

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE

Weekly Digest for the Week of October 16, 2009

Welcome to the FYE community of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to supporting our new first-year and transfer students create a more successful transition to the University of Connecticut. The Weekly Digest will publish every Friday during the Fall semester and contain details about workshops, upcoming events, tips/techniques, and other information geared to help you have the best semester possible with your FYE class. This summer we will send you a bi-weekly edition to update you prior to the semester. Information will be sent to both INTD 1800/1820 and Learning Community instructors. Comments, suggestions and constructive critique are welcomed. E-mail kevin.sullivan@uconn.edu or David.Ouimette@uconn.edu

Thoughts from the Director, David Ouimette

The Writing Assignment

For my class, the deadline for the first writing assignment is coming next week. I could sense that my students were tentative about going to the Writing Center to have their draft critiqued. They already struggled with the assignment because I only allow them to select events that are from our long list on the Digest, such as human rights-related programs, performing arts, or lectures and seminars. As the tutor notes from the Writing Center stream in I am convinced that this is the kind of assignment that will have a lasting impact on my students. I am pleased to see the diversity of events that my students selected. Many students took advantage of Elie Weisel's talk, the Teale lecture, and the events of the Metanoia. Most all have negotiated the appointment process and found their way to CLAS or the Learning Commons in the Homer Babbidge Library to meet with a tutor. And as you will see below, after some trepidation, they had successful meetings with excellent tutors who care about not only their writing but their thought process. I would like to thank Tom Deans and Gordon Frazier for working collaboratively to create the assignment, conduct workshops, and provide specialized training for the tutors. Below I have given you an example of a tutor note and some posts from my students about the experience. Please let us know how your students are doing.

Tutor Note

Sarah* came to the Writing Center to discuss an FYE assignment. She attended Tonya Lovelace's presentation on violence against women. Sarah explained that she was unsure of her writing ability. After reading aloud her draft, however, it became clear that Sarah spent effort crafting this piece. She related the speech to an article in the Daily Campus and offered clear reflection. We talked about the elements of her reflection as Sarah explained how she felt about the event.

Sarah brought her rubric and assignment sheet, so we looked at each element requested by the teacher. I encouraged Sarah to look through her reflection to decide on a title. Sarah then said she felt repetitious in her paper. I brought up a thesaurus and Sarah located places where she used to same word more than once. We read aloud choices and Sarah chose new words to replace those she felt were overused.

**name has been changed*

Student Posts

"Ok, honestly I didn't really want to go to the writing center, but of course it's mandatory for our event paper so I went. I don't like to get help from people, I like to do things on my own, so I was a little nervous in going mostly because I didn't know what to expect. It went really well. My tutor was extremely helpful, and just with a few little tips, we completely transformed my paper. I am definitely going back there if I ever need help again" -First Semester Student

"I went on Sunday night to the writing center. The person that was helping me, Joshua, is a 5th year English undergraduate. We worked in the library and he read my paper aloud for me. It was pretty good. I'll probably end up going back there at some point in the future for some other classes. My suggestion for other students: Go in there with an open mind, they aren't trying to rip your essay and self-esteem apart, they are trying to help. It'll make you a better writer in the future. Overall, definitely a good experience." - First Semester Student

"I made my appointment over the weekend because I was worried about being able to find a time slot that would not conflict with my classes. Making the appointment was pretty easy and self explanatory. I like how we can either go to the library or CLAS. I made mine at the library because it is a lot closer to my dorm. I went to my appointment and met with my tutor. She was really nice and friendly so I felt comfortable right away. She had me read my paper out loud which helped me find mistakes that I had missed. We went over the tense of the paper and she gave me some suggestions for improvement. The whole thing lasted about fifteen to twenty minutes. As for advice, don't worry about them judging your paper because they are here to help and not to criticize you. Also, if you go to the one in the library, the center is on level 1 (the floor with all the computers and Q center). The first desk under the big sign that says writing center is not the writing center desk, you have to go past there and look for the smaller writing center sign. I am only saying this because I went to the wrong desk and felt pretty stupid." -First Semester Student

GPA Calculator/Probation/Dean's List

This is a good time of the semester to help your students get a sense of their Grade Point Average (GPA). If you have a high-tech room you can pull it up from our Academic Support website - http://web.uconn.edu/uconnconnects/calc_gpa.htm. Students can plug in their grades and take a look to see if their actual grades match their goals for the semester. You can remind them that the last day to drop a class is November ,2 and that they should definitely talk to their academic advisor if they are considering a drop. Students need a 1.8 GPA their first term to be in good academic standing. I also like to mention Dean's List and provide them with the website <http://www.registrar.uconn.edu/dean.htm> so they can determine what it takes for each school and college.

UConn Today

Be sure to check out UConn Today and the nice feature about our AskAli video series. Go here: <http://today.uconn.edu/>.

Instructor Information

(This section will include schedules for HuskyCT training sessions and instructor workshops as well as information for planning classes)

Upcoming Workshops

[Link to sign up for workshops on-line.](#)

First Year Programs is offering some "Just in Time" brown-bag workshops for instructors. These workshops are designed to address questions instructors may have about the writing and resume assignments and how to communicate with students who are reported to be earning less than C- in a class at mid-term.

Workshop Title	Presenter	Date	Time	Location
Leading Faculty Seminars (INTD 1820) and Learning Community (INTD 1810) FYE Classes	Steve Zinn, Professor of Animal Science	Oct 21 Wednesday	Noon to 1:00pm	CUE 318

Leading Faculty Seminars (INTD 1820) and Learning Community (INTD 1810) FYE Classes

Professor Steve Zinn, a long-time supporter of First Year Experience and an award-winning instructor, conducts an informal discussion about developing and managing both Faculty Seminar and Learning Community FYE classes. He will focus on the insights he has gained over the past ten years of teaching these classes for First Year Experience.

Announcements in HuskyCT

Sometimes First Year Programs will receive information about a workshop or event that is happening before the next issue. In these cases, we add an "Announcement" to each INTD section with the hope that it will be noticed by instructors and students. We make an effort to expire the announcement after the event is completed, but it may remain under the Announcements Tool for the remaining duration of the semester. If you see an announcement whose date is past and you didn't create, and would like it removed, contact [Lesla von Munkwitz-Smith](mailto:Lesa.von.Munkwitz-Smith@uconn.edu), 860-486-1735.

Active Minds Class Presentations:

Active Minds is a national organization concerning suicide prevention/mental health whose mission is not only to help those in need and provide resources, but to lower the negative stigma we all know exists surrounding mental health. The motto of Active Minds is "***Changing the conversation about mental health***"; this is precisely what we are attempting to do with the First Year Experience classes.

The FYE classes would be a perfect place to have open discussions about topics such as mental health illnesses and behavioral disorders. There are so many resources on-campus that students are extremely unfamiliar with due to the lack of discussion surrounding the subject. Many people are scared to begin discussions about this topic due to the negative stigma.

Prior to beginning classroom sessions, the peer educators from Active Minds at UConn will sit with Barry Schreier, Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services, to learn how to facilitate such discussions. Also, emergency procedures will be discussed if a student admits to suicidal thoughts. The main goal of this section of the lesson is to teach students that everyone shares similar stories and no one should be ashamed of sharing their own.

Contact Jeremy Bersin at jmb1836@comcast.net to set up a presentation.

Community Outreach Class Presentations:

As you plan for fall semester and finalize FYE course plans, please consider building a presentation by Community Outreach into your syllabi. Community Outreach student leaders and public relations specialists will present to your incoming class highlighting our programs and services. By inviting Community Outreach to your class, your students will gain valuable information about:

- Various community service opportunities
- Transportation to and from site
- Developing a service program
- Resources for further information

Community Outreach seeks to work with you to enable our first year students with the information and tools necessary to become engaged citizens at the University of Connecticut and beyond. Our opportunities allow students to gain an experiential education to bridge material learned in the classroom with real life experience.

Please contact us at communityoutreach@uconn.edu to request further information or to schedule a presentation for the fall 2009 term. When scheduling a presentation, please include:

- Your name
- Contact information
- Date & time of presentation
- Location of class
- Number of class members

Career Services Resume Writing Assignment for FYE classes:

Career Services reports that the maximum number of presentations for “Preparing Résumés” has been reached. However, the 30-minute, “Overview of Career Services” presentation is still available.

Contact Larry Druckenbrod at 486-3013 or larry.druckenbrod@uconn.edu for questions or to schedule the 30-minute presentation.

Continuing the Tradition: UConn Dairy Bar:

A favorite among students, instructors can take their class on a field trip to the dairy bar for ice cream and/or a tour of the facility. When planning to visit the Dairy Bar, please use the following guidelines (also found on the HuskyCT instructor site):

- Ask your students which flavor from the list on HuskyCT they would like (orders are now either a 4 oz. or 8 oz cup)
- Telephone your order to Jackie Patry or the Student Manager (6-2634 or 6-1021) with a one-week lead time. Identify yourself as an FYE instructor and give Jackie your class number and section (i.e., 1800.001)
- She will need to know your arrival date and time
- If you want a tour, you may also schedule at this time
- There is no need to stop by FYE for a voucher, it is all done electronically

Wellness and Prevention Services

The Department of Wellness and Prevention Services is new to campus this year. Affiliated with Student Health Services, this Department brings together longstanding existing units that focused on health education (Joleen Nevers’s area), alcohol and other drug prevention (Liz Prince’s area) and nutrition (Amy Pumerantz’s area) to create a holistic approach addressing impediments to health with the aim of promoting a state of wellbeing, and not simply the absence of illness or disease, or the reduction of risky behavior. The approach used will focus on community collaboration and the implementation of evidence informed practice that respects the unique culture of the UConn community.

Joleen, Liz, and Amy have long participated in FYE and INTD courses and students have greatly benefitted from all that they have shared. In order to facilitate this process in a more streamlined manner, you may now contact the Wellness and Prevention Services Department Administrative Assistant, Nisha Hardnett, at 486-9436 to begin scheduling FYE or INTD presentations

For more information on this new Department you may also call the Director, Beth DeRicco at 486-9430.

Focus on Students

(This section will include helpful assignments/activities/information for your INTD 1800/1810/1820 students.)

Benton Museum of Art and First Year Experience

FYE Educators! Museum Tours Alert!

Many people know that the Benton Museum’s budget was cut this past spring, which resulted in closing our doors to the public on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. But, did you know that you can still schedule a tour for a Tuesday or Wednesday? We’re not going to let budget cuts prevent us from what we do best, introducing students to art! Tour hours are still 10:00 – 3:30, Tuesday through Friday and 1:00 -4:00 on weekends. If you would like a tour for your group, please see information below.

Tracy Lawlor, Education Coordinator
phone **486-1711**
e-mail tracy.lawlor@uconn.edu.

Tour requests may also be made by going to our website www.thebenton.org and click on *Education*.

Special Events

(This section will include events in September and early October that students can attend for the Writing Assignment or personal enrichment.)

October 16-18

- **Play, Connecticut Repertory Theatre**

The Exonerated, by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen

Wrongly convicted, these six people were condemned to death row for years. Their nightmarish stories are told through interwoven scenes and monologues derived from actual court transcripts, interviews, and letters. Although eventually freed by DNA and other evidence, these gripping stories depict the personal devastation that occurs when our justice system misfires. The stories of these six individuals are extraordinary, and provide a promise of hope and redemption.

Nafe Katter Theatre. [See CRT Website for days and times.](#)

October 17

- **Writing the World: Finding Ideas for All Genres of Writing**

It seems obvious to say that ideas for writing are all around us, but it's true. As writers, we need to develop the habits of mind that awaken us to the world and the endless opportunities it holds for us. How? We'll start by examining the work of established writers whose work shows us that ideas for writing come out of our daily lives. Then it's our turn. Through a series of writing exercises, we'll practice awakening our minds and senses so that we know where to look and how to listen for ideas for writing that literally are all around us.

CLAS, Stern Lounge, Rm 217, 9 am-12 noon, \$40.

October 18

- **Songfest, Viva Italia!**

The songs of Italy, Constance Rock, director

Von de Mehden Recital Hall, 3-5 P.M., free

October 20

- **10th Annual UNESCO Chair & Institute of Comparative Human Rights International Conference: *Health and Human Rights***

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Henri Atlan

Student Union, 9:00 A.M.- 3:30 P.M.

www.unescochair.uconn.edu

October 22

- **Teale Lecture Series, Nature and the Environment**

"Literature and Sustainability," by John Elder, Professor of English and Environmental Studies, Middlebury College

Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

October 30

- **India Studies Lecture**

"The Emergence, Context, and Content of Gandhi's Nonviolence"

By Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, is currently Research Professor, South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Illinois.

Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

November 10

- **Human Rights Film Series: *Human Rights in the USA***

Ask Not (2008)

Examines the military policy "Don't Ask Don't Tell," which has resulted in the discharge of thousands of gay and lesbian member of the US armed forces.

Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.

November 10

- **India Studies Lecture**

"Squaring the Circle: Exploring Indian and Jewish Concepts of Sacred Space."

Robert Kirschbaum, Professor of Art, Trinity College.

Sponsored by India studies, the Department of Art and Art History and Judaic Studies.

Art Building 107, 3:30 P.M.

November 16

- **India Studies Lecture**

"India: The New Rising Power"

By Dr. Ravi Ramamurti, CBA Distinguished Professor of International Business and Director, Center for Emerging Markets, Northeastern University. He is currently researching the internationalization strategies of multinationals from Emerging Market.

Co-sponsored by Center for International Business Education and Research.

Homer Babbidge Library, Class of 1947 Room, 4 P.M..

November 19

- **Teale Lecture Series, Nature and the Environment**

"Coming Down to Earth: Valuing Nature to Improve Decision-Making," Dr. Stephen Polasky, Fesler-Lampert Professor of Ecological/Environmental Economics, University of Minnesota.

Dodd Research Center, Konover Auditorium, 4 P.M.