

Florida State University • Interdisciplinary Studies Course

IDS 1XXX: The Florida State Experience (S/U) 0 Credit Hours

Note to reader

Over the last decade, Florida State University has developed significant programming to engage and support freshman students, such as Freshman Interest Groups, Undergraduate Research Programs, and Living Learning Communities. Despite these efforts, significant portions of the freshman population do not participate in this kind of intensive, university-sponsored programming. Lack of participation is due, in part, to limited capacity in existing programming.

The Florida State Experience Course, outlined below, is part of a new university initiative to ensure every freshman is connected, engaged, and challenged in university-administered, mentored, small group, co-curricular programming. Importantly, the higher education literature and FSU internal research has found that engagement in this kind of intensive programming bolsters student growth, persistence, and academic performance.

The Florida State Experience Course (a zero-hour course) serves as the common foundation for this new, intensive, co-curricular programming. All sections share common elements: a basic organizational structure; a core curriculum/topic list, a common reflection assignment; and common objectives that serve to connect, engage, and challenge freshman students. Beyond this, section variations, additional assignments, and implementation are built around a common theme and purpose, and instruction is delivered through a connected university program.

Faculty and instructor of record effort to support this course has already been secured through existing student success programming. This new course will provide additional academic structure, support, and engagement to these programs.

The common course elements:

Core structure: All sections consist of small groups of approximately 25 students or fewer, routine meetings, a peer mentor, and faculty or appropriately SACS-credentialed staff instruction or oversight.

Core curriculum/topics: Transition to and success in higher education; purpose and goals of higher education; university resources and opportunities available to help students consider and evaluate their academic and career interests; and goal setting, reflection, and meaning making.

Connected course resources:

Light, R. J. (2001). Suggestions from students. In *Making the Most of College* (pp. 23-44). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
([https://www.dropbox.com/s/cevnh1uw6nhznr/Light Making the Most of College%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/cevnh1uw6nhznr/Light%20Making%20the%20Most%20of%20College%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0))

Bok, D. C. (2006). Purposes. In *Our Underachieving Colleges* (pp. 58-81). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

(<https://www.dropbox.com/s/j2voizatqiders/Bok%20Our%20Underachieving%20Colleges.pdf?dl=0>)

One common assignment: Assignment of at least 250-500 words reflecting on the student's experience thus far in higher education, synthesizing their engagement with the university and their own developmental journey. Students will be asked to articulate their next steps for continued development. Sections may add additional assignments. All sections will utilize Blackboard and/or Canvas for assignment submissions.

Common course objectives are below:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. **Identify ways their identities and interests intersect with the people and places of the Florida State community.**
2. **Recognize how these interests can continue to be developed within the larger Florida State community.**
3. **Articulate the different ways in which Florida State calls upon them to demonstrate their learning and critical thinking skills.**
4. **Interact with their instructors and fellow students in ways which support their goals and demonstrate the values of the Florida State community.**
5. **Examine and evaluate their in-class and out-of-class experiences to make meaning and find intrinsic value in their overall college experience.**

Assessment: The Florida State Experience is a zero-credit course, S/U graded. There are no exams. In order to receive a passing grade, students must actively participate in the selected experience by contributing to discussion and completing a reflection assignment by the end of the semester.

While topics will vary, described below is one possible section connected to the university's College Life Coaching program. Other sections/topics may have a particular focus on underrepresented student transition to the university and success in connection with CARE's new TEAM initiative, student transition and engagement in high-impact practices in connection with the Garnet and Gold Scholar Society Program, etc.

SAMPLE SECTION/TOPIC BELOW

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Instructor: << Insert name >>
Email: << Insert email address >>
Phone: << Insert phone number >>

Meeting Time: << Insert day & time >>

Location: << Insert class location >>

Office Hours: << Insert office hours >>

Course Description:

This section of The Florida State Experience course is affiliated with a new initiative of the Advising First College Life Coaching program. This engagement program specializes in working with first-time-in-college students to promote retention and academic success in the freshmen year and beyond.

Students are invited to participate in this program at no cost. By choosing to participate in this engagement program, students agree to:

- meet with their College Life Coach twice per month at a prearranged time
- meet with their small groups at least once per month
- utilize Blackboard and/or Canvas to contribute to group discussions
- be open to discussing challenges and sharing successes that occur in and out of school

Course Objectives:

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- 2. Recognize how these interests can continue to be developed within the larger Florida State community.**
- 3. Articulate the different ways in which Florida State calls upon them to demonstrate their learning and critical thinking skills.**
- 4. Interact with their instructors and fellow students in ways which support their goals and demonstrate the values of the Florida State community.**
- 5. Examine and evaluate their in-class and out-of-class experiences to make meaning and find intrinsic value in their overall college experience.**

Equipment:

In order to complete the discussion board assignments, students must have access to a computer with internet.

Suggested Readings:

Light, R. J. (2001). Suggestions from students. In *Making the Most of College* (pp. 23-44). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

([https://www.dropbox.com/s/cevnh1uw6nhznrl/Light Making the Most of College%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/cevnh1uw6nhznrl/Light%20Making%20the%20Most%20of%20College%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0))

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(<https://www.dropbox.com/s/j2voizatjqiders/Bok%20Our%20Underachieving%20Colleges.pdf?dl=0>)

Evaluation and Grading Policy:

The Florida State Experience is a zero-credit course, S/U graded. There are no exams. In order to receive a passing grade, students must actively participate in the selected experience by contributing to discussion and completing a reflection assignment by the end of the semester. Emergency absences may be excused, but please notify the instructor as soon as possible, preferably in advance of your absence.

Kickoff Attendance = 25 points

Individual Meetings = 50 points per meeting

Small Group Meetings = 25 points per meeting

Discussion Board = 10 points per response

Reflection Assignment = 100 points

S (satisfactory grade) = $\geq 70\%$ of all points available

U (unsatisfactory grade) = $< 70\%$ of all points available

Week 1: Attend Kickoff and meet your coach. Schedule bi-weekly individual meeting time for the semester.

Weeks 2-5: Attend two meetings with your coach. Get your small group assignment for the semester and connect with your group members via Blackboard/Canvas. Meet with your small group one time to discuss topics for this month. Contribute to at least two discussion board questions and respond to two students' answers (4 responses total).

Discussion topics for this month include:

- Getting around Tallahassee
- How to get involved
- Financial issues

- Learning new study skills
- Time management
- Setting goals for the semester

Weeks 6-10: Attend two meetings with your coach. Meet with your small group one time to discuss topics for this month. Contribute to at least two discussion board questions and respond to two students' answers (4 responses total).

Discussion topics for this month include:

- Registration for next semester
- Studying for midterms and campus resources
- Dealing with homesickness
- Getting to know your professors
- How to prepare for a meeting with your advisor

Weeks 11-15: Attend two meetings with your coach. Submit reflection assignment at least one week prior to last individual meeting (see below). Meet with your small group one time to discuss topics for this month. Contribute to at least one discussion board question and respond to one student's answer (2 responses total).

Discussion topics for this month include:

- Confidence and study plan for finals
- Financial issues: FAFSA
- Reflection on challenges and successes of first semester in college
- "What would you do different in the spring?"

Reflection Assignment:

Prepare a 250- to 500-word essay reflecting on your overall experience during the semester. Examine these experiences and discuss the impact that engagement with the university has had on your own developmental journey. Consider choosing topics that center on academics, involvement, and/or personal growth. Analyze what you have learned and articulate your next steps for continued development.

The essay should be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font and double-spaced. The assignment must be submitted to your coach via Blackboard/Canvas. Plan to discuss this essay with your coach at the last meeting of the semester.

****University Attendance Policy:** Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

****Academic Honor Policy:** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving

alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy> .)

****Americans With Disabilities Act:** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

****Syllabus Change Policy**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.