Connections - Faculty FAQ

Overview

What are the components of the Connections Curriculum?
Under the new Connections Curriculum, all students will be required to enroll in a First Year Seminar, complete one ConnCourse, complete two semesters of coursework in one language at any level, and complete one Pathway or Certificate Program (or take one course in each of the five Modes of Inquiry taught in five different departments).

When does the Connections Curriculum go into effect?
The Connections requirements take effect with all students entering in the fall of 2016 and following.

Where can I find updated information about the Connections Curriculum?
Visit the Connections blog at: http://wordpress.connoll.edu/connections/

First Year Seminars .................................. p. 2

ConnCourses ........................................ p. 4

World Languages and Cultures ............. p. 6

Pathways ................................................ p. 7

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First Year Seminars

What is required of a faculty member who teaches a First-Year Seminar (FYS)?
The faculty member will design and teach the FYS. The FYS will meet twice a week for 75 minutes. An additional third 75 minute session each week will be devoted to an FYS common meeting that will be used for advising, workshops, events, extended orientation, and other relevant purposes. All FYS courses are designated Writing courses. The faculty member will serve as the primary academic advisor for the students in the seminar as a part of an advising team that includes a staff member and student peer advisors. The new FYS structure gives faculty members the freedom to explore engaging and rigorous academic topics of their choice with incoming students while also providing students with practical information and guidance to further orient them to college life and study.

Is the FYS instructor responsible for the third “common” meeting each week?
The common meeting is adaptable for each course. Instructors may design their own content or select topics from a menu of “modules” that are offered by a variety of programs and offices from across the campus. The list of “modules” is coordinated and maintained by the Dean of the College. The faculty instructor is responsible for scheduling these modules. When scheduling the module, the FYS instructor should discuss with the “module” partner who should be in attendance; pedagogical principles should on a case-by-case basis guide whether the FYS instructor should be present. All students are expected to attend every class session.

Are faculty members required to be part of a “cluster” with other FYS sections?
No. Faculty members who are offering classes on connected themes are welcome to group their seminars with some time devoted to group activities and events during the common meeting time, but there is no requirement to do so. Those who are intending to cluster their seminars should be sure to select the same day for the common meeting time.

Is there any training for faculty who are interested in offering a FYS?
The CTL offers a variety of sessions related to teaching FYS – specific events and dates are announced throughout the year. Training is also a part of Camp Teach & Learn each year. Before the start of the fall semester, there is also an orientation session to train faculty who are new to advising first year students.

What should I do if I am interested in teaching a FYS?
Talk with your department chair about your interest in offering the course. If the FYS is to be a new course, you will need to complete a FYS Proposal Form and submit it to AAPC. (The proposal form, which should be submitted to aapc@conncoll.edu, is available on CamelWeb.) You or your chair should let the Dean of the College know that you are planning to offer an FYS. Ideally, decisions about teaching an FYS should be made in February as you plan your teaching schedule for the next academic year.

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Are there enrollment limits for First-Year Seminars?
The standard enrollment cap for all seminars is 16 students. Students are assigned to a seminar before the start of the semester, based on a ranked list of preferences.

Are there set times in the schedule when the FYS must be offered?
During the fall semester 2016, instructors will have three options for FYS times:
1. Monday and Friday from 11:50 a.m. to 1:05 p.m., with a common meeting time Thursday from 11:50 a.m. to 1:05 p.m.
2. Tuesday and Thursday from 11:50 a.m. to 1:05 p.m., with a common meeting time Friday from 11:50 a.m. to 1:05 p.m.
3. Any pair of evenings from 7:00 to 8:15 p.m. (or any single evening from 7:00 to 9:45 p.m.), with a common meeting time either Thursday or Friday from 11:50 a.m. to 1:05 p.m.

May I see examples of other First-Year Seminars that have been developed?
Syllabi for seminars offered since Fall 2015 can be found on the College’s syllabus repository (http://syllabus.conncoll.edu).
ConnCourses

What is a ConnCourse?
A ConnCourse is a 100-level course that has been redesigned to meet the criteria of the ConnCourse rubric and has been approved as a ConnCourse by AAPC and vote of the faculty. In ConnCourses students integrate areas of the liberal arts and explore different modes of thinking. Working in an intellectually stimulating and exciting environment, students from all backgrounds make lasting connections across fields of study and to the world beyond the classroom. ConnCourses create an environment of full participation that cultivates academic excellence and encourages an integrative approach to learning and problem solving. In these courses, students develop fundamental skills that can be applied throughout their studies. ConnCourses instill deep intellectual curiosity and desire for lifelong learning.

What do I need to do to teach a ConnCourse?
You have to develop a ConnCourse and complete the ConnCourse rubric to demonstrate how your course meets the learning goal of a ConnCourse. Once you have completed the rubric, you submit the proposal to the Associate Dean of the College for Curriculum and attend a ConnCourse workshop. At the workshop, you will have the opportunity to discuss your proposal with colleagues from across the college. Based on the input from the workshop, you will revise your proposal for final submission to AAPC. Like any new course, a ConnCourse will be vetted by AAPC and submitted to the faculty for consideration. The ConnCourse rubric and proposal form are available on CamelWeb.

Are there extra requirements of faculty who teach ConnCourses during the semester?
There are no required extra meetings for faculty who teach ConnCourses, although as an experienced ConnCourse instructor, you will have the opportunity to take part in workshops to help your colleagues who are developing their own ConnCourses.

Can ConnCourses be offered above the 100 level?
ConnCourses were designed to be 100-level courses that provide first-year students with courses that link areas of the liberal arts. ConnCourses grew out of a need to reinvigorate the 100-level curriculum. During the 2016-17 academic year, a ConnCourse will be piloted at the 200 level. The EPC will be considering this issue and reporting to the faculty in the fall semester.

Do ConnCourses have prerequisites?
With the exception of ConnCourses that are offered in a foreign language, all ConnCourses should be open to all first year students. Only language courses designated as ConnCourses may have prerequisites.

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May I teach a ConnCourse that my colleague had developed?
Yes, but each faculty member must go through the workshop process to become a ConnCourse instructor.

Are there set times in the schedule when ConnCourses must be offered?
No. Just like other regular courses, ConnCourses may be offered at any time.

Are there enrollment limits for ConnCourses?
There is flexibility when setting the size of ConnCourses. As with other 100-level courses, instructors may set the enrollment cap anywhere between 30 and 40 students. With compelling justification, lower limits may be established with the approval of AAPC and the faculty. Faculty may wish to work with the Office of the Registrar to reserve a portion of the seats in the ConnCourse for first year students. Currently, for courses that are cross-listed between two departments seats cannot be reserved specifically for first year students.

Can a ConnCourse count towards a student’s major?
Yes. Departments determine whether ConnCourses will count towards their programs of study.

What is the ConnCourse Rubric?
The ConnCourse rubric consists of six prompts that the course must address:
1. The course will examine how knowledge is constructed in the field of study.
2. Course materials and activities will be intentionally diverse in perspective and explicitly connect the topic to other areas of the liberal arts and different ways of thinking.
3. Course discussions or activities will connect ideas and concepts to the world around us.
4. Course materials and activities will contribute to the development of the student as an ethical, responsible global citizen.
5. The course is intentionally structured to create an environment that encourages full participation.
6. The course is structured to be rigorous and to cultivate active learning.

May I see examples of other ConnCourses that have been developed?
Yes – examples of ConnCourse descriptions and rubrics are available on Moodle. Syllabi for ConnCourses can be found on the College’s syllabus repository (http://syllabus.conncoll.edu).

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World Languages and Cultures

What is the language requirement?
Each student will complete a minimum of two semesters of study of one language at any level, either at Connecticut College or at a comparable institution. Prior experience will be used to determine placement in the language for a student if a student chooses to continue in that language; however all students must complete two semesters of study. Introductory language courses have no prerequisites.

When should a student complete the language requirement?
Normally, language courses should be completed by the end of the sophomore year so that students may incorporate and deepen their knowledge in culminating work in the junior and senior years.

What can I do as a faculty member to support the world languages and culture requirement?
You can encourage students to build upon their required language coursework and apply their language study to scholarship and other activities that reach beyond the language classroom. These experiences may include, but are not limited to: study away and SATA programs with intensive language study; course TRIPS with language and culture components; certificate programs through the academic centers; science practica or internships involving international collaborations; international internships; community learning components in languages other than English; student teaching; FLAC sections; participation in the World Languages program in the New London schools; CC Language Fellow and Language Assistant positions; honors theses and Senior Integrated Projects employing research in languages other than English.

How are students recognized for high performance in languages and culture?
Students who achieve advanced-level proficiency in a language and apply their language in an international or other practical context, may have this noted on their academic transcript. Students seeking this distinction as a “Global Engagement Scholar” should consult with the chair of the appropriate language department.

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Pathways

What is a Pathway?
Integrative Pathways, designed and implemented by self-designated groups of core faculty members, will offer students an opportunity to achieve academic integration within a broad intellectual framework. Every Pathway will be organized around a central theme, in relation to which students will consider an animating question that provides a focus for their work. Current proposed Pathways include Eye of the Mind: Interrogating the Liberal Arts; Global Capitalism and its Consequences; Peace and Conflict; Public Health; and Sustainability as Social Justice.

What are the components of a Pathway?
Each Integrative Pathway includes four components:
1. A Thematic Inquiry course that presents the theme and provides an overview of the Pathway.
2. A Curricular Itinerary that consists of a collection of courses related to the Pathway. Students are required to complete three courses selected from three different Modes of Inquiry taught in three different departments.
3. A Global/Local Engagement where students pursue a purposeful engagement in a local or international context, such as study away, an internship, or community-based learning experience.
4. A Senior Reflection during the fall of the senior year, which will prepare all students to participate in the All-College Symposium that semester – whether through presentations, poster sessions, panel discussions, or some other medium.

Does a course have to be offered every semester to be part of a Pathway?
No – in planning their Curricular Itinerary, students will be able to select from a range of courses related to the Pathway theme. Some courses will be offered regularly, but special topics courses and courses offered only occasionally may also be included. Members of the core faculty group for the Pathway maintain an active list of courses included in the curricular itinerary.

How can I get courses that I teach included in a Pathway?
You should contact the Pathway coordinator. A list of current Pathways and coordinators can be found on the Connections website: http://wordpress.conncoll.edu/connections/.

What are the five Modes of Inquiry (MOI)?
(A) Creative Expression
(B) Critical Interpretation and Analysis
(C) Quantitative and Formal Reasoning
(D) Scientific Inquiry and Analysis
(E) Social and Historical Inquiry

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**How many Modes of Inquiry must a student take?**

A student who enrolls in a Pathway needs to complete courses in four Modes of Inquiry, at least three of which will be part of the Pathway. A course in a fourth MOI may be selected from outside the Pathway. A student who does not complete a Pathway must complete courses in all five MOIs. Each MOI course must be taken in a different department (as defined by the course designations). Every course being counted for a Mode of Inquiry must receive a letter grade, be worth at least four credits, and be taken at Connecticut College or a comparable institution. Freshman Seminars and ConnCourses may be counted towards the Modes of Inquiry, in the same manner as other courses.

**How can I find the list of courses that currently satisfy each of the five Modes of Inquiry?**

For now, the best place to look is on the Connections website: [http://wordpress.conncoll.edu/connections/modes-of-inquiry/](http://wordpress.conncoll.edu/connections/modes-of-inquiry/).

**How can I develop a new Pathway?**

The Integrative Pathway Approval Committee (IPAC) coordinates the process of Pathway development. To propose a new Pathway, complete the Pathway Proposal Form, found at the Connections Moodle page, here: [http://moodle.conncoll.edu/moodle1516/course/view.php?id=1443](http://moodle.conncoll.edu/moodle1516/course/view.php?id=1443)

**When do students select a Pathway?**

Normally a student will select a Pathway in the sophomore year. In Spring 2017 several Pathways will be offering pilot “Thematic Inquiry” courses.

**Does every student have to take a Pathway?**

Currently, under the Connections curriculum a student must complete one Pathway or Certificate Program or take one course in each of the five Modes of Inquiry taught in five different departments. When sufficient Pathways have been developed, legislation will be proposed making the Pathway a requirement for all students.

**Can Pathway courses count towards a student’s major?**

Yes, a maximum of one Pathway course may count towards the major.

**How do Center Certificate Programs relate to Pathways?**

A student who completes a certificate program in a center fulfills the Pathways requirement, provided that the student has completed courses in four Modes of Inquiry in four different departments.

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