First-Year Seminar - A Privileged Learning Experience

The School of Humanities and Social Science is dedicated to delivering the highest quality education through close mentoring by its faculty members. Amongst its other features, the First-Year Seminar is specially designed as a required course for BSc Global China Studies major students in the spirit of small-group, interactive and guided learning.

“The First-Year Seminar is an experiment with different possibilities. We train students to be active learners and engage them interactively.” (Professor Agnes Ku)

The Seminar is theme-based; students will sign up for a theme, and under the guidance of a professor, they explore the theme through class discussion, field trips and projects in a group of 10-15 students. Examples of the themes include, but are not limited to, Reading News from Social Science Perspectives, Hong Kong Culture and Society, Mobile Phones in China, and History as Narrative.

“The design of my course is to confuse you … to stimulate your creativity, to help you learn to ask why … This is I think the reason why you are coming to the university.” (Professor Liu Tik Sang)

After going through the year-long First-Year Seminar, students from different groups shared their learning experiences in the last session of the Seminar:

““The First-Year Seminar to me is an eye-opening program … It is not only interesting but has also inspired me to see the ‘bigger picture’ from different angles.” (Steven Tsoi, student)

“The one question that the professor most commonly asked us was ‘why’ … We have now learned to reflect on the social and cultural meanings of the things around us. This inspiring, small-class seminar has certainly enriched my study experience.” (Rico Yip, student)

The last session was an occasion for joy, inspiration and gratitude. A vibrant spirit filled the room when students were recalling and sharing the debates they had during their past seminars.

“I enjoy teaching the Seminar and would like to do it again, perhaps on a different theme with greater potential for provoking students.” (Professor Erik Baark)

Why the Seminar?

The First-Year Seminar is intended to facilitate students’ transition from their high school study environment to the university environment characterized by a more independent study mode. It will help students to overcome their fear of conversing with a faculty member, and also make them more comfortable in independently raising questions and commenting on materials they have covered—all in an interactive class setting. The Seminar is also intended to further develop the interest of new students in certain key issues in the humanities and social science, and to strengthen their identity with the program and the School.