

Memorandum

To: University Faculty

From: Lisa Schnell, Interim Dean, Honors College

Subject: Request for Sophomore Year Course Proposals

Date: May 14, 2018

The Honors College Curriculum Committee invites proposals for sophomore year seminars to be offered by the Honors College. Please consider proposing a sophomore seminar for either semester of the 2019-20 academic year. In each semester, we expect to offer over a dozen seminars, which will be limited to twenty Honors College students each. Since undergraduates from any major in any college or school may enroll, seminars should not have prerequisites or require prior knowledge that would prevent any Honors College sophomore from enrolling and being successful.

Any University faculty member may propose a course, which is typically taught as part of a faculty member's regular teaching load. We hope that the sophomore seminar offerings will represent a diversity of ideas, disciplines, methods, and topics. Evaluation of proposals will be based upon these "essential qualities" valued by the Honors College Curriculum Committee.

1. *Academically Challenging*: Courses must be appropriately demanding for sophomores, keeping in mind that students in the class may be from any college or school and may not be presupposed to have taken particular courses. Instructors may choose to introduce foundational material at the beginning of the course, however.
2. *Research-Focused*: Seminars should introduce students to aspects of the conduct of research within disciplines or interdisciplinary clusters. These seminars aren't viewed as "methods" courses but should allow students to acquire tools that will allow them to develop the skills and dispositions that will help them become more active and engaged students, eventually capable of conducting their own independent research (the sophomore seminars are thus an important part of the students' general preparation for their senior-year Honors Thesis). For example, courses may introduce students to ways to read a scientific article, conduct primary scholarly research, annotate a bibliography, conduct field research, design an experiment, write an abstract, and so on.
3. *Interactive*: Courses will be seminars (and not small versions of lecture courses), with a great deal of interaction among students and the instructor.

4. *Writing Intensive*: In most cases, seminars should emphasize excellence in written communication and expression. Courses emphasizing numeracy and quantitative skills, oral communication, or information technology, are also encouraged.
5. *Creative*: Courses that engage students in creative thinking and projects are invited.
6. *Innovative*: Courses involving service learning and other forms of non-traditional learning are also invited.
7. *Engage Diversity and/or Sustainability Requirements*: Courses that might satisfy D1 and D2 diversity requirements and/or the new SU requirement are strongly encouraged.

Within the general parameters set by a seminar format, faculty members are encouraged to think creatively about topics, teaching techniques, and course structure. Courses should be planned to adhere to standard teaching times.

There is a two-step application process for sophomore seminars to increase the likelihood of course approval and to better facilitate distribution requirement classification by the academic unit curriculum committees:

First, a brief draft proposal introducing the idea for the course is due on September 14, 2018. The HCOL Curriculum Committee will then review all draft proposals. Faculty members proposing courses will meet with the HCOL Deans in the first week of October to discuss the HCOL Curriculum Committee's recommendations. If the course is recommended to advance to the second stage, a final proposal in the form of a course syllabus is then due on October 30, 2018. The final selection of courses will be completed by the first week of November, 2018.

For the first step in this process, please use the course proposal form, which can be found at http://www.uvm.edu/honorscollege/submitting_sophomore_seminar_proposals for your draft proposal. If you have previously taught a course that you wish to teach again, please indicate this on the course proposal form.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you would like more information, or if you would like to discuss ideas for a course. We very much welcome conversations at any step along the way. Associate Dean Ian Grimmer or I can be reached by phone at 656-9100 or by email at Ian.Grimmer@uvm.edu or Lisa.Schnell@uvm.edu.