First-year Interest Group Seminars (FIGS) are one-credit, ten-week courses taught by talented and informed upper-class Peer Instructors during the fall semester. Taking a FIGS course will allow you to explore an exciting area of study with a small group of peers and examine the opportunities available at Rutgers and beyond. Since our courses are taught by experienced upper-class students, you will gain valuable advice on how to navigate college life from someone who was once in your shoes. In your FIGS, you will discover the basics of academic, research, and co-curricular involvement; connect with faculty in your interest area; identify educational tracks and career options; and learn the ins and outs of Rutgers resources.

Choosing a FIGS

Because FIGS courses are popular, we recommend ranking several FIGS classes that interest you. In addition to alphabetical course descriptions, you will find course topics grouped thematically below. Please note that some courses address multiple interest areas(*).

Arts, Communication and Entertainment
- Art & Art History
- Communication
- Creative Writing
- English Literature
- Music

Business, Financial Services and Logistics
- Business
- Economics
- Management & Labor Relations

Education and Public & Human Services
- Africana Studies
- Criminal Justice
- Diversity & Social Justice
- Education
- Foreign Language & Linguistics
- Geography & Global Studies*
- History
- Latin American Culture
- Law & Leadership
- Middle Eastern Studies
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Sociology

Food & Agriculture and Environmental & Natural Resources
- Animal Science
- Environmental Policy & Awareness
- Geography & Global Studies*
- Landscape Architecture & Environmental Design
- Nutrition*
- Plant & Agricultural Science
- Science of the Environment
- Veterinary Medicine

Life Sciences and Health
- Careers in the Sciences*
- Dental Professions
- Exercise Science - Kinesiology and Health
- Health and Medicine
- Nutrition*
- Pharmacy
- Public Health

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
- Careers in the Sciences*
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Mathematics
- Physics

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Africana Studies
Are you interested in learning more about the African American Experience in the United States, Africa and abroad? Do you want to discuss the importance of social movements like #BlackLivesMatter or learn about how Rutgers University was involved in the fall of apartheid in South Africa? Regardless of your specific major or career interests, these are important questions that impact us all. This course will focus on debunking myths regarding African Americans, the African continent and the African diaspora as well as introducing you to the beauty and intriguing nature of Africana Studies and its importance today. Along the way, you’ll gain valuable knowledge as well as an introduction to the skills and Rutgers resources necessary to succeed both in and out of the classroom.

Animal Science
Do you love working with animals? Come and explore academic paths and career opportunities within the field of Animal Science. This FIGS will focus on degree programs directly related to the tending, care, and supervision of animals. Learn more about opportunities for co-curricular involvement and research at Rutgers, meet faculty working in the field, and discover specialization areas as well as educational and career paths.

Art & Art History
Are you interested in art? Have you ever given any thought to artistic technique or wondered why some works of art are prized more than others? Would you like to know what it takes to be an art historian? If so, join us as we explore the study of art and the field of Art History. In this FIGS, you will be introduced to important artistic genres and time periods, meet faculty from the Art History department, and learn about a variety of resources available to Rutgers students. If you’re interested in art and want to share that curiosity with others, then this is the course for you.

Business
Would you like to learn about the business world and explore the current issues, trends, and practices shaping the future of domestic and international business? This FIGS will introduce you to various undergraduate plans of study for business and liberal arts majors as well as the Rutgers Business School and business-related graduate programs. Additionally, you will discover the vast array of relevant academic resources and co-curricular involvement opportunities while also hearing from faculty and business majors who will provide valuable insight and advice on current hot topics in business.

Careers in the Sciences
Are you passionate about science? This seminar will explore the variety of majors, minors, and career paths available to students interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields. Find out about emerging issues, discover prospects for research and involvement in science-related opportunities at Rutgers, and learn how to be a successful student in STEM. Students will also connect with student leaders and faculty in the sciences and learn about the process for applying to graduate programs and medical schools. This FIGS will help you determine which science path is best for you.

Communication
Learn about this exciting field through the exploration of interpersonal, mediated, and organizational communication. Students will be introduced to current topics within the study of communication such as the function of public relations, advertising, and reputation management to the outsized influence of the media and popular culture, and will see how this discipline impacts their everyday lives. Students will have the opportunity to learn more about related co-curricular resources available at Rutgers while discovering the limitless applications of the field of communication.

Computer Science
Have you ever thought about pursuing a career in computer science? If so, this course will introduce you to the field’s diverse academic and career opportunities while explaining its connection to other relevant disciplines such as math, computer engineering, and economics. The class will explore facets of computer science such as software development and hardware innovation, look at faculty research and emergent technologies, and help students learn more about academic resources, internships, and other job related resources offered at Rutgers.
Creative Writing
Do you have a passion for creative writing? Would you like to make writing a part of your undergraduate experience? In this seminar, you will study the craft of story building and developing a narrative voice and discuss ways to incorporate your interest in writing into your academic life. We will also learn about writing-related programs and workshops at Rutgers, examine relevant major and minor options, explore internship opportunities and job market resources, and discover how the Rutgers community can be an engaging place to foster your creativity.

Criminal Justice
Are you thinking about a career in criminal law, counseling, or law enforcement? Do you want to know more about working within the court system, correctional facilities, or even the FBI? A degree in Criminal Justice will satisfy a variety of interests and provide you with a strong foundation for academic and professional success. This seminar will explore the connections between criminal justice and social issues such as race, class, violence, and discrimination. This course will also offer the opportunity to explore relevant academic and co-curricular resources to make your criminal justice journey at Rutgers a success.

Dental Professions
Are you interested in dentistry as a possible career? Do you know what it takes to be a successful dentist? This FIGS will introduce you to topics such as new dental technologies and procedures, dentists' involvement in both local and global health efforts, and the many options and specialties available to dental students. If you would like to learn more about the dental field and understand its relation to other medical disciplines while gaining valuable insight on how to navigate Rutgers resources, come and explore the field of dentistry.

Diversity & Social Justice
What prejudices exist in society? How do we begin to challenge them? Regardless of your career interests, these questions impact all of us. Join us as we explore the rich diversity of our world from historical, social, and political perspectives. Enjoy lively conversation on topics such as race, class, language, sexual orientation, and disability. Challenge yourself to discuss your beliefs about these issues and their place in the 21st century. This FIGS will help you identify relevant majors and minors, campus organizations, career paths, and all the resources you'll want to use to make the most of your passion for social justice!

Economics
Are you interested in working on Wall Street, consulting for the government, or applying the study of economics to another industry? In this FIGS, you will explore the diverse field of economics and discover how economics intersects with the fields such as politics, psychology, public policy, health, and finance. Basic economic concepts like resource allocation, individual decision-making, and global trends will be discussed as you get a taste of the powerful analytical tools and skills developed in economics. We'll also examine the flexible academic and career paths available and the wide array of opportunities available for economics majors, such as research, extracurricular activities, various certificates in Economics, internships, and more!

Education
Are you passionate about changing the lives of tomorrow's youth? What about a career in K-12 teaching? Educators today have immense influence, yet face a wide range of issues in our ever-changing society. This course is designed to introduce you to teaching in the United States educational system. Discover your options through the perspective of an upper-class student pursuing a career in education and find out more about becoming a certified K-12 teacher in New Jersey. You will also examine the relevant academic resources and involvement opportunities Rutgers has to offer for a successful college career.

Engineering
Are you interested in math and science? Would you like to develop your problem-solving skills? Do you enjoy building things and, on occasion, tearing them down as well? If so, then this is the FIGS for you! This course will introduce you to the many Engineering majors and minors offered at Rutgers as well as the STEM-related career paths available to those who pursue a degree in this dynamic field. Throughout this seminar, we will discuss cutting-edge issues and advancements in Engineering, connect with research opportunities, and learn about other avenues for involvement. Come join us as we lay the foundation for future success.
English Literature
Do you love to read? Would you like to channel your literary creativity? Are you wondering how to get the most out of your interest in English literature? In this FIGS, you will study short works of historical and contemporary literature and discuss significant authors and important literary movements. You will meet faculty from the English department, explore a wide range of curricular offerings and extracurricular resources available to Rutgers students, and learn more about the exciting internship and job opportunities available to English majors.

Environmental Policy & Awareness
Are you interested in improving and protecting our environment? This course will provide information about what you can do to be a global citizen and an ethical consumer. Topics covered may include fair trade, locally sourced goods, sustainable initiatives, and environmental policies. You will also learn about relevant academic resources, co-curricular involvement opportunities, exciting career possibilities, and meet faculty specializing in environmental awareness. Learn what you can do to keep our planet safe and secure, both as a Rutgers student and as a future professional.

Exercise Science – Kinesiology and Health
Are you interested in exploring a future in the field of Exercise Science? If so, then this is the FIGS for you! Learn more about this multi-disciplinary field; examine the links between physical activity and health, science and medicine; consider career options such as physical and occupational therapy, medicine and athletic training; and meet faculty from the Department of Kinesiology and Health. Along the way, you’ll gain valuable knowledge as well as an introduction to the skills and Rutgers resources necessary to succeed both in and out of the classroom.

Foreign Language & Linguistics
Are you interested in the acquisition and mastery of different languages? Do you know what linguists do? In this FIGS, you will explore the relevance of foreign languages and linguistics in American culture—as well as their impact in other parts of the world—and learn about the variety of foreign language programs and linguistics-related resources and opportunities at Rutgers. In an increasingly connected global age, this course will provide you with insight into the career options available to foreign language and linguistic specialists and the real-world applications of such knowledge.

Geography & Global Studies
Are you interested in developing your understanding of Planet Earth? Have you ever wondered how geography impacts culture, economics, and the connections humans have to the environment? In this FIGS, you will learn more about our globalized world as you explore both natural and human-altered systems. We will explore the vast dimensions of geography from urban planning to threats to biodiversity, and by the end of the course, you will have a newfound appreciation for the “science of where.” You will also be introduced to research opportunities and career options available for geography majors. Come network with other students and faculty and find out how Rutgers resources can help you have a successful future as a global citizen.

Health & Medicine
Have you thought about going to medical school or becoming a healthcare professional? Are you intrigued by scientific research? During this class, you will discuss current issues in healthcare, network with fellow students and Rutgers faculty, look at the medical and graduate school application process, and learn about the many undergraduate plans of study for those interested in medical careers. In addition, you will discover the basics of academic, research, and co-curricular involvement that will pave your path for a successful college experience at Rutgers.

History
How is history relevant to our everyday lives? Can we really learn from the past? In this FIGS, we will study both primary and secondary sources and discuss the methodologies that historians use to examine and understand historical events. History will come alive as we learn more about the exciting courses offered in the department, meet a faculty member and talented upper-class students, gain insight on navigating relevant opportunities for research and involvement at Rutgers, and discover the many career paths available to those who pursue a degree in History.

Landscape Architecture & Environmental Design
Do you love the great outdoors? Have you always wanted to create your dream oasis, public park, or urban space? This FIGS will give you an understanding of how Landscape Architects and Environmental Designers shape the landscape. We will be learning how to turn our ideas into reality through the process of design. In this FIGS, students will learn how to get involved with exciting projects at Rutgers with the Landscape Architecture club and alongside professors from the Department of Landscape Architecture. You will also be introduced to the different degree programs, career options, and how Rutgers resources can help you achieve your goals. Join us as we learn to develop our changing landscapes!
Latin American Culture
Are you interested in gaining insights into the fascinating and diverse region that stretches from the Mexican border to the tip of Tierra del Fuego? We will explore topics together such as politics, economics, art, history, society, language, culture and the relationship between North and Latin America. We will discuss study abroad opportunities and academic resources, meet faculty from the Department of Latino & Hispanic Caribbean Studies, explore relevant career paths, and discover how studying the richness and diversity of Latin American culture complements any major program or career focus.

Law & Leadership
Are you a budding legal ace? Do you want to engage in civic leadership? This course will examine a wide range of legislative and judicial issues that have shaped our nation and our world and will introduce you to the political and legal spheres. You will also learn more about different career and educational paths, including law school, pursuing a Ph.D., and other possible vocations. We’ll introduce you to the tools and information necessary to become leaders in the Rutgers community and the greater world of law and politics.

Management & Labor Relations
This FIGS will explore questions such as the impact of the United States labor movement, contemporary ideas surrounding work and industry, and the development of effective teams and productive employees. Learn about the management of employees from entry-level jobs to corporate leadership, as well as American union movements and contemporary social movements. Students will be introduced to careers in the management and labor relations field, and will be able to discuss their experiences as workers and how their future goals fit into the American labor structure and workplace. Students will discover the academic resources, internship, and co-curricular involvement opportunities Rutgers has to offer for a successful college and management career.

Mathematics
Do you enjoy solving complex math problems? Do you see yourself working with numbers for a living? As one of the most uniquely versatile academic subjects, mathematics serves as the logical “common denominator” behind various disciplines including (but not limited to) computer science, education, engineering, and physics. This FIGS will introduce you to different courses of study, numerous academic resources, and involvement opportunities while helping you to integrate your mathematical passion into your Rutgers experience. Meet fellow students interested in this field, network with faculty, and learn about the many career paths available to those who pursue a degree in mathematics. Come join us, and we’ll prove it to you!

Middle Eastern Studies
This FIGS will help you understand American perspectives of the Middle East and North Africa and explore issues such as diverse as culture, language, religion, and gender. We will examine what we know about the Middle East and how knowledge has been shaped (and sometimes misshaped) by historical events and international politics. Throughout the course, you will engage in informed dialogues about the Middle East, meet faculty affiliated with the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and learn about a variety of academic paths and career opportunities related to this exciting field.

Music
From Paleolithic bone flutes to Spotify and Pandora, music remains a timeless, universal language. In this FIGS, we will dive into the origins of different musical genres and explore how music remains prevalent in a variety of art forms and professional career paths. Discover the music-related academic tracks that Rutgers offers; learn about out-of-class opportunities to experience, appreciate, and perform music; and discuss the career opportunities available to students interested in the musical arts. In addition, you will also meet a faculty member and learn about the resources and opportunities Rutgers offers. If you love music, then this is the course for you!

Nutrition
Are you eating healthy meals? Have you ever given any thought to the labels found on food packages? Do you know what it means to maintain a “balanced” diet? In this course, you will discuss some of the current issues and advancements in nutrition and explore both the different options within the nutrition major as well as career paths the field of nutrition offers. You will also discover relevant academic, research, and co-curricular opportunities at Rutgers and meet faculty from the Department of Nutritional Sciences.
Pharmacy
Are you considering a well-rounded career that combines healthcare sciences, business, and technology? Pharmacy is a dynamic field that emphasizes the importance of analytical thinking and patient care. Through this course, you will gain an understanding as to how pharmacists have unique roles and responsibilities in community, hospital, and pharmaceutical industry settings! You will also be introduced to different academic programs, career options, and how the resources at Rutgers can assist in accomplishing your goals. Join this FIGS and meet other students interested in the profession of pharmacy as well as network with faculty and professionals, and explore the resources and opportunities for students interested in this exciting field.

Philosophy
Who are you? What gives your life purpose and meaning? Why do you do the things you do? Join this seminar as we explore such questions and engage in philosophical speculation and debate. Throughout the course, you will learn how to analyze major issues, strengthen arguments, and prove points. This FIGS will expose you to different philosophical fields and to the opportunities and academic resources that exist at Rutgers to pursue an academic and career path related to philosophy. If you like to think about thinking, then enroll in this seminar and learn more about the field, network with upper-class philosophy students, and get to know faculty from the Department of Philosophy.

Physics
Physics can be used to describe everything in the world around us, from fundamental natural phenomena to the processes that make even the most complex technologies work. This FIGS will explore the diverse array of subfields within physics, ranging from astrophysics to particle physics and all the scales in between. We will discuss modern advancements within the fields, how these advancements impact our daily lives, and the variety of opportunities and resources open to those who study Physics at Rutgers. Join us and embark on the exciting journey of becoming a physicist!

Plant & Agricultural Science
Have you ever wondered why New Jersey is called the “Garden State”? Why does Rutgers have a tomato named after it? Discover the answers to such questions in this FIGS course and explore the important role plants play in society and the environment. Topics covered may include New Jersey agriculture, organic farming, GMOs, urban horticulture, and plant biotechnology (to name just a few). You will learn about the many research and career opportunities available in the “fields” of agriculture and plant science—pun intended—and get to know students and professors from the Plant Biology department, as well as many of the relevant research and involvement opportunities available at Rutgers.

Political Science
Do you know how politicians are elected or how legislation is passed? Have you ever wondered why countries get involved in some international conflicts but not in others? Are you interested in national politics and world affairs? Students enrolled in this FIGS will explore the various subfields of the Political Science major—including American politics, comparative politics, international relations, political theory, and public law—and will learn about involvement opportunities and professional career paths in both the public and private sectors. Discover the numerous resources Rutgers has to offer for a successful college career and meet likeminded peers and faculty from the Department of Political Science.

Psychology
Do you often wonder why people do the things they do? Or what drives human behavior? In this FIGS you will learn about psychological theories, subfields within psychology, current psychosocial trends, and the everyday applications of psychology. You will discover the broad array of internships and career paths available to students interested in psychology, while also learning about relevant research and co-curricular involvement opportunities available to Rutgers students.

Public Health
Public health affects every aspect of our daily lives. From the food and water we consume to the air we breathe, our knowledge of public health can enhance the lives of people dramatically. This FIGS course will explore public health from an interdisciplinary perspective so that you can understand its role in human behavior, environmental policy, professional research, humanitarian interventions, and much more. You will examine health statuses among different populations and be introduced to a wide variety of career opportunities, co-curricular involvements and Rutgers resources relevant to the field of public health.
Science of the Environment
Are you interested in studying the earth’s environment and protecting its natural resources? This FIGS will demonstrate how a science education can prepare you to address concerns related to climate change, resource management, and human and ecosystem health. Learn more about environmental problems and their solutions through the lens of the biological, chemical, and physical sciences. If environmental science, geology, marine science, or ecology sound like interesting majors, this FIGS will help you envision which academic path best complements your specific interests and future career goals, while also exploring the relevant Rutgers resources and co-curricular opportunities to help you be successful.

Sociology
Do you find yourself analyzing how groups function? Do you enjoy thinking about how society and culture influence our experiences? This FIGS will introduce you to the complexities of the sociological world. We will examine society and social relationships and explore the sociological processes taking place in your everyday life—from your residence hall to your college classrooms, from the meals you share with family and friends to the media you consume on a daily basis. Additionally, you will learn more about relevant academic and co-curricular involvement opportunities, discover the many career paths available to sociology majors, and hear from a faculty guest speaker within the Department of Sociology!

Social Work
Do you enjoy helping others? Are you interested in how to best use your helping skills? This course will explore different models and approaches to social work and social welfare as well as academic options and involvement opportunities here at Rutgers. You will learn how to take the skills you already have—gleaned from life, school, and work experiences (to name a few)—and to direct these skills to the profession of social work. Possible course topics include the history of social work and its place in contemporary society, the career paths available to students interested in the field, and the impact that social workers have on the world at large.

Veterinary Medicine
Do you like animals? Are you interested in understanding and improving their lives? This course will introduce you to the field of veterinary medicine and allow you to explore a number of exciting careers, ranging from small and large animal veterinarians to veterinary technician work and scientific research. You will also interact with a faculty member from the Department of Animal Science, and learn more about clinical, research, and involvement opportunities at Rutgers.
**I’m not really sure what I want to major in. How should I decide which FIGS topics to sign up for?**

FIGS are a great opportunity to learn more about an area of interest and explore whether it might be the right major for you. Ultimately, you should be interested in the content of the class, so select a topic that you want to learn more about.

**Are FIGS available to all first-year students?**

Only students enrolling in the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, and Rutgers Business School are able to register for a FIGS.

**How many students are in a FIGS?**

Each FIGS will have no more than 25 first-year students. This will be significantly smaller than most classes that you take in your first semester, which is another great reason to take a FIGS.

**Will I get my first choice of FIGS?**

We will make every attempt to place you in your first choice; however, your schedule may require that we place you in one of your other choices. If you do not see your first choice on your schedule, you may also try to sign up for an open FIGS in early September during the add/drop period.

**How are we graded in FIGS?**

FIGS courses are one-credit courses graded Pass/No Credit. There will be some homework to complete, but you will spend much of your time in this course exploring your interest area, discussing hot topics, and learning about the many resources available to you at Rutgers.

**Does taking a FIGS impact my grade point average?**

No. FIGS are graded Pass/No Credit, which means you do not receive a letter grade. Therefore the grade that you receive is not factored into your grade point average.

**Does the credit count towards graduation?**

Yes, all students who successfully participate in FIGS will receive one credit, which counts towards graduation. If you do not come to class and complete the minimum assignments, you may receive no credit in the course. FIGS do not satisfy specific core curriculum requirements.
**What should I expect each week in FIGS?**

Your weekly FIGS class will be planned and facilitated by your Peer Instructor. FIGS are seminar courses, which means they are based on participation. You will receive the most benefit from this class if you come each week and take advantage of learning from your Peer Instructor and fellow students. All FIGS students will have the opportunity to go on an out-of-class excursion, hear from a peer panel, meet a faculty member, explore the various aspects of your interest area, and learn about the many services and resources available at Rutgers. You will have some short homework assignments and projects, but they are all designed to complement your learning, not provide you with busywork.

**How do I register for a FIGS?**

When you visit campus on advising day, indicate your choices on the appropriate course registration form. You can select up to four FIGS courses and rank them in order of preference. If you did not indicate interest in taking a FIGS at your advising day or find that you are not registered for a FIGS when you get your class schedule in August, you may still register for one during the first week of classes through the online Web Registration System (course number 01:090:120 or 11:090:120). To see the list of available FIGS, visit the Schedule of Classes in late August/early September at sis.rutgers.edu/soc/

**Can I take a FIGS and a Byrne Seminar?**

Yes, if you are interested in both FIGS and Byrne Seminars, you should note this on your course request form when you are selecting your fall classes. FIGS are only offered in the fall semester; Byrne Seminars are offered in the fall and spring.

**If I applied for a learning community, how do I reference the corresponding FIGS on the course request form?**

Students selected to participate in the Discovery House, Health & Medicine and Bunting Cobb Learning Communities are guaranteed placement in the related FIGS course for that community and will automatically be assigned into this class by a first-year dean. You are welcome to list alternate FIGS options on course request forms in the event you are not assigned to a learning community.