



**HC 200: First Year Experience  
Fall 2013**

**Instructors:** Dr. Eric Gruver and Dr. Ray Green

**Time & Location:** M 1-1:50 p.m. PC Media Room  
W 6-6:50 p.m.  
F 1-1:50 p.m.

**Office & Phone:** Prairie Crossing 903-468-3001

**Office Hours:** Normal business hours (appointment will be best)

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**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Texts and Other Necessities:**

No textbook is required

Students will need reliable Internet access in order to access the course syllabus in eCollege.

**Course Description:**

The First-Year Success Seminar (FSS) is a one-hour required course, Theory and Application of Learning and Critical Thinking, designed to ease the transition from high school to university life and provide important academic, intellectual, and social skills to help ensure a successful first year in college. The course is designed to assist students in increasing their knowledge of and skill in critical thinking. Assignments require students to apply critical thinking skills to real-life problems. Students who complete FSS have been empirically shown to have lower dropout rates and higher grade point averages than students who do not take the course. The course is taught under the prefix COH 111 for students majoring in disciplines in the College of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Art; COS 111 for students majoring in disciplines in the College of Science, Engineering, and Agriculture; COB 111 for students majoring in disciplines in the College of Business; CED 111 for students majoring in fields within the College of Education and Human Services; and, HC200 for Honors College students.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

This course is designed to help you in the transition from high school to college. Although you are all excellent students, research indicates that the first semester may be the most pivotal for determining student success in college. Thus, we will attempt to provide you with information and strategies that increase your likelihood of success. Further, assignments will be designed with a goal to increase your level of engagement with your peers and the university community. The following represent the learning outcomes by which students will be evaluated during the course.

- 1) Become involved in campus life by attending and documenting a minimum of 4 campus activities that showcase different aspects of the university.
- 2) Demonstrate effective time management skills, which will be analyzed by correlating students' grades on the time management assignment with their first semester GPA.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Instructional Methods, Activities, and Assessments

Our plan is to run this class as a seminar class. By this we mean that we will not view our role as that of lecturers. Rather, our plan is to be facilitators of discussion and analysis. Our rationale for this format is the following: We do not believe that this is the type of information that you benefit from through memorization. Although behavioral science focuses (more often than not) on normative behaviors, what is important in this class are the experiences unique to you. Thus, we don't really care what the concerns are of a typical college student – we want to know what you are worried about. Thus, we need to hear your voice.

### Grading

#### A. Administrative Paperwork Items

**Orientation and Enrollment Fees:** Students who invited guests to Orientation should have paid a \$25 fee per guest, and students should ensure that their account reflects a paid balance for Orientation. Students also should ensure that they have paid their enrollment fee (\$60.00) for Fall 2013. Login to MyLeo, click on "Check your balance and make payments," and then read carefully. **Points: 10 (Due Sept. 6)**

**Transcript #1:** As a matter of law, all students attending a university in Texas must submit a final high school transcript that displays a "date of graduation." To that end, students should request an official high school transcript be sent to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Students who think they have already sent an official transcript to A&M-C should go to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions in the One Stop Shop to inquire. When requesting a transcript, please do not have it sent to the Honors College office. **Points: 20 (Due Sept. 13)**

**Transcript #2:** Students who attended a two-year institution prior to graduating from high school must also submit a transcript to A&M-C, and the transcript should show all courses completed at that institution. Students can check with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions if they think they have sent a final official copy, including Spring 2013 and Summer 2013 courses. Again, please do not send transcripts to the Honors office. **Points: 20 (Due Sept. 13)**

#### B. Class participation and attendance

As you read above, this course relies upon your participation. Thus, a portion of your grade will rely upon your participation in discussions. There are numerous elements that go into class participation: (1) Good attendance (according to University rules, students may be dropped from the class for excessive unexcused absences). If you miss a class, you will lose 10 points toward this grade; (2) Frequent, and preferably intelligent, contributions to class discussion; (3) Active participation in group exercises; (4) Polite and civil interactions with all members of the class ["All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment." (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)]. **Points: 120**

### C. Event Papers

All students will be required to attend at least 4 university/campus activities/events and write a 1-page critical thinking paper on each explaining how attending that event contributes to their being a more successful college student. At least 1 event should be a “cultural event” (art show, concert, play, etc.); 1 should be a “university-wide event” (guest speaker, colloquium, convocation, etc.); 1 should be an athletic event (varsity sport or intramural sport); and, 1 can be of the student’s choosing of any university/campus sponsored event or activity. *Neither Orientation nor the HC Picnic can count for this assignment.* Due dates for the papers are included in the Course Outline at the end of the syllabus, but students may submit papers at any time prior to the due dates. **Please upload papers to the specific eCollege dropbox; no hard copies or email attachments. Points: 25 each paper; 100 Total**

### D. Library Workshops

University students should become masters at utilizing the resources available at the campus library, and honors students who are required to produce a thesis prior to graduation should become familiar with the library as soon as possible. To this end, the library staff has created a schedule of presentations for Honors College students, and students are required to attend TWO (2) different workshops, one entitled “General Information” and another entitled “Special Services.” Students will sign in at each workshop they attend and then submit a one-page synopsis of the workshop, including the topic(s) presented, the resources highlighted, and a brief description of how the information will be useful to you (be specific). The schedule of the library workshops appears in the “Schedule of Activities,” and due dates for the attending the workshops and submitting the synopsis papers are included in the Course Outline. **Please upload papers to the specified eCollege dropbox; no hard copies or email attachments. Points: 25 each session/paper; 50 Total**

### E. To-Do List

Most freshmen college students struggle with time management, working on assignments a few days before the due date rather than structuring their homework schedule at the beginning of a semester. Thus, we suggest that all students keep a weekly (or daily) to-do list. Your assignment is to turn in your to-do list for the week of September 9<sup>th</sup>. Indicate which items you completed and which you did not. On a separate sheet, discuss the reasons for failing to achieve some of your goals and what you could do to increase the likelihood of completing them in the future. “I will try harder” is not a satisfactory answer – think about concrete improvements that you can make to your time management skills. **Turn in a hard copy in class; no electronic submissions. Points: 50**

### F. Note-taking Exercise

Photocopy your notes from one day of class—any class, but make sure it is a class where you actually had to take notes!—before the week of September 23<sup>rd</sup>, which is the due date for this assignment. On a separate sheet, discuss the strengths of your note taking. Also, what are some of the weaknesses – what **specifically**, can **you** do to take better notes. **Turn in a hard copy in class; no electronic submissions. Points: 50**

### G. Resume

Construct a 1-page resume and a cover letter in response to a job posting found in a newspaper or online (include job posting with your assignment). Due date listed in the schedule of activities. **Turn in a hard copy; no electronic submissions. Points: 50**

A total of 470 points is available this semester. Final grades are based on the total number of points earned during the term in accordance, generally, with the following levels of proficiency: A = 425-470; B = 376-424; C = 350-375; D = 310-349; F = 309 and below.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

Students will need access to a word processor and printer to prepare all assignments in the course.

This course is web-enhanced through eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To access eCollege you will need an internet connection, preferably high speed, and your CWID and password. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, please contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu). To get started with the course, go to: [online.tamuc.org](http://online.tamuc.org). eCollege will be used to send you announcements and reminders, to post grades, and to provide access to course materials (except required readings) such as handouts and assignments. In addition, eCollege will be the primary means for me to communicate with you outside the classroom. **Be sure that you can access the email account the university has on record for you.**

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you cannot see me during office hours, please send me an email so that we can make an appointment. I am quite happy to see students at any time as long as I don't have a prior commitment.

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### Academic Dishonesty & Classroom Decorum

Students who collaborate or attempt to collaborate during any assignment will receive grades of "0" on the assignment and possibly an "F" in the course. Likewise, students who plagiarize any assignment or portion of an assignment—even as small as one sentence—will receive a grade of "0" on the assignment and likely an F in the course! (See Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). Plagiarism occurs when students copy directly from a source—including but not limited to another student's paper, a book, or an electronic document—with or without citations. Budget your time and do your work! Students can lose financial aid and scholarships when they attempt shortcuts. I care that you are in school and hope that you succeed, but I will not ignore cheating and plagiarism.

This class is designed to be an open forum for student comments, questions, and discussions. The speakers and your classmates may help you broaden your knowledge and perceptions, so please give them the respect they deserve.

### ADA Statement and Student Behavior

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services in the Gee Library Room 132, call (903) 886-5835, or email [StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu).

All students enrolled in the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See the Student Handbook.)

<b>COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR</b>
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<u>Week of</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Activities &amp; Due Dates</u>
Aug. 26 <sup>th</sup>	Introductions	
Sept. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	One Week In: Now what?	<b>Event Paper #1 due</b>
Sept. 9 <sup>th</sup>	Seeking Help	Ms. Marty Marsh-Jacobs, Counseling Center <b>Begin To-do List Exercise; due week of September 16</b>
Sept. 16 <sup>th</sup>	Helping Yourself (MyLeo)	Bring laptops to class <b>To-Do List Due</b>

**Tuesday, September 17 @ 6:30 = Library Information Session (General Information)**

Sept. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Notes	<b>Notes Homework assignment due</b>
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**Tuesday, September 24 @ 6:30 = Library Information Session (Special Services)**

Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup>	Tests	<b>Library Workshop synopsis #1 due</b>
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Oct. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Balancing	<b>Event paper #2 due</b>
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**Tuesday, October 8 @ 3:30 = Library Information Session (General Information)**

**Thursday, October 10 @ 3:30 = Library Information Session (Special Services)**

Oct. 14 <sup>th</sup>	International Studies	
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Oct. 21 <sup>st</sup>	Choosing a Major	<b>Library Workshop synopsis #2 due</b>
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Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup>	TBA	<b>Event Paper #3 due</b>
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Nov. 4 <sup>th</sup>	What about Honors?	
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Nov. 11 <sup>th</sup>	What's Next?	<b>Event Paper #4 due</b>
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Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup>	Group Dynamics	
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**Resume Homework due by December 2<sup>nd</sup> (hard copies only; no electronic copies)**