

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE: UNIV 1704</b> <b>FALL 2008 SYLLABUS</b></p>
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**Course Coordinator:**

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**Course Syllabus Online**

<http://www.studentprograms.vt.edu/themehousing/documents/FYSSyllabus2008.pdf>

**Required Textbooks:**

- Gardner, John N. and Jewler, Jerome, Barefoot, Betsey O. (2007). **Your College Experience: Strategies for Success, Seventh Edition**. Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Available at the University Bookstore
- Dept. of Public Relations & Information Technology, Eds.) (2008). **Hokie Handbook 2008-2009**. Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, VA. Hokie Handbook is available on line only: <http://www.hokiehandbook.vt.edu>
- University Common Book: Kidder, Tracy. (2004). **Mountains Beyond Mountains**. New York, NY, Random House

**Required Materials:**     Calendar/Planner   ♦ 3 ring binder   ♦ Handout Packet (provided)

**Course Credit:** Three credit hours as an elective credit. Credits may or may not be applied toward graduation requirements. Please check with your major department. Credits are applicable in determining full-time status, financial aid, and other eligibility issues. Course grades are calculated into semester and cumulative GPAs.

**Course Description:**

The First Year Seminar (FYS) course (required for **WING** participants) is designed to help new Virginia Tech students with their critical and creative thinking skills associated with college academic work, social adaptation to a new environment and making connections with faculty, staff and advanced undergraduate students. Topics include: an understanding of higher education; an understanding of self; holistic development (wellness); life-planning; meta-learning & meta-cognition (learning about learning and thinking); personal responsibility.

### **Course Goals:**

1. To better understand the purpose, value and expectations of the collegiate environment (curricular and co-curricular) and how to function successfully within the collegiate environment
2. To develop an enhanced understanding of self through self-reflection, self-awareness and self-insight
3. To deepen awareness of how to live a holistic (wellness) lifestyle with regard to social, emotional, intellectual, vocational, physical, and spiritual elements of self-development
4. To explore past and current experiences (both academic and social) through a variety of graded written papers
5. To learn and practice life-long learning skills and critical thinking skills
6. To have a more heightened awareness of students' personal responsibility (including self motivation, self management and self discipline) for their academic and social success and an opportunity to practice skills associated

### **Upon completion of this course, students should be more able to do the following:**

1. Reading: processing printed information analytically and critically
2. Writing: communicating clearly, precisely, and persuasively in print
3. Speaking: clear, precise, and persuasive oral communication
4. Listening: processing oral communication actively, critically, and empathically
5. Visual Communication Skills: critical processing and creative presentation of information through visual formats  
or visual media (e.g., diagrammatic drawings; computer graphics)
6. Information Research Skills: proficiency in locating, accessing, retrieving and evaluating information from a variety of sources
7. Technology Skills: proficiency in computer-based communication and information acquisition
8. Learning-How-to-Learn Skills: learning transferable and durable (long-lasting) strategies or methods for most effectively receiving, processing, retaining, retrieving, and utilizing information in a variety of formats and contexts.
9. Higher-Level Thinking Skills: thinking at a level that is more complex or deeper than merely storing facts or recalling factual information.
10. An appreciation for the attitudinal and emotional characteristics associated with critical thinking such as:
  - the willingness and courage to engage in intellectual risk-taking
  - tolerance for ambiguity or uncertainty
  - openness or receptivity to new ideas
  - willingness to give up personally-held beliefs in light of contradictory evidence

### **Course Requirements/Student Responsibilities:**

#### ***Attendance:***

Students are expected to attend **ALL** class sessions (two per week for 75 minutes each class), averaging 150 minutes in class per week. If you are absent, 0 points will be received for participation that day.

#### ***Class Participation:***

Students are expected to read weekly assignments and be prepared for class. In discussions and activities, students will be asked to be ACTIVE and open participants. The quality of your participation will be determined by how well you share ideas, ask questions, listen to peers and contribute to learning. **NO** points will be received when student is absent from class. Students cannot attend another section's class to make up participation points for missing your assigned section's class meeting.

#### ***Written Assignments:***

Students will practice their writing skills by submitting writing assignments that are both graded and un-graded. (See information below about the Writing Center if you need writing assistance).

#### ***Group Projects:***

Each student will be assigned to a group for shared learning and a group paper/presentation. The purpose of the group project is to enhance students' ability to work with others and to enhance each student's public speaking abilities. Group members will work together to research a topic on college student adjustment/issues affecting first year students and present the topic to the class and write a group paper regarding their findings. Each member of the group will be responsible for doing a certain amount of research, presenting and writing for the paper. Topics and guidelines will be provided in more detail during class.

#### ***Cover Letter and Resume:***

Students will identify a potential job or internship (he/she is qualified for) and will create a cover letter and resume for the position. While the student will not have to apply for the position, creation of the cover letter and resume will be a valuable tool learned for the future.

**Interview with Faculty:**

Students will conduct a brief interview with a Virginia Tech Faculty member or their academic advisor. First Year Seminar instructors may not be interviewed for this assignment.

**Photo Project:**

Each student will be assigned to a group for a lower level group project experience.

**Journal:**

Students will be given a variety of topics to reflect upon for the journal assignments. The purpose of these assignments is to engage the student in reflection regarding their experience in the First Year Seminar. The **section facilitator** generates reflection topics.

**Homework Projects:**

Section facilitators will assign announced homework projects. Some of these include: Library Tour, Budget Assignment, and Course Planning project.

**Grading:**

The course is graded A-F. Grades will be determined based upon attendance, class assignments, ACTIVE class participation (and thus class attendance), written homework assignments, and one group project. Students must meet **all** minimum course requirements in order to attain a passing grade. You must turn in **all** assignments, even if submitted late, in order to pass the course.

• Class Attendance/Participation (30 X 2 pts)	(60 points maximum)	11%
• Graded Written Papers	(75 points maximum)	13%
• Photo Project	(50 points maximum)	9%
• Homework/Class Assignments	(50 points maximum)	9%
• Interview with Faculty	(25 points maximum)	5%
• Group project (1 paper, 1 presentation)	(120 points maximum)	21%
• Paper Revision	(25 points maximum)	5%
• Cover Letter and Resume Assignment	(100 points maximum)	18%
• <u>Journal Assignments (5X 10pts)</u>	<u>(50 points maximum)</u>	<u>9%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(555 points maximum)</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Late Assignments:**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified. **No credit will be given for assignments turned in more than three business days late.** Two points will be deducted per day that the assignment is late, up to three days. **The assignment must still be submitted in order to pass the course. Late assignments must be turned in to the department office of your section's Facilitator (Those submitted will not be accepted by email).** Failure to turn in any graded assignments or group projects will result in a failing grade for the course. Groups that are unprepared to make or do not make their oral Group Project presentation on the scheduled date will receive no points for the Presentation portion of the Group Project grade.

The following grade/point breakdown will be used to assign final grades:

<b><u>TOTAL POINTS</u></b>	<b><u>PERCENTAGE POINTS</u></b>	<b><u>LETTER GRADE</u></b>
Above 516	93-100	A
496-515	90-92	A-
480-495	87-89	B+
457-479	83-86	B
441-456	80-82	B-
424-440	77-79	C+
402-423	73-76	C
385-401	70-72	C-
369-384	67-69	D+
346-368	63-66	D
330-345	60-62	D-

Below 330	0-59	F
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**Honor Code:**

This course, and all aspects of your coursework, are subject to the rules and regulations of the Virginia Tech Honor Code which is described in the University Course Catalog. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work. You are also expected to be knowledgeable and abide by the University guidelines on Acceptable Use of Technology, Section V.t. and Class Attendance and Classroom Conduct, Section V.e, (Hokie Handbook).

**Writing Center**

All students enrolled in the FYS Course have permission to work in the Writing Center on any course-related material. A blanket permission form has been filed with the Writing Center, in order to adhere to the Virginia Tech Honor Code. The Writing Center, (340 Shanks Hall, 231-8469), provides free tutorial and consultation assistance through tutoring hours (10:00am-4:00pm, M-F) or by appointment. Brief grammar questions can be also be sent to the on-line grammar hotline at gram@vt.edu.

**Accommodations**

“Students with a disability who are interested in receiving accommodations contact the Services for Students with Disabilities, (150 Henderson Hall, 231-3788 (V), 231-1740 (TTY), prior to or at the beginning of the semester. If a student’s documentation indicates that he or she is unable to perform certain academic tasks in the traditional manner or requires environmental modifications for access, accommodations can usually be arranged,” (excerpted from *Hokie Handbook for Students with Disabilities* pamphlet). The student should notify Susan Angle or Jane Warner in the Services for Students with Disabilities Office should assistance be necessary.

**Course Outline**

**Week 1**

August 25/26	Introduction to the First Year Seminar and review of syllabus
August 27/28	Virginia Tech History and Traditions and Higher Education
August 29	Last Day to Add a Class or Change Sections (Contact Course Coordinator, James Penven at <a href="mailto:jpenven@vt.edu">jpenven@vt.edu</a> )

**Week 2**

September 1/2	High School vs. College and Academic Skills; <b>Paper 1 Due</b> ; <i>Photo Project Assigned</i>
September 3/4	Introduction to the University Library

**Week 3**

September 8/9	Time Management and Student Panel
September 10/11	Residence Life/Living On Campus

**Week 4**

September 15/16	Relationships & Sexual Assault Awareness
September 17/18	Personality Style’s Interactions & Self Reflection

**Week 5**

September 22/23	Diversity: Awareness of our own behavior	<b>Paper 2 Due</b>
September 24/25	Diversity	

**Week 6**

September 29/30	Group Project
October 1/2	Scavenger Hunt
<b>October 3</b>	<b>Last day to drop classes for the semester</b>

**Week 7**

October 6/7	Careers and Lifestyles	<b>Interview with Faculty Due</b>
October 8/9	Research Skills/University Library	

**Week 8– Don’t Forget to Pre-Register for Spring (October 21 – 28)**

October 13/14	Oral Communication and Critical Thinking Skills; <b>Photo Project and Presentation Due</b>
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October 15/16 <b>October 20</b>	Academic Planning: University Core Curriculum and How to Register for Classes <b>Last day to resign from the University</b>	
<b>Week 9</b>		
October 20/21 October 22/23	Group Project Writing Skills Values and Decision Making	
<b>Week 10</b>		
October 27/28 October 29/30	Decision Making Budgeting and Money Management; Budget Quiz Assigned	
<b>Week 11</b>		
November 3/4 November 5/6	Stress Management & Burnout Wellness	<b>Cover Letter/Resume Draft Due</b>
<b>Week 12</b>		
November 10/11 November 12/13	Information Management and Technology Group Project Preparation/Work Time	<b>Group Project Paper Rough Draft Due</b>
<b>Week 13</b>		
November 17/18 November 19/20	Group Project Presentation Group Project Presentation	<b>Group Paper Due</b> <b>Revised Paper Due</b>
<b>Week of November 24 - No Classes Thanksgiving Break</b>		
<b>Week 14</b>		
December 1/2 December 3/4	Summary and Reflections End of Semester, Course Evaluation and Closing Activity planning	
<b>Week 15</b>		
December 8/9 December 10/11	Final Closing Activity <b>Paper 3 Due</b>	<b>Cover Letter Resume Due</b>
<b>December 11 Reading Day</b>		
<b>Week 16 – Finals Week</b>		
December 15-18 No Classes		

This syllabus is subject to change.