



# First-Year Experience Faculty Handbook

2024-2025

## Introduction

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Welcome to the First-Year Experience! Thank you for your commitment to this program, which is central to the education of our newest students. We trust that your experience at a Scribner Seminar will be both professionally stimulating and personally rewarding.

This Handbook offers some essential information about the program and its processes, and will serve as a reference as you develop more specific plans for your teaching and advising. Both this guide and all necessary forms are available on the FYE website:

[www.skidmore.edu/fye/index.php](http://www.skidmore.edu/fye/index.php)

If you have questions or concerns about

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# FYE Faculty

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Jan. 8	SSP 100 Proposals and/or Changes to be submitted via Course Leaf
Jan. 22	Deadline for Candace Carlucci Backus Prize submissions
March	Advising Lunch for Fall 2024 SSP Instructors (advising rising sophomores)
March	

## Frequently Asked Questions

The Committee on Educational Policies and Planning (CEPP) brought a motion to the faculty floor that was approved on October 1, 2004. September 2005 marked the inaugural year of the program.

At the time of the program's implementation, CEPP recommended that each department, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty, would contribute to the FYE according to a formula that would maintain tenure-line faculty participation in the FYS and rotate among the faculty the opportunity and responsibility for teaching first year seminars and serving as first year advisors. For example, each department might contribute 6% of tenure-line equivalents' (FTEs) teaching obligations to the FYS, so that a department would offer one FYS for approximately every three full-time faculty.

About 45, depending on the size of the incoming class. Two additional seminars take place in London as part of the London FYE program; these are taught by Skidmore faculty.

Each incoming student is enrolled in a Scribner Seminar, an intimate, topical/interdisciplinary

Each seminar has a budget of \$600 that may be used for field trips, special supplies, or social outings, among other things. The instructor may also request additional funds if a proposed event exceeds the seminar budget; applications for supplementary funding are due on July 31. Instructors sometimes set aside a portion of the seminar budget to be used by the Peer Mentor who may then initiate and host activities of their own. Funds may only be used when the seminar is active (fall semester) and receipts must be submitted by Dec. 12.

the coherence of the seminar and provide advising, mentoring, and/or social; ~~support~~ funds are available for pizza or other refreshments.



## **Building a Scribner Seminar Course**







Possible assignments might include:

- brief written responses to readings
- online discussions or chat room participation
- in-class three to five-minute writing exercises in response to specific prompts
- activities to help generate ideas (brainstorming, listing, mapping, free writing) in relation to a specific reading or a specific assignment
- discussions that examine a reading's organization, use of argument, and use of evidence
- peer critiques (it is helpful to provide guidelines)
- classroom workshops

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON TEACHING WRITING IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE FYE OFFICE OR [THE SKIDMORE WRITING CENTER](#)

Research assignments may be small or large, but they should follow some basic guidelines:

- Assignments should be specific and unambiguous
- Adequate time and assistance need to be provided
- Research should enhance course content and build on course objectives
- Students should learn how to locate, interpret, and evaluate sources
- Issues of academic integrity and ethical scholarship should be addressed

Scribner seminar instructors might consider the following in order to best facilitate research assignments:

## 4<sup>th</sup> Credit Hour Program

### Designing the Fourth Hour Component

The Scribner Seminars were designed to respond to some of the challenges of teaching new college students. Specifically, the 4<sup>th</sup> credit hour component allows students to explore some of the curricular and co-curricular issues that often arise in the first year of college but go largely unaddressed in other college courses.

So, for example, a Scribner Seminar might take advantage of the 4<sup>th</sup> credit hour to examine topics ranging from “how to manage your time” to “how to make an effective oral presentation” to “how to use the library.” That same seminar might also explore internships, studying abroad, and/or joining a club or organization on campus. Sometimes the fourth hour might be used for a special field trip or a social outing, or you might require that your students attend a public lecture or mandate that they volunteer in a specific organization. Although we hope that faculty members are mentoring the first-year students throughout the entire Seminar experience, the 4<sup>th</sup> credit hour is specifically designed to allow additional time for that to happen.

The Office of the First Year Experience provides programming through the Peer Mentor if you wish to take advantage of it, but each faculty member must decide what works best for his/her/their course. Indeed, Scribner Seminar instructors are encouraged to develop their own approaches to the fourth credit hour, organizing events and addressing issues that they deem appropriate for first-year students.

### Programming Offered by the FYE

The Office of the First Year Experience trains Peer Mentors to support programming on the following topics, any or all of which may be integrated into 4<sup>th</sup> credit hour programming:

- Academic Integrity
- Knowing Your Academic Resources and Opportunities
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Summer Reading
- Civic Engagement and Campus Community
- Co-Curricular Life
- Sex and Gender-Based Misconduct
- Alcohol and Drug Use
- Mental Health and Wellness

The Peer Mentors are able to deliver brief modules and/or facilitate conversations on these topics if you wish. We encourage you to collaborate with your Peer Mentor to complement specific sessions into the curriculum, preferably in a staged way throughout the semester.

While the Peer Mentors can offer these sessions outside of class, they are probably best delivered in the classroom with your encouragement and even participation, since they support student learning and engagement. The first-year students are more likely to recognize their importance if they are endorsed and sessions are attended by the faculty; however, the faculty will decide what

roles, if any, these sessions will play in the classroom. We encourage these sessions occur, the faculty and Peer Mentors will want to coordinate timing.

There are, of course, a number of offices on campus that might also prove useful to your first-year students and might be incorporated into fourth hour programming. Among these are the Tang Museum, the Office of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges, the Counseling Center, Career Services, the Writing Center, the Library, etc. We are happy to facilitate "open houses" if faculty would like to learn more about these offices. If you would like more focused attention for your class, we encourage you to contact these campus offices directly. You do not need the FYE's approval to schedule individualized sessions.

## Funding

Each seminar receives a \$50 budget for curricular programming, and \$50 for course development (books and other pedagogical materials). Faculty members who have taught in the FYE receive an additional \$75 (for a total of \$125) for pedagogical materials. Receipts for reimbursement must be submitted by Dec. 12th of your teaching semester. SEE SOUND PROCEDURES for further information.

The FYE encourages faculty to think creatively about ways to enhance student learning. If you have something in mind that exceeds your budget, you may petition the Director for additional funds; this must be done by July 31st via the form available on the FYE website. We will accommodate as many requests as possible.

The FYE further encourages collaboration among faculty in the planning of particular events; indeed, several faculty members might wish to pool their resources. The FYE website lists the fall Scribner Seminars and provides brief course descriptions; we invite you to contact other faculty to explore possible collaborations. With some advance planning, seminars might, for example, combine forces and funding for a field trip. The FYE office is available to facilitate these collaborations, so please feel free to utilize us.

## Arranging Special Events

Please contact Christy Brown in the FYE Office for assistance in scheduling and arranging all field trips and for help with any other special event, including the ordering of food. Christy also keeps track of your budget and will let you know if you are approaching your limit.

Please be advised that all trips requiring bussing, including local field trips, necessitate the submission of a [Funding Request Form](#) (available on the FYE website). Forms must be submitted by July 31st. For trips without bussing, the field trip form must be submitted two weeks in advance.

SEE [POLICIES & PROCEDURES](#) REGARDING TRANSPORTATION, PURCHASES, ACCESSING FUNDS, ETC.







participating in class discussions (when appropriate), mentoring students, supporting students as they make the academic and social transition to college, meeting with students outside of class, helping the instructor with fourth-credit hour programming, and so on. Peer Mentors are not expected to undergo major assessments (tests), nor are they graded for such work. The grade assigned should reflect the quality of their mentoring and the support they provide.

### Termination Policy

FYE Peer Mentors hold a unique position in their seminars and on campus. They are not exactly College employees and yet neither are they typical seminar students. On the contrary, they are specially trained to fill a particular role as resources for *both* the first year students ~~and the~~

# Advising and Mentoring First -Year Students

## The Role of the Advisor/Mentor

A unique aspect of the Scribner Seminar is the instructor's role as advisor *and* mentor to his/her/their first year students. The advisor role entails official responsibilities, while mentoring is a broader category that is more loosely defined. What is important, however, is that FYE faculty members are actively engaged in helping new students integrate into the intellectual life of the College.

As \_\_\_\_\_, faculty members will meet with new students on the day before classes begin in the fall semester to initiate the advising relationship and answer any questions about schedules, College policies, etc. Thereafter, faculty members will meet advisees to discuss curricular choices during advising week each semester. First-year students typically remain with their FYE advisors until they declare their majors.

As \_\_\_\_\_, faculty members are called upon to model intellectual engagement and to guide students in making informed choices about their college lives; this may include conversations about curricular, co-curricular, and career plans, as well as the way those areas intersect. Faculty mentors may also direct students to other appropriate faculty members for about aspirations and goals; in general, mentors serve as a resource as students explore the varied opportunities that the College offers. During the Scribner Seminar semester, of course, the faculty member will be able to build this mentoring relationship through curricular and co-curricular means.

The Office of Academic Advising will host two different advising workshops—one in each semester in advance of the advising period to prepare FYE instructors/advisors for the specific advising needs of this population.

## Reflection and Projection (RAP) Document

The RAP is an electronic document that serves as a reflection tool and is also used for advising purposes. In the summer before they arrive at Skidmore, incoming students respond to a question (typically about the role of liberal education in their lives) in an essay format; the resulting document may provide the basis for the first advising session during New Student Orientation. Students may add to this document later on, notably in the second semester, thereby developing habits of reflection about educational goals and creating a record of growth and change. The RAP is part of each student's record and may be accessed at any time by his/her advisor.

## Summer Reading

This common reading offers another opportunity for early modeling of intellectual engagement and for getting to know your advisees. Each SSP faculty member will lead a discussion of the Summer Reading for his/her seminar group during New Student Orientation; you will receive a series of talking points to assist your preparation for discussing the Summer Reading and programming around the reading. It will be organized by a committee made up of several current SSP faculty members.

# Policies and Procedures

## Accessing Seminar Funds

Each seminar has a budget of \$650— \$600 for curricular events and \$50 for pedagogical materials such as books. Faculty who have never taught a Scribner seminar receive an extra \$75 (for a total of \$125) for pedagogical materials. [Anticipated overages for special pedagogical needs, including trips, must be requested by July 31st preceding the seminar](#)

You may set aside a portion of your seminar funding to be used by your Peer Mentor activities. (Please notify the FYE office if you

PLEASE NOTE THAT UNUSED FUNDS DO NOT "ROLL OVER" INTO THE SPRING.  
NO SOCIAL EVENTS MAY BE HOSTED DURING STUDY DAYS OR FINAL EXAMS.

Tax paid for any item will not be refunded. You or your Mentor must use the college's tax-exempt card/form when making purchases available in the FYE Office on Skidmore's website; otherwise you will be reimbursed for the item(s) but not the tax.

The college will not reimburse you without an itemized receipt. If you purchase food or beverages for your students, must have a complete itemized account, not just a final total.

Check requests for less than \$250 will be approved and returned to you for submission at Barrett Center. Reimbursements for more than \$250 will be mailed to you via campus mail.

PLEASE CHECK WITH THE FYE DIRECTOR IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT ANY POSSIBLE USE OF SEMINAR FUNDS

### Field Trips

All field trips requiring busing (local or trips beyond the local area) must be

For trips to destinations outside the immediate Saratoga vicinity, all students must fill out a waiver. Students under 18 years of age will also require a confirmation email from a parent, sent to the instructor and forwarded to the Director of the FYE. The waiver forms (paper or electronic copies) and the parent emails must be submitted to the Director at least 24 hours prior to the field trip departure or by the date set by the Director.

(e.g., Saratoga Springs and New York state Capital Region) area

- CDTA bus (free for those with a Skidmore ID). Bus routes available at: <https://www.cdfa.org/routesand-schedules/saratoga>
- Taxi cabs (pricey, but possible, depending on your destination). Skidmore typically deals with Saratoga Taxi (584-2700). Contact the FYE Office to arrange direct billing for your trip OR get a receipt so you can be reimbursed from your seminar funds.
- Rented or College Fleet vehicles. Drivers must be authorized by Skidmore, which requires filling out the [Driver Authorization Form](#)









## FYE Prize