AHS Foundation Goals and Common Features

AHS Foundation Courses are defined by a set of common goals that include developing student writing, presentation, critical reading, and discussion skills; offering an opportunity for students to approach topics with the methods and perspectives of different disciplines; and introducing lifelong learning opportunities via independent projects. To address these goals, all AHS Foundation courses share the following features:

- **Writing Workshops.** The AHS Foundation is committed to helping first-year Olin students develop the tools they need to write critically, insightfully, and carefully. The workshops help provide and standardize intensive writing instruction in every AHS Foundation course. AHS Foundation courses currently include at least three writing workshops for thesis writing, using evidence, and close reading. AHS faculty work with Olin's writing consultant to customize each workshop.

- **Writing Assignments.** Students receive experience with frequent writing and revision. This includes:
  - Written assignments approximately every two weeks.
  - At least two relatively substantial pieces of writing (averaging about six pages each). At least one of these assignments involves analysis of a written text and includes citations.
  - At least one assigned revision, graded separately from the written deliverable.

- **Class discussion.** AHS Foundation courses emphasize class discussion in order to help students take ownership of their learning process and course material. AHS Foundation courses are run in a seminar-style, and are not lecture-based courses.

- **Critical reading.** AHS Foundation students are encouraged to read analytically, as opposed to reading solely for the purpose of gathering information or learning content.

- **Peer critical commentary.** AHS Foundation courses encourage students to formally comment on one another's work with the following pedagogical goals in mind: learn to actively engage with the work of peers; internalize how to edit one's own work by actively editing someone else's work; and learn to perceive and address the disconnect between what one writes versus how it is processed or understood by an audience.

- **Draw connections between AHS and technical subjects.** AHS Foundation courses explore ways that AHS techniques and principles make students into better engineers, and suggest ways for students to bring technical strategies to bear on AHS problems and topics.

- **Explore the relationship between different AHS fields.** AHS Foundation courses strive to introduce related AHS fields and investigate their methods, questions, and content.