UCO 1200 – First Year Seminar – Course Proposal Form

Catalog course description: First Year Seminar provides students with an introduction to a liberal arts education at Appalachian. Students practice thinking critically and creatively, communicating effectively, developing intercultural competence, and developing information literacy competence. Students also engage with the common reading book, and are exposed to university resources and activities, explicit expectations for college-level work, and the purpose of a liberal arts education. In addition to examining distinct topics from multiple perspectives, all classes equip students with a common set of transferable skills. In particular, First Year Seminar facilitates student engagement with fellow students, the university, and the community, and the development of the habits of rigorous study, intellectual growth, and lifelong learning.

1. Instructor's name, email address, and telephone number:
   Dr. Jeffrey H. Coats, Assistant Professor for Teaching
   coatsjh@appstate.edu
   828-260-6748

2. If employed at Appalachian, instructor's home department or program:
   First Year Seminar, University College

3. Instructor's contract status at Appalachian (choose one):

   ____ Tenured or tenure-track faculty

   __x__ Full-time non-tenure track faculty

   ____ 3/4-time non-tenure track faculty

   ____ Adjunct instructor

   ____ EPA administrator

   ____ Staff member

   ____ Not employed at Appalachian

   ____ Other (specify) _____

4. If employed at Appalachian, name of instructor's department chair, program director, or supervisor, and date of their approval for the instructor to teach First Year Seminar for three semesters (not necessarily consecutive):
   Dr. Phillip Ardoin

5. Title of proposed course: **Navigating the AI Frontier**

6. Sample paragraph course description for the proposed course: **Based on Jonathan R. Whitestone's *Navigating the AI Frontier: A Comprehensive Guide to AI Integration, Ethics, and Future Implications* (2025), this course equips future leaders, managers, and professionals with a practical roadmap for responsible artificial intelligence adoption. Moving beyond technical theory, students will explore real-world strategies for integrating AI into organizational workflows, scaling human-AI collaboration, and driving sustainable innovation. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on ethical guardrails—examining algorithmic bias, data privacy, governance frameworks, and regulatory accountability—to ensure deployments remain transparent and trustworthy. By the end of the course, participants will be prepared to anticipate emerging industry shifts and design resilient, ethical AI strategies tailored to their organizations.**

7. Are there any courses already offered at Appalachian that are similar to the proposed course? If so, please briefly describe them, and how the proposed course will be different.
   No

8. Briefly describe why you are interested in teaching First Year Seminar at Appalachian.
   I am interested in developing and teaching this course through the First Year Seminar because it will offer first-year students an opportunity to learn about AI's **responsible adoption;** helping them develop the critical thinking skills and an ethical roadmap they need as **future leaders, managers, and professionals with a practical roadmap for responsible artificial intelligence adoption.**

9. Briefly describe any academic training, scholarly contributions, or work experience you have related to the topic of the proposed course. **I currently teach the course, Disinformation in America, where the use of AI to create disinformation is taught and critically analyzed. In addition, I am participating in AI training on January 15, 2027.**

10. Briefly describe any prior teaching experience you have, noting especially any with first-year college students, and any related to the topic of the proposed course.
    I have over twenty-five years of teaching experience on the graduate and undergraduate level. Specifically, I have taught First Year Seminar at Auburn University, Bowling Green State University, and Appalachian State University for 10 years. I currently teach the course, Disinformation in America, where the use of AI to create disinformation is taught and critically analyzed.

11. Briefly describe how the proposed course will meet the following expectations and learning goals.
    (a) Provide students with opportunities to practice thinking critically and creatively:

Analyze existing organizational workflows to identify high-value opportunities for practical AI integration and human-AI collaboration. *(Bloom's Level: Analyze)*

Evaluate AI systems and vendor solutions for ethical risks—including algorithmic bias, data privacy vulnerabilities, and transparency gaps—against established governance standards. *(Bloom's Level: Evaluate)*

Assess emerging technological trends and socio-economic implications of artificial intelligence to anticipate future industry disruptions and adapt organizational strategy accordingly. *(Bloom's Level: Evaluate)*

(b) Provide students with opportunities to practice communicating effectively:
Students will present a current news article **communicating** an AI topic or related matter in class

(c) Provide students with opportunities to practice developing intercultural competence:
The Activity: Assign comparative analyses examining how identical technologies or policies are received across different cultural contexts (e.g., comparing attitudes toward workplace surveillance, algorithmic hiring, or data privacy under the EU AI Act versus East Asian or North American frameworks).

(d) Provide students with opportunities to practice developing information literacy competence:
The Activity: Require students to research an emerging industry trend (such as agentic AI energy consumption in Week 13) using three distinct channels: academic databases, industry analyst reports, and AI-assisted search tools. Students submit a reflection comparing how each medium frames the issue, what gets omitted, and how prompt phrasing skews AI-synthesized summaries.

(e) Engage students with the FYS common experience:
Students will participate by watching the FYS Common Experience video. Afterwards, students will engage in an in-class discussion of the analysis of the film and what resonated with them they can integrate into their lives.

(f) Expose students to university resources and activities:
Students will be made aware of University resources through information in the syllabus, covered in class, and taking the FYS Library modules.

(g) Expose students to explicit expectations for college-level work:
The Practice: Structure every major assignment prompt (such as the Workflow Audit Memo or Ethical Risk Audit) into three explicit sections: **Purpose** (why this skill matters professionally and intellectually), **Task** (step-by-step actions required), and **Criteria** (an annotated rubric defining what "exemplary" vs. "developing" work looks like).

(h) Expose students to the purpose of a liberal arts education:
The Practice: During your governance and future-implications modules (Weeks 8 and 13), frame AI policy not merely as corporate compliance, but as a question of civic responsibility and democratic self-governance. Ask students: *What kind of society are we building with these tools, and who gets a voice in deciding?*

12. First Year Seminar classes are typically taught in a fully face-to-face style. If the proposed course would have an online component, please state the percentage that would be offered online, whether the online component would be synchronous (live) or asynchronous, and (generally, if necessary) why an online component is necessary.
Fully face-to-face

Submission Instructions: Please include with this form (1) a course Readings and Schedule document that includes topics, resources, readings, assignments connected to the First Year Seminar expectations and learning goals, and a class calendar, and (2) your CV or resumé, and send all three documents to Dr. Phillip Ardoin, First Year Seminar Program Director, at ardoinpj@appstate.edu.
Approval Process: The First Year Seminar Faculty Coordinating Committee, which is comprised of full-time faculty members at Appalachian who are affiliated with the First Year Seminar Program, will review proposals and make recommendations to the First Year Seminar Director, who will then notify proposers of the outcome. Please note that approval of a proposed course does not guarantee that the course will be able to be offered in a given semester, since sometimes more courses are approved than are actually needed in a given semester's schedule.
Questions or Need More Information? Please contact Dr. Phillip Ardoin, First Year Seminar Program Director, at ardoinpj@appstate.edu.