Services](#))
 - No matter the mode of course instruction, approved academic accommodations remain in effect. Students with documented disabilities and learning differences who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester, or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who has, or thinks they may have, a physical, learning, or psychological disability may contact Disability Services at <mailto:accessibility@oxy.edu> to learn about available services and support. More information is available at <http://www.oxy.edu/disability-services>.
- **Accommodations for Reasons of Faith and Conscience** ([Link to the policy in Catalog](#))
 - Consistent with Occidental College’s commitment to creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that students should be excused from class for reasons of faith and conscience without academic consequence. While it is not feasible to schedule coursework around all days of conviction for a class as a whole, faculty will honor requests from individual students to reschedule coursework, to be absent from classes that conflict with the identified days. Information about this process is available on the ORSL website: <https://www.oxy.edu/office-religious-spiritual-life>
- **Academic Ethics and Misconduct**

The Academic Ethics and Misconduct policy is being replaced by a Shared Academic Integrity Commitment that will be released in Summer 2021 for effect in the 2021-2022 year.