UB Seminars: Course Development Guidelines

3-Credit UB Seminar Description
The 3-credit UB Seminars are for freshman students and those transfer students that come into UB with less than 45 credits, as well as all transfer students coming from an international institution. These are “big ideas” courses taught in a small seminar setting that embrace broad concepts and challenging problems from a disciplinary perspective. “Big ideas” lead students to engage with questions of significance in a field and, ultimately, to connect their studies with issues of consequence in the wider world. One of the first courses to be taken in the UB Curriculum, the 3-credit UB Seminar will help students to see their college career as a process of learning rather than a steady march to a certificate. The common learning outcomes focus on fundamental expectations for critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and oral communication, which will be reinforced by other elements in their education. The Seminars introduce students to general education and begin to inculcate the rigorous and sustained academic work and study habits necessary for college-level study. Students will ideally begin to forge connections between coursework and intellectual, creative, and career interests, and thus be readied to embark on the integrative learning of their UB education.

The 3-credit UB Seminars provide departments with an opportunity to make an early connection with students and a route into the major or discipline. Interaction with faculty in the classroom, and through mentoring, can help to draw students into majors, programs, and minors. In addition, through collaboration with colleagues in Student Affairs, support will be available to enable 3-credit UB Seminar instructors to help students manage the transition to college and to cultivate an inclusive and supportive environment that considers the social, emotional, and academic needs of new students to aid in their retention and success.

It is an expectation that UB Seminar instructors incorporate the eportfolio into the class, and use it when setting assignments.

Those programs and departments with a developed first year experience that meet the course objectives and learning outcomes will be considered to have fulfilled this requirement, subject to approval by the General Education Committee.

Minimum Learning Outcomes
Having completed a 3-credit UB Seminar, students will be able to:

- Think critically using multiple modes of inquiry.
- Analyze disciplinary content to identify contexts, learn fresh perspectives, and debate and discuss problems in the field.
- Understand and apply the methods of close reading, note taking, analysis, and synthesis.
- Recognize and debate ethical issues and academic integrity in a variety of settings.
- Demonstrate proficiency in oral discourse and written communication.
- Develop essential research and study skills such as time management.
- Utilize the eportfolio for at least one assignment.
- Understand the academic expectations pertaining to studentship at the University at Buffalo and to higher learning at a research university.

Comments
Faculty offering 3-credit UB Seminars should draw upon the disciplinary perspectives of their fields and departments. As many departments may wish to use these courses as recruiting tools to the major or even minor, this consideration should shape content and influence the selection of teaching faculty.

Departments will need to gear the courses to new students, of whom some will be searching for a major, others will be pursuing intellectual interests outside their intended major, while others will come with some college credit but be new to UB. Departments might take a narrowly focused idea or theme and use that as a prism to explore a broader topic through a variety of sources, methods, or approaches. Such an approach could help to draw students into majors, minors, and interdisciplinary programs they might otherwise not find. “The Tuskegee Airmen,” for example, would focus on specific group of individuals while being broadened into many possible routes of inquiry from race in the twentieth-century United States to the ethics of medical and scientific research to military strategy and planning. A 3-credit UB Seminar on “Louise Bethune” might be the launching point for a discussion of architecture as practice and profession, civic engagement with the city of Buffalo, or the role of women in architecture or fin-de-siècle United States.
The Seminars will function best as newly designed or newly revised courses, as opposed to existing capstone or senior seminars, or as watered-down graduate seminars. They should be stimulating introductions to methods of inquiry and research problems in a particular discipline.

1-Credit UB Seminars
In addition to the 3-credit UB Seminars, transfer students entering with 45 credits from a domestic US institution will complete a 1-credit UB Seminar. This seminar serves to orient them to the intellectual life of UB, to the UB Curriculum, and to the expectations of their major.

Minimum Learning Outcomes
Having completed the 1-credit UB Seminar, students will be able to:

- Describe the unique character of higher learning in a university, such as deep domain knowledge, the role of research, and value of experiential learning.
- Articulate the components of the UB Curriculum program and the integration of multiple disciplines.
- Understand their chosen major or other fields of study and the key concepts that will be explored in those disciplines.
- Understand the necessity for writing/communication in university and professional settings.
- Initiate use of the eportfolio and select a thematic framework for the UB Curriculum program using articulated transfer and UB coursework.

Comments
Faculty offering 1-credit UB Seminars should gear their courses to students who come with significant college credit, but are new to UB. Given the variety of needs particular to the transfer population, and their uneven distribution around the university, departments and units will have the latitude to shape this experience, so long as the course objectives and minimum learning outcomes are met, and students have significant opportunities for faculty contact. The 1-credit UB Seminar might take a number of forms, from small seminars to larger groupings that provide smaller breakout groups with faculty. The course may provide an overview of different majors, a roster of different speakers, or concentrate specifically on a focused theme.