Model 1b: The Current Seminar Structure and Modified Reading List Lengths

Rationale:
1. Emphasizes the strengths of the current program.
2. Keeps the current four seminars, based on a chronological plan from beginning to end.
3. Maintains the Western Conversation as the most important source of texts
4. Decreases the amount of reading to support close, critical reading of texts

Summary:
The primary intent of this model is to preserve the current seminar structure and pedagogy. How is it developmental? Each reading list would be shortened by about 30-40% to support careful, critical reading. A set of rubrics will be designed that students will be expected to demonstrate at increasingly sophisticated strategies of reading, thinking, arguing and writing in the four seminars. The rubrics will address critical thinking, shared inquiry, and written and oral communication. There will be one assignment (out of all the writing assignments) that will be required and structured by the board to provide evidence for assessment of the goals.

Four-year Seminar plan:
First seminar (spring of freshman year) – Greek Thought
Second seminar (fall of sophomore year) – Roman, Christian, Medieval
Third seminar (fall or spring of junior year) – Renaissance, 17th and 18th
Fourth seminar (fall or spring of senior year) – 19th and 20th

Trade-offs:
1. What is gained
   a. We keep as much of the current model as possible.
   b. Texts focus largely on the great conversation without inserting anything between the reader and the texts.
   c. Texts could be selected to enlarge the scope of the discussion - more focus on Middle Eastern texts, for example, during the Medieval era.
2. What is lost
   a. Texts will be shorter and fewer.
Model 3: A Developmental Model for Seminar (1-2-1)

Rationale for this model:
1. Building of student strategies/tools in critical thinking, critical reading, shared inquiry, etc.
2. Developmental structuring of the four seminars, including a capstone experience in the fourth
3. Maintenance of the Western conversation as the most important source of texts
4. Including a larger proportion of intercultural/global texts

Summary: The primary intent of this model for seminar is to preserve the heart of the Western conversation while at the same time addressing the very real concerns for the development of student learning and the inclusion of more intercultural and global voices. The Western Tradition (from the Greeks to 1900) is preserved in the second and third seminars, using the transfer-list as a model. The development of student learning is addressed in the first seminar (focused on critical thinking, reading, and shared inquiry, with texts that facilitate these strategies) and the fourth seminar (which includes a capstone experience). The non-chronological structure of the first and fourth seminars also enables the inclusion of a much broader range of global and intercultural voices. How is it developmental? The first seminar intentionally educates students in a set of strategies that students will be expected to demonstrate at increasingly sophisticated levels in the next three seminars. The fourth seminar asks students to integrate their learning at the end of this experience.

How is this developmental?
1. Includes a freshman seminar to teach seminar strategies through carefully chosen and shorter texts.
2. The historical ordering of texts is intrinsically developmental in terms of content. Ideas from later ages are built on earlier ones.
3. The level of demand – length of reading, discussion rubrics, writing assignments and rubrics, etc. – will be graduated through the four seminars.
4. The students will discover the convergence of cultures over time, expanding their awareness of that phenomenon.
5. The focus of the fourth seminar readily suggests integrative evaluations and/or capstone projects.

Four-year Seminar plan:
First seminar (spring of freshman year) – Critical Strategies and Great Questions
   a. Focus #1 (skill) – Through the selection of shorter, targeted readings, the primary intention of the first seminar is to facilitate the growth of the students’ abilities to think and read critically and to participate in shared inquiry.
b. Focus #2 (content) – Texts will be chosen based on a series of factors, in this order: (1) their accessibility to freshmen [i.e., length, difficulty], (2) their relevance to modern life/modern questions, and (3) their importance in human history. The focus is on texts that best allow students to practice the strategies of critical thinking, critical reading, and shared inquiry. Texts from a variety of times and cultures can/should be included.

Second seminar (fall of sophomore year) – **Western Tradition, part 1**

a. Focus #1 (content) – Western Tradition, part 1 – Students will read the classics of the Greek and Latin worlds, using a model similar to the current first transfer seminar.

b. Focus #2 (skill) – Students would be expected to employ and build upon the strategies of critical thinking, critical reading, and shared inquiry that were learned in the first seminar.

Third seminar (fall or spring of junior year) – **Western Tradition, part 2**

a. Focus #1 (content) – Western Tradition, part 2 – Students will read the classics of the Renaissance through roughly 1900.

b. Focus #2 (skill) – Students would be expected to employ and build upon the strategies of critical thinking, critical reading, and shared inquiry that were learned in the first and second seminars.

Fourth seminar (fall or spring of senior year) – **The Global Conversation of the 20th and 21st c.**

a. Focus #1 (skill/integration) – Students would be expected to employ and build upon the strategies of critical thinking, critical reading, and shared inquiry that were learned in the first, second, and third seminars. Most importantly, students would be required to spend the last weeks of the fourth seminar looking back on what they have learned and how they have grown, integrating the steps of their intellectual development in a capstone experience.

b. Focus #2 (content) – The Global Conversation of the 20th and 21st c. – Building on the Western tradition explored in the second and third seminars, readings would focus on the Great Conversation of the modern world, which includes the West but also fully integrates important intercultural and global voices – texts which are now part of the modern conversation (and would be chosen based on such a status). The focus would be on issues or concerns of significant relevance for a 21st c. student, as well as texts that would allow for integrative thinking.

**Trade-offs:**

1. **What is gained**
   
a. More explicit skill-building

b. More explicit development and integration of student learning
2. What is lost
   a. Fewer texts from the Western conversation