

## HONORS COLLEGE SEMINAR POLICY

### A. Honors Seminars—Their Distinctive Character and Expectations

1. Honors seminars are elective, one-credit hour courses, open to all Honors College students, but usually taken by sophomores and juniors. These seminars can be taken to fulfill an Honors activity.
2. Honors seminars have low enrollment limits (18-25) and are intended to provide a challenging and intimate learning experience for excellent undergraduates in the Honors College.
3. Honors seminars cover a wide range of topics centered in different academic disciplines. Instructors of varying areas of expertise often find freedom in teaching their favorite topics, going beyond traditional course content and even styles of teaching, and making important contributions to the intellectual life of the students.
4. We encourage proposals that (1) offer unique perspectives on issues that are unlikely to be addressed in traditional course offerings; (2) offer an interdisciplinary perspective with novel insights into practical or scholarly problems; or (3) bring real-world experience into theories or translate theory into practice. The seminar is NOT a pared-down version of a regular course, and must be substantially distinctive in content or approach.
5. Students' active engagement in the class is indispensable in making the seminar a success. According to the policy developed by the Honors Council and approved by the Fellows of the Honors College in Spring 1993: "Students are expected to participate fully in honors seminars. 'Participation' includes attending class, taking part in discussion, displaying intellectual curiosity and zest for intellectual challenge, and completing seminar assignments--reading, writing (e.g., paper, report, problems, exam), oral reports, group projects. Students are reminded that failure to participate fully will result in a grade of 'unsatisfactory'." This policy should serve as a major guideline for instructors' grading of the one-credit seminar as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

### B. Seminar Proposal Submission Procedure and Timeline

1. The Honors College welcomes proposals by faculty members from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Off-campus professionals in areas of expertise with an advanced degree and/or significant professional expertise in the specialized field of their proposed offering are also encouraged to submit proposals.
2. Generally, an instructor teaches only one seminar per semester.
3. The Honors College will plan its Honors seminars on a semester-by-semester basis:
  - a. For Fall semester:
    - (1) Feb. 15: Call for submissions for seminars to be taught in the coming Fall.
    - (2) March 7: Deadline for submitting proposals. Instructors must fill out the "Honors Seminar Proposal Form."
    - (3) March 31: Signing of contract with instructor.
  - b. For Spring semester:
    - (1) Sept. 15: Call for submissions for seminars to be taught in the coming Spring.
    - (2) Oct. 7: Deadline for submitting proposals. Instructors must fill out the "Honors Seminar Proposal Form."
    - (3) Oct. 31: Signing of contract with instructor.

4. The Honors College may accept additional proposals on an ongoing basis, in the event that additional seminars are needed.
5. The Honors College Educational Policy Committee (HC EPC) will review all proposals and make recommendations to the Dean of the Honors College about offerings.

### **C. Selection Criteria**

1. Priority will generally be given to Honors seminar proposals that are of high quality, that broaden students' horizons, that challenge students' critical thinking ability, that integrate real-world experience with theories, and that provide students interdisciplinary learning opportunities with a wide range of topics that go beyond traditional contents and styles of teaching.
2. To keep seminars' contents fresh and to increase diverse course topics, a seminar will usually be offered only once per academic year. The Honors College will try to provide the opportunity for an instructor to teach a successful seminar at least two times.

### **D. Contract Signing**

1. After a selected proposal has been approved, upon mutual agreement, the instructor will sign a contract to teach the specified Honors seminar. This contract is subject to the Honors College minimum course enrollment policy. According to the policy, by the first Friday of the semester, if there are fewer than 5 students enrolled in an Honors Seminar, the class may be cancelled.
2. Effective Fall 2011, the Honors College will provide \$1,000 compensation for Honors seminars to the instructor's home unit in the form of research funds. The instructor may use these funds to support the seminar, his or her own scholarship, travel, and so on.
3. If, under unexpected circumstances or emergency situations, a contracted instructor is not able to teach the seminar, the instructor should immediately notify the Honors College.

*Revised March 6, 2012*