



# STUDENT DIRECTED SEMINARS

## **APPLICATION GUIDE**

2020-2021

This guide contains program information and instructions about the application process for prospective Student Directed Seminars Coordinators.

# **PROGRAM INFORMATION**

## **Student Directed Seminar (SDS) Program Philosophy**

The SDS Program gives students the opportunity to extend and deepen their education by turning a traditional university classroom into a rich, peer-based learning environment. Student Coordinators and their peers undertake a democratic exploration of a topic of their choice through a range of learning activities, assignments, and discussion. Similar to a senior capstone class or directed studies, in both depth and academic rigour, students together take the lead in building, facilitating, and grading their work, with Student Coordinators creating the framework for the seminar and ensuring that the group upholds the ethos and practice of a truly peer-led learning environment.

## **Role of the Coordinator**

The Student Coordinator is not an instructor, teacher or content expert. The Coordinator's role is that of a facilitator. They are responsible for organizing the learning resources (e.g., guest lectures, reading materials, and films) to be used in the seminar, and set the parameters of seminar content, structure, and evaluation procedures, in conjunction with the Faculty Sponsor. Coordinators should not position themselves as leading or lecturing in every seminar throughout the term. Coordinators must also complete the same coursework and assignments as all participants.

Students in their third year of study or above can apply to coordinate an SDS. Seminar applications are approved by a cross-campus Advisory Committee that is comprised of UBC-Vancouver faculty, staff, and students. Seminars are approved on the basis of quality of proposal and suitability of the student to be a Coordinator, including their academic standing.

## **Seminar Evaluation and Credit**

Most SDS are evaluated on the standard alpha-numeric scale used in other UBC courses. Occasionally, seminars can be set up to be graded on a pass/fail basis but this is not common. The grading scheme and allocation of grades for each seminar is determined by the Coordinator and the participants, with support and approval from the Faculty Sponsor. What is agreed upon applies to both seminar participants and the Coordinator. Coordinators should not be grading the work of their peers unless the responsibility is being shared with all participants and grading is fully peer-based.

Final responsibility for assigning grades to all students, including the Coordinator, rests with the Faculty Sponsor but most seminars will undertake rigorous peer grading for a good portion of the assignments and seminar activities. In some cases, Faculty Sponsors may agree to mark final papers, projects or assignments.

Coordinators and participants earn upper-level credit, either through a department or through an interdisciplinary Arts credit option (ASTU). Decisions on whether a seminar can be used to fulfill specific program or degree requirements (i.e., major/minor credits), for Coordinators or other participants, are made by specific academic program or department.

## **Seminar Guidelines**

Seminars can only run once. Students who would like to offer a seminar similar in content to a previously-offered seminar will need to clearly demonstrate how their proposed seminar is different in approach, scope, and content. Additionally, seminars should not replicate a course that is currently offered at UBC. Prospective Coordinators should research to ensure that the seminar does not overlap with a current UBC course.

While seminars can run during Fall and Winter Term. However, it is strongly recommended for the majority of seminars to be run through Winter Term (January - April). Training for Coordinators typically is run in Fall Term (September - December) on topics including curriculum design, classroom management, instructional design, facilitation strategies, evaluation and assessment practices.

## **Registration**

Seminars will be listed on the Student Service Centre once they are open for registration. Coordinators can choose to have open registration, in which students register themselves directly. Coordinators can also pre-select students through specified processes such as submitting a statement of interest or providing other application documents. In order for the seminar to run, each seminar must have a minimum enrollment of 8 students and is capped at a maximum enrollment of 15. These enrollment restrictions are put in place to ensure the academic integrity and robustness of the seminar experiences. Coordinators like all seminar participants have to pay for their seminar as they would for any other UBC course.

## **APPLICATION COMPONENTS:**

### **Seminar Proposal**

The seminar proposal will outline how the seminar will be delivered, including details such as seminar flow, grading, and assignments. Details of the seminar proposal are outlined on page 4 and 5 of this document.

### **Faculty Recommendations**

The faculty recommendation serves to address the Coordinator's ability to organize and facilitate a seminar. It is important for Coordinators to choose a faculty member who can accurately speak to the suitability to take on such a role within a peer-based academic setting. When approaching a faculty member, it is important to provide them with information about the SDS Program, as well as the Faculty Sponsor FAQs to help them fully understand the scope of the program and thus, speak to the student's suitability as a Coordinator.

### **Faculty Sponsors**

The Faculty Sponsor assists the Student Coordinator in ensuring a high level of academic rigor, they may agree to mark, read, and comment on academic material produced by students in the seminar. Faculty Sponsors are not expected to attend seminars but do need to be available for guidance, resolve any problems that may arise, and meet with participants in the seminar, if needed. Faculty Sponsors are also required to sign-off on and submit final grades to the appropriate administrative contact. Faculty Sponsors will need adequate time to review your seminar proposal, so be sure to approach Faculty Sponsors early. Coordinators are required to provide the Faculty Sponsor FAQs to any faculty member that is approached to ensure that they have all the information about the role and responsibilities of a Faculty Sponsor.

# **PROPOSAL GUIDE**

In building your seminar proposal, make sure to consider and address the following as outlined below. Your proposal should be no more than 5 pages in length (single spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman), including any supporting documents, syllabi, seminar plans, or sample reading lists. We encourage you to be creative in how you address the information we require in this proposal.

## **1. Seminar Content and Rationale**

- What is the academic focus of the seminar?
- What is the overarching literature, research, and/or theoretical frameworks that have influenced the topic or concept that is of focus for this seminar?
- What is important to you about having this seminar offered at UBC? What gaps do you hope that this seminar addresses?
- How does the seminar reflect the overall philosophy of the SDS program?

## **2. Seminar Structure and Plans**

- What is your desired schedule for this seminar? (i.e., once a week for 3 hours, or twice a week for 90 minutes)
- What role do you anticipate playing in this seminar? How do you envision participants actively contributing to exploring the topic of this seminar? Will everyone have an opportunity to facilitate a discussion?
- What will the first two weeks of this seminar look like? Provide a seminar plan that outlines how each seminar will build on each other and connect topics, as well as supporting readings and/or material that are considered essential to learning in this seminar. In this plan, please consider the following:
  - Proposed topics
  - The structure of the seminar – what will various weeks look like (e.g., lectures, films, field trips, community service project, discussions, case studies, debates, etc.)
  - The identification of possible guest speakers
  - The proposed flexibility which will allow participants to co-create the experience with you. Identify what elements students will allow for seminar input – assignments, grading, rubrics, readings?
- Provide a sample of representative readings. Identify how each of these reading support the academic and learning objectives of the seminar plan?

Remember that the seminar is an exploration with other students and a democratic process. Be prepared to seek input from your seminar participants during the first week of classes and expect changes to this section during your initial seminar meetings. It is vital to get the seminar marking scheme and criteria for assessment finalized in the first week of classes.

### **3. Grading and Evaluation**

- What are the assignments that seminars participants will be required to complete?
- What form will the assignments take? (e.g., collaborative research projects, presentations, essays). How will each assignment be weighted (i.e., what percentage will it contribute to overall grade for the seminar?). Keep in mind that these are 4th year classes - assignments must be at the 4th year level.
- What strategies are you proposing to evaluate assignments? (e.g., by Faculty Sponsor, peer evaluated, through an expert in the field)
- Please provide the breakdown of how overall grade for the seminar will be determined (i.e., 10% participation, 45% presentation, etc.)  
*Please note that attendance is not a permissible portion of the grade. If you choose to include grades for participation, the allocation must fall between 0-10% of the overall grade.*
- How will you ensure your seminar maintain a level of academic rigour that is expected of an upper-level course?

### **4. Student Recruitment and Selection**

- What types of students, and from which disciplines, might be interested in the seminar?
- What kind of demand do you anticipate for this seminar?
- How will you select and recruit students into your seminar? (i.e., will you require students to submit a statement of intention?)
- Will interested registrants need to have prerequisite courses or submit an expression of interest? Why are these prerequisites needed? If you choose to select students, what criteria will you use?
- Are you hoping to position your seminar within a specific department? If so, which department and why? Or do you hope to access an ASTU course code from the SDS Program?

### **5. Coordinator Suitability (for Co-Coordinators, please ensure you address all questions for both students)**

- How have your previous personal, professional, and/or academic experiences prepared you for coordinating and facilitating a Student Directed Seminar?
- What do you hope to learn from the process of facilitating a Student Directed Seminar?
- What challenges do you expect to encounter as a Coordinator and how might you plan to overcome those challenges?
- Have you participated in an SDS before? If yes, which one? What learning will you bring forward from that experience to your seminar?
- If you are proposing a seminar with a Co-Coordinator, how will you navigate sharing coordination and facilitation with a peer?
  - o What do you anticipate will be the challenges to joint facilitation and how you expect to overcome those challenges?

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Students interested in applying to coordinate a seminar are encouraged to begin preparing your application materials early, to ensure you have enough time to research, revise, and develop your application. We recommend beginning the process in January/February to have enough time to meet the April deadline.

It will also take time, once you have developed your idea, to secure a Faculty Sponsor. You should have your idea well developed before approaching a Faculty Sponsor and it is essential that you leave plenty of time for a potential sponsor to read and critique your proposal.

### APPLICATION COMPONENTS

#### A. COORDINATORS SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING TO: [student.seminars@ubc.ca](mailto:student.seminars@ubc.ca)

*If you are coordinating a seminar with a Co-Coordinator you will only submit one application and need to attach grades for both Coordinators along with one copy of your proposal.*

1. Seminar Proposal – maximum 5 pages, 12pt Times New Roman font.
2. Grades Summary – downloaded from the Student Service Centre. If you are proposing a seminar with a Co-Coordinator, you will each need to submit separate Grades Summaries. To access your grades summary:
  1. Login to Student Service Centre
  2. Click the Grades & Records option from the upper horizontal menu bar
  3. Choose “Your Grades Summary” from the drop down menu
  4. Click “Print” in the upper right corner
  5. Save the document as PDF.

If you have grades from other colleges or universities, please provide an unofficial transcript for those grades as well.

#### B. FACULTY MEMBERS SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING BY EMAIL TO: [student.seminars@ubc.ca](mailto:student.seminars@ubc.ca)

These documents come directly from your Faculty Recommender and Sponsor to our program office.

3. Faculty Sponsor Form – 2-page fillable PDF. Coordinators are also expected to provide a copy of the Faculty Sponsor FAQs to prospective Faculty Sponsors.
4. Faculty Recommendation Form – 3-page fillable PDF. If you are proposing a seminar with a Co-Coordinator, you will each need separate recommendations. This is preferably from your Faculty Sponsor but can be completed by another faculty member if they are better able to comment on your suitability to be a Coordinator.

All application materials can be downloaded individually from the SDS website: [students.ubc.ca/success/student-directed-seminars/your-seminar](http://students.ubc.ca/success/student-directed-seminars/your-seminar).

**Application deadline: Wednesday, April 8th, 2020 by 11:59pm.**