

First-Year Seminar

First-Year Seminar (GE 100) is a 3-unit course designed to introduce students to academic success strategies and foster a sense of belonging at the university through engagement in the curricular and cocurricular life on campus. The curriculum is discipline-specific, meaning students from the same major take the same GE 100 section(s) together and become better acquainted with their major department and resources. The curriculum is composed of six main components: University 101, Strengths, Diversity, Health and Wellness, Academic Advising, and Critical Thinking.

Required for students transferring 29 or fewer units. Waived for students transferring 30+ units, unless units are from credit by exam.

University 101

This unit helps our students become more attuned to an understanding of college values, rigor, and skill sets. First-Year Seminar also partners with Alpha Leaders (or peer leaders). Each class section consists of 2-3 Alpha groups, each of which includes 8-12 students. Alpha groups meet outside of class time each week to continue University 101 conversations, and to support the sense of community and belonging on our campus.

Strengths

Students take the StrengthsFinder assessment during their first semester, as APU encourages students to focus on their strengths and use them as a guide to academic and vocational choices. We invite Strengths-certified faculty and staff to teach our students how to utilize their unique strengths to advance in their academic and career pursuits.

Diversity

Students explore why diversity matters as Christians. All GE 100 sections facilitate diversity units during weeks 4-5 of the semester, focusing on biblical and theological perspectives on diversity.

Health and Wellness

We believe that, in order for students to take care of their grades, studies, relationships, etc., they must first take care of themselves. As students transition to college life in their first semester at APU, First-Year Seminar meets them there with informative lessons on health and wellness topics such as spirituality, relationships, finances, stress, anxiety, sleep, and more.

Academic Advising

We require all students to seek out academic advising in order to prepare for the following semester, as well as remain on track for the rest of their academic career.

Critical Thinking

Researching, reading, and writing through a college-level critical lens is of paramount importance for success in academia and careers that follow. The First-Year Seminar curriculum explores a problem-based pedagogy, meaning students study a problem from many perspectives and approaches, then assess the best way to solve the problem based on the evidence and arguments they have collected and evaluated over the semester. This unit reviews discipline-specific topics and research, meaning the “problem” under study is a key topic that is rooted within a student’s chosen field of study.

All new students are required to enroll in First-Year Seminar in their first semester, except for those in Honors College, who have their own seminars. The course fulfills General Education requirements and has no prerequisites, and reflects APU’s Four Cornerstones (<https://www.apu.edu/believe/#cornerstones>)—Christ, Scholarship, Community, and Service.