Honors Research Seminar Proposal Requirements

Honors College
Eustace-Cole Hall | 468 E. Circle Drive, Room 105
355-2326 Fax: 353-4721

Electronic versions of proposals are due no later than Monday, December 9, 2013
Please submit by email to hcawards@msu.edu.

Please limit the proposal to three pages and include the following information:

1. Name(s) of seminar faculty and contact information, including email.

2. Describe the scholarly project(s) to be completed by seminar team(s), including the anticipated research or creative product(s) and the significance of the proposed project (with or without student participation). See accompanying document: Guidelines for Honors Research Seminars. If the project to be completed involves research with human or animal subjects, the description should also include plans to obtain approval from the appropriate MSU review board (IRB or IACUC).

   The product(s) of the seminar should be suitable for presentation at the spring 2015 University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum. In addition, seminars often culminate in work to be presented at a professional conference, or reports to clients or governmental agencies, or other similar products. If this is the case for your proposed seminar, please include where you will be submitting/presenting your results.


4. Number of students expected in seminar – minimum 5, maximum 15.

5. Does the project require previous training or knowledge on the part of the students? If so, specify expectations that should be communicated to students during enrollment.

6. Anticipated seminar expenses. Please provide details of the general categories of expenses required for the seminar along with a budget justification (up to $3,000).

7. Identify special facility needs – computer, lab, audio-visual equipment, as well as preferred area of campus and/or building request.

8. Specify time preference for seminar meetings. In order to avoid conflicts with required classes for first- and second-year students, the Honors College asks that seminars be scheduled before 10 am or after 3 pm. Also, please indicate if you would prefer 50 minute or 80 minute class periods for each semester, although only the Fall will appear on MSU’s Schedule of Courses. (Seminars need not always meet as a regularly scheduled class, but the Honors College will schedule a time and room for the seminars so that classroom space is available if needed.)

9. If you have access to a room or lab that is suitable for the meetings of your seminar, please include this information, along with the scheduling contact person’s name in your proposal.

10. If you have previously taught an Honors Research Seminar, please explain how this proposal differs from or extends the seminar(s) previously offered. Provide commentary and/or evidence as to the relative success of your past seminars, as well as what, if anything would be done differently in the current proposal.
Guidelines for Honors Research Seminars

The Honors Research Seminars, like the Professorial Assistant program, provides Honors students with entry-level research experiences so that they will be better prepared to take advantage of the more advanced research opportunities that are available at the University. The Honors College anticipates supporting up to 15 Honors Research Seminars in 2014-2015.

Seminar proposals are due no later than Monday, December 9, 2013. Please see Honors Research Seminar Proposal Requirements for specific proposal requirements. Please submit proposals electronically to hcawards@msu.edu.


Purpose of Seminars:

The purpose of the Honors Research Seminars is to provide first- and second-year Honors College students with research experiences under the close supervision of an MSU faculty member. In the past, some students have participated in seminars tied closely to their major, while other students have explored other disciplines, often as part of their General Education program. In previous years, 10 colleges have been involved in the seminars, including faculty from the Medical and Law schools.

The Office of the Provost has established mechanisms to support undergraduate research more broadly, including opportunities for undergraduate students in their third and fourth years of study. Because the Honors Research Seminars are directed toward students in their first two years of study, proposals will need to specifically address this point in the seminar design and also in the recommended background for students.

Design of Seminars:

The Honors Research Seminars are designed to enable a faculty member to mentor Honors College students by working collaboratively on scholarship – i.e. research and creative projects. Seminars vary in size from 5-15 students, with students working on one or more “teams.” Students receive academic credit for the seminars (3 credits, UGS 200H). The seminars extend through the entire academic year; students enroll for the seminar in the fall semester, receive an Extended grade (ET) in December, which changes to a Pass or No Credit entered in the spring semester. Seminars meet as often as necessary for the faculty member to guide the students’ scholarly work, and meet as regular classes only as needed to provide background for the groups’ research and creative projects.

In many cases, the seminar will be the first university-caliber research experience for these students. The seminar projects must be suitable for first-and second-year honors students. The seminars should provide opportunities for students to work as active hands-on participants in scholarly work at the University, not only as observers or recipients of knowledge from instructors. Importantly, each seminar project will be expected to culminate in a scholarly research or creative product, suitable for presentation at the University Undergraduate Research & Arts Forum (UURAF) or in some other public or professional forum or for presentation to a “client.”

Faculty and Seminar Support:

Support of up to $3,000 will be available to pay for costs related to the seminars themselves. Appropriate expenses could include funding for seminar materials, copying, equipment and travel. We do not offer support for graduate student assistants, but in some cases, may offer support for an advanced Honors College undergraduate student assistant. The Honors College will also consider proposals requesting other forms of support that would enable a faculty member to offer a seminar, in cases where the faculty research allowance is not appropriate.
Guidelines for Honors Research Seminars

Faculty members will receive a personal research allowance of $3,000. Co-teaching of seminars is encouraged; however the $3,000 research allowance will need to be shared among instructors. Seminars must be led and have active and on-going participation by an MSU faculty member.

Appropriate Seminar Projects:

The faculty mentors design research seminar projects. The Honors College expects to support a wide range of research and creative projects through this program, including projects that contribute to ongoing faculty scholarship and projects that serve “clients” (e.g., governmental agencies, interest groups, non-profits, businesses and the University itself). Projects crossing disciplinary boundaries are encouraged. Many of the seminars in the past have been based on public policy or laboratory research projects, but we aim to offer a diverse range of seminars that appeal to students across all disciplines. Please note the earlier links to previous years’ seminars.

The Honors College intends to support a variety of seminar models. We are willing to discuss modifications of the model specified in this document, so long as the proposal describes a seminar that will enable first and second-year students to work as active participants in scholarly projects and the significance of the project is clearly described. If you are interested in participating in the program, but are uncertain about your ideas for how to design the seminar, please contact Dr. Justin Micomonaco (micomona@msu.edu, 355-2326) to discuss options.

NSF and other Endorsements:

The Honors College may be of some assistance to MSU applicants for NSF or other funding support when it is necessary to demonstrate educational outreach. For instance, NSF requires that a discussion of “Broader Impacts” be included in grant applications; educational outreach activities are sometimes an appropriate means to fulfill this requirement. Leading an Honors Research Seminar might be appropriate educational outreach. In particular, these seminars may be of interest to faculty applying for NSF CAREER Awards. We have offered a letter of endorsement in such cases in past years and would be happy to do so again, upon request.

Enrollment Logistics/Student Participation:

The Honors College will manage student enrollment and assist with classroom scheduling for the Honors Research Seminars with the aim of ensuring that students enroll in seminars appropriate for them, given their interests and background. Seminar sections that fill to capacity before the end of open enrollment will have a waitlist maintained by the Honors College. Sections that fall below the minimum of 5 students before the first day of the Fall semester are subject to cancellation due to low enrollment. This past year 105 students enrolled in 10 seminars.

Review of Proposals:

The Honors College will establish a Faculty Review Committee in consultation with the University Committee on Honors Programs. Seminar proposals are due no later than Monday, December 9, 2013. The Faculty Review Committee will make recommendations to the Dean of the Honors College. Funding decisions are expected by Friday, February 7, 2014.

Please note that if research involving human or animal subjects is a part of the seminar, the PI must indicate that the appropriate review board approval (IRB or IACUC) has been or will be sought. Funding for such seminars will then be contingent upon approval from the IRB or IACUC, as appropriate.