

Guidelines for Challenge Seminars

The Curriculum Committee has created the following guidelines for faculty to reference as they create proposals for the Challenge Seminars. These guidelines are for clarification; all proposals must respond to the criteria and student learning outcomes found in the faculty handbook or available at <https://gustavus.edu/assessment/slos/>).

1. What is the appropriate credit load for Challenge Seminars?: One credit.
 - a. Rationale: The criteria and SLOs would be difficult, if not impossible, to meet in less than a credit. Moreover, half credit classes tend not to be less work and certainly would not incentivize faculty participation.
2. What is the appropriate course level for Challenge Seminars?: 200
 - a. Rationale: The Challenge Seminars fit the catalog description for description 200 level courses. "Courses numbered 200–299 are in Level II and assume a capacity for the independent acquisition of material and the mastery of methods and subject matter in Level I courses." According to the catalog, 300 level courses are oriented toward the major (which is not the intent for the seminars) and assume some understanding of disciplinary theory than we would expect students to gain after taking one disciplinary course.
3. Can Challenge Seminars count for departments or programs?: Yes, with the following stipulations:
 - a. No departmental prerequisites for seminars
 - b. Seminars must demonstrate interdisciplinarity in the approval process and will be asked to submit prompts/assignments to show interdisciplinary work (true for all seminars, not just those that count for majors/minors).
 - c. Majors or minors should not require a particular Challenge Seminar for program completion (although a seminar might be an option for filling a requirement).
 - d. Rationale: Some departments and programs are interdisciplinary by nature. Thus, the seminars might well achieve goals shared by the departments/programs. Moreover, we are practically concerned with finding enough faculty to teach seminars without allowing them to count for majors and minors. We do want to make certain, however, that the seminars are first and foremost meeting the criteria and SLOs for the seminars and that all seminars welcome students from across the College. Hence the focus on the approval process and continuing accountability.
4. What designations can/should Challenge Seminars carry?: Seminars can carry (in addition to the Seminar designation) one of the following designations--WRITL, Global Affairs and Cultures, U.S. ID, Wellbeing, or Quant.
 - a. Rationale: Other areas can only carry two designations so this is in line with those rules.

- b. Providing a choice among designations allows faculty to make appropriate determinations about their seminars.
 - c. While we think the seminars are a good fit for WRITL and would encourage faculty to attach it, we recognize that mandating WRITL might be a deterrent for some faculty to teach the seminars and that some seminars might fit better with another designation. We also recognize that requiring WRITL for the seminars would largely preclude departments from making courses within their disciplines WRITL (since all students would receive WRITL in their seminar).
- 5. Are Challenge Seminars attached to the proposer? Yes, Seminars are attached to proposer.
 - a. Rationale: not everyone in department has the same expertise or ability to do interdisciplinary work in the same way. The person (or persons) proposing the seminar should teach the seminar
- 6. Who can teach Challenge Seminars?: Any faculty member who has taught at Gustavus for at least one year can propose and teach a Seminar (including non-TT/Tenured faculty).
 - a. Rationale: The seminars do not have the same advising component as FTS so having TT faculty teach them is not as crucial. Moreover, students could benefit from the expertise of new and visiting faculty, many of whom come from programs that are moving in more interdisciplinary directions.
- 7. What is the appropriate enrollment cap:? 20
 - a. Rationale: An enrollment cap of 20 would be consistent with the WRITL cap (so we would not have competing caps for faculty who want to add that designation). The seminar cap can be higher than FTS owing to the lack of advising.
- 8. When can students take their Challenge Seminar?: Students can take the seminar starting in their sophomore year, although we would recommend taking it in their junior or senior year and after they have fulfilled three out of five area designations.
 - a. Rationale: The seminars are intended to be integrative, so students need to have taken enough courses to integrate. We do not recommend requiring students wait until their junior year to take the seminars, however, owing to the requirements of some majors.
- 9. We will require training for faculty? Once we are through the pilot period (2020-2022), we will require at least a short online training focused on requirements and practical strategies. We will also offer multiple opportunities for training (Camp Kendall, Faculty Development Day etc.) for faculty who want more in-depth training or time to workshop assignments. We also anticipate that these training will be coordinated by a Challenge Seminar Director once the pilot period has ended.
 - a. Rationale: Faculty should have at least minimal training so the seminars have consistent requirements and experiences.