

PROSEMINAR COURSE GUIDELINES

Proseminars are small courses that require intensive interaction among students, and between students and instructors, through emphasis on writing, speaking, and discussion, and/or other approaches to inquiry and expression that demand such intensive interaction. A proseminar integrates content and instructional methodology to create an active and demanding intellectual learning environment. In proseminars students are expected to engage in independent analysis and evaluation of the course's subject matter. While there are many ways in which this engagement may be made manifest, in proseminars these ways at least include:

- giving students frequent assignments and timely feedback as a regular and substantial part of the course involving one or more of the following: writing, discussion, speaking, or other approaches that require intensive interaction
- expecting students to be active participants during class and holding them accountable for class preparation and participation, the frequent evaluation of which is a substantial part of the grade.

Explanatory notes

1. Proseminars are not **merely** writing-intensive (as defined by current guidelines) or **merely** small. Moreover, they are not predominantly lecture-based.
2. Our expectation is that students will engage in study that meets the criteria for **at least** 120 minutes a week.
3. Writing, discussion, and speaking assignments can involve activities that might be called demonstrations or critiques. Performances may also be a significant part of assignments.
4. By "speaking" we mean an individual oral presentation, as differentiated from group discussion. That individual oral presentation may be a part of a group presentation.
5. By "substantial part of the grade" we mean **at least** 30% of the grade.
6. Proseminars that are designated as writing-intensive must meet not only the criteria for a proseminar but also the criteria for being writing-intensive. A proseminar need not be writing-intensive.
7. Though spaces are reserved for first- and second-year students in proseminars, after preregistration juniors and seniors can add a proseminar if space allows, with the restriction that seniors need permission of the department chair to take a 100-level course.
8. An instructor may reserve all spaces in a 100-level proseminar for first-year students.

Faculty who wish to propose a proseminar should provide to the Committee on Academic Policy a course description and outline (which could be a syllabus), and your *brief* answers to the following questions:

1. Given the criteria, why do you believe that your course qualifies as a proseminar? In your answer be sure to describe how the instructional methods you plan to use in the course will create an active and demanding intellectual learning environment.
2. a) Approximately what percentage of the course will be devoted to activities (discussion, small-group work, oral presentations, etc.) other than lecture? ___% Give examples of assignments and activities.

- b) What percentage of the grade will be based on a student's class preparation and participation?
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3. How will you provide frequent evaluation of each student's class preparation and participation? How will you provide timely feedback on each student's assignments?
 4. Will your course be writing-intensive? If so, how will it meet the guidelines?