**First-Term Seminar**

**Description**: First-year Gustavus Adolphus College students enroll in a fall semester course designated FTS-100: First-Term Seminar (FTS). These small, discussion-based courses support students’ transition to college by practicing skills and habits of mind central to the liberal arts while considering enduring and contemporary questions or challenges. Each FTS, with the help of a Peer Mentor, Academic Leader, and Teacher (Peer MALT), also increases students’ understanding of the academic program and campus resources that support their academic journey. Consequently, the FTS professor serves as the academic advisor until students declare a major or are admitted into a certification program (e.g., Education, Nursing). All FTS courses carry the Writing in the First Year (WRIT) designation. A full list and description of FTS offerings is published for entering students before registration.

**Academic Skills**

FTS students learn how to engage in academic conversations by practicing how to analyze others’ arguments and evidence, as well as their intended audience and purpose. They also express and share their perspectives with others by making choices that appropriately accommodate different purposes, contexts, and audiences. FTS courses teach students to make these rhetorical choices, enabling them to communicate clearly and effectively.

**Criteria** FTS courses will:

1. Provide frequent opportunities to identify and analyze the purpose, audience, context, and meaning of a variety of texts.
2. Provide frequent opportunities to identify arguments, assess evidence used to support arguments, and practice generating and supporting arguments.
3. Provide frequent opportunities to use informal writing and discussion to engage unfamiliar concepts, explore ideas, practice techniques for communicating effectively, and reflect on learning.
4. Guide students through at least two short, formal argumentative writing assignments for specific audiences that utilize a process-based approach that provides opportunities for students to plan, draft, revise, and edit their work with instructor and peer feedback.

**SLOs** FTS students will:

1. Consider purpose, audience, and context when writing.
2. Make and support claims effectively in writing.

**Advising Knowledge**

Gustavus students develop skills to become leaders in navigating their own college experience. FTS students begin this process with the help of their FTS professors who, in collaboration with Peer Mentors, Academic Leaders, and Teachers (Peer MALTs), work alongside students to plan their liberal arts education, explore campus resources, and help them think about possibilities for their college career and beyond.

**Criteria** FTS courses will:

1. Introduce students to the process of academic planning, searching for classes, using the College’s systems for registration and advising, and reading progress reports.
2. Introduce students to campus resources and out-of-classroom learning opportunities with the goal of engaging in a community of lifelong learners.
3. Encourage students to advocate for themselves, take ownership for their learning, become responsible and accountable as independent learners, and ultimately become their own best advisors.

**SLO**: FTS students will: demonstrate familiarity with the College curriculum and campus resources related to navigating College successfully.