

FYS 1170: First Year Seminar

Instructor: Robert Smyth

Email: rsmyth@mcdaniel.edu

Meeting Time: Mondays (12.30-2pm) & Wednesdays (12.30-2pm)

Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Description

This course provides students with a firm understanding of the expectations that a liberal arts institution such as McDaniel College has of students pursuing a bachelor's degree, and to provide them with the tools to be able to succeed. A strong emphasis is placed on research and how to go about develop compelling ideas and proposals. The course will also serve to familiarize participants with their environment culturally and politically. Another aspect is to already consider future career aims and to formulate ways of preparing to meet the demands to enter chosen fields. Internships are a stepping stone on a career path and the internship application process will also be examined. Students are expected to help and learn from one another along the way and become acquainted with each others' majors, which also helps to familiarize oneself with the rest of the program.

Course objectives

- To develop information literacy so that students become better equipped to deal with the demands of college and subsequently working life.
- To develop critical thinking skills and apply them.
- For students to be able to find and critically process information independently through research.
- For students to produce content related to the field of their Major.
- To develop a certain level of understanding of how to go about researching within other Major specializations.
- To improve debating and presentation skills, as well as the verbal presentation of ideas.

Learning outcomes

- Students demonstrate the ability to critically analyze college level material.
- Students convey effective oral communication, both in class presentations and informal discussions.
- Students demonstrate basic information literacy skills, including research, evaluation and citation.
- Students show an ability to construct an argument and offer appropriate evidence in support of their argument.
- Students can identify the resources and processes they need to use to apply them to their own work.
- Students have strategies for analyzing and interpreting all manner of texts.
- Students can examine issues from an interdisciplinary-perspective.

Course Grade

Class Participation and Contributions	50%
Mid-term project	25%
Final project	25%

Attendance/Honor code

If you miss more than three classes your grade will drop a letter grade. Then, with each subsequent absence, the grade will drop another letter grade. Participants must adhere with the Honor code and produce only their own work.

Course Schedule:

Week	Monday	Wednesday
Jan 29/31	Introductions. Getting to know the program.	Approaches to research. How to generate research ideas with ease.
Feb 5/7	Analyzing the world around you to generate new research ideas. Forming a research hypothesis.	How to write a persuasive proposal. Understanding your audience.
Feb 12/14	The Hoover Library: an online resource at your fingertips. Exploring other online libraries.	Source evaluation. Introduction to the McDaniel Writing Center.
Feb 19/21	Reading with purpose.	Exploring contemporary issues.
Feb 26/28	Preparing a resumé.	Writing a cover letter.
Mar 5/7	Internships: how to go about finding them.	Time management.
Mar 12/14	The perils of plagiarism and how to avoid them.	How to argue convincingly and persuasively.
Mar 19/21	Mid-term consultations.	Mid-term consultations.
Mar 26/28	Easter holiday.	Easter holiday.
Apr 2/4	Easter holiday.	Feedback from Mid-term.
Apr 9/11	Debate analysis.	How to prepare for an interview
Apr 16/18	Presentation skills.	Writing an annotated bibliography.
Apr 23/25	Debating.	Fine-tuning and fact checking.
Apr 30/May 2	No class.	Project work.
May 7/9	Finding ideas for future research.	Practice.
May 14/16	Final consultations.	Final consultations.