Honors 391AH Instructor Resources

Honors 391AH Course Overview

Course Description
This one-credit seminar-style course meets once a week for 50 minutes and is required of all Commonwealth Honors College students. Every section is open to honors students of any major. Advanced knowledge of the topic should not be necessary.

Compensation
Faculty teaching these seminars will receive a research stipend of $2000, which may be used for research expenses. Faculty emeriti will be paid directly throughout the semester. Enrollment is limited to 15. Part of the stipend may also be used for enhancement of the educational experience in the seminar or for a social event connected with the seminar and involving all its participants. Faculty also have the option of donating the stipend to the Commonwealth Honors College student research grant program.

Goals
Honors 391AH is intended to inspire a love of learning, and to help prepare students with skills necessary for completion of senior theses and projects and the professional workplace. It is also designed to facilitate contact between Commonwealth Honors College students and departmental faculty in a small, seminar-style setting and to provide an intellectually stimulating, cross-disciplinary experience for both the faculty and students involved.

Curriculum Overview
The subject matter of each section is chosen by its instructor. There is no restriction on the field or topic around which the course is centered, but all courses should be accessible to students from all majors; no advanced knowledge should be required.

Preference will be given to courses that incorporate specific skills into the curriculum that will help prepare students for the senior thesis or project. These include writing in general but also may include writing abstracts and literature reviews, competence in research, definition of a research question, computer literacy in presenting research results and public speaking.

The point of these courses is to allow faculty members to create short, compelling courses in areas of personal interest to them and to teach courses they have always wanted to teach while helping students hone the skills necessary for senior thesis or project work. View examples of courses currently being offered.

To Apply
To apply, complete the Honors 391AH Application to Teach.

More Information
Please contact Brion Dulac at abdulac@honors.umass.edu or (413) 577-3913.

Syllabus Template

We have prepared a template for you to use when writing your syllabus. It is completely optional and provided here only for your convenience. Please customize it in any way you would like.

n.b. There are several required elements that must appear in every Honors 391AH syllabus. These are listed below.

Click here for the Syllabus template (Word Document)

Required Items for Syllabus

The following paragraphs must appear in the syllabus for your section:

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Absentee Policy and Extenuating circumstances (illness, death in the family, etc.) for which students must miss a class meeting
While attendance is crucial to participation in the Honors Seminar Series and therefore a significant factor in calculating your final grade in this course, extenuating circumstances may require you to miss a class meeting. Whether an absence is “excused” or counted in calculating participation grades is largely at the discretion of the instructor. Any student absent—whether the absence is “excused” or not—should...
contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss assignments missed, class discussion, etc.

Student athletes, members of the band, and on occasion, students who are members of other groups will be allowed to miss class for games and other special events and make up work will be assigned. See the University Registrar website for university policies on class absence and religious observance. (www.umass.edu/registrar/students/policies-and-practices)

EXAM CONFLICTS
University policy on exams scheduled at the same time a student’s Honors Seminar class meets
According to Faculty Senate Document 06-042, certain one-day-a-week courses, including Honors 391AH, have priority over evening exams on Monday and Tuesday evenings. Evening exams (7-9 p.m.) have priority over all courses on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings.

Exams scheduled for 6 p.m. or earlier do not have priority over Honors 391AH. If you have an exam scheduled during this class, you must be given the chance to make it up by the professor of the other course. If you miss a class because of an exam that has priority over this class (extremely rare), you will be given the chance to make up any work you have missed.

PLAGIARISM POLICY
Documenting the Writing, Speaking, and Thinking of Others
In all your writing, and in oral presentations too, it is essential that you acknowledge the ideas of others upon whom your own thinking depends, including ideas obtained from such non-written sources as lectures, interviews, class discussions, and even casual conversations with colleagues and friends. Give credit for ideas that are not your own as well as for passages of text that you summarize, paraphrase, or quote.

If material possessions are the property of our community at large, thoughts and ideas—expressed in speech or writing—constitute the “intellectual property” of our academic community. To take another’s words or ideas and present them as your own is to commit plagiarism, an act of academic theft, and the punishments can be severe (cf. University of Massachusetts Amherst Academic Regulations, “Academic Honesty”).

UMass’s Academic Honesty Policy
Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty.

Disability Accommodation Statement:
The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you
have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. ([www.umass.edu/disability/current.html](http://www.umass.edu/disability/current.html))

Commonwealth Honors College Class Profile

The UMass Office of Institutional Research (OIR) maintains statistics on students who participate in Commonwealth Honors College. Visit OIR for information about entering and continuing CHC students.

Teaching Honors

Honors pedagogy is always evolving and looks much different in different contexts depending on the goals of its faculty and institution. Honors courses across the country vary widely in their learning outcomes and designs. The National Collegiate Honors Council's monograph, *Inspiring Exemplary Teaching and Learning: Perspectives on Teaching Academically Talented College Students* points out several common themes, though:

- One is the groundswell of interest in reflective practice and all of its implications: critical thinking, problem solving, and ethical and moral reasoning.
- A second is the emphasis on faculty development and pedagogical innovation and creativity ... Curricular, program, and institutional reform is a third ... The compelling power of integrative learning is another: collaborative learning, cooperative learning, team-based approaches, interdisciplinarity, and synthesis of knowledge... (Clark and Zubizaretta 5)

We will be providing links to sources regarding honors teaching and learning at this location as a way to begin a conversation about honors education and its role, not as an endorsement of any particular view. Please feel free to contact us if you would like additional information, including a copy of the NCHC monograph or would like to suggest a link to post here.

Honors Teaching Links

- **What is Honors?** - National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC)
- **Community or Contact Zone? Deconstructing an Honors Classroom** by Phyllis Surrency Dallas and Mary Marwitz

Logistical FAQs

USEFUL LINKS
The Honors Research webpage line is the gateway to all the online research tools developed for Honors 391AH, including information about evaluating the reliability of web sources, a guide to making effective posters, and tips on how to avoid plagiarism. You’ll also find templates, models, and explanations of abstracts, literature reviews, and research logs.

Also on the web site, “For Faculty>Instructor Resources” provides access to files containing course assignments and in-class activities developed by Honors Seminar staff and instructors. Materials are in Word format, ready to be edited and modified should you find them useful to the particular needs of your course.

The What’s New web page announces events of interest to the College and community. It can be accessed from the front page of the Commonwealth Honors College web site and is frequently updated, so again please check the site and encourage your students to check it too.

ENROLLMENT
Where do I get my SPIRE roster?
All instructors have SPIRE access, through an account and password issued by OIT. (If you have not received, or have lost or forgotten your account name and password, OIT staff in A107 Lederle will issue you a new one. Just be sure to bring along a valid ID.) Log on to SPIRE and click on “Class Management” in the drop-down menu to the left of the screen, then on “Class Rosters” and the appropriate term.

How do I know who is enrolled in my class?
Your SPIRE roster contains the names of students officially registered for your class.

What if a student is present in my class but not on my roster?
If any students are present in your class but missing from your roster, make sure they are in fact registered for your class (and not another). If they are not on your roster but wish to enter your class now, if you wish, you may add them to your section as long as they have met the prerequisite. To add students to your section, submit their names—along with their student ID number (absolutely essential) and class year—to Brion Dulac either by email or in person.

How and when do I turn in my final grades?
Instructors enter their own grades directly through SPIRE at the end of the regular academic semester. Only at that time does SPIRE accept grades, again through “Class Management” and then “Record Grades” for the appropriate term.

AUDIO-VIDEO EQUIPMENT
How can I reserve audio-visual equipment for student presentations?
Most sections of Honors 391AH are scheduled in AV-equipped “smart” classrooms. To access audio-visual (AV) cabinets in auditoria and technology-enhanced classrooms, instructors are now using lock combinations instead of physical AV keys. Lock combinations are available in SPIRE to those instructors teaching in classrooms equipped with AV cabinets. This change went into effect in Fall 2013.

**Cabinet keys are no longer in use. Please do not contact the Provost's Office to request a key.**
OBTAIN YOUR LOCK COMBINATION

1. Log in to SPIRE at [http://www.spire.umass.edu](http://www.spire.umass.edu) with your IT Account NetID and password.
2. In the top navigation bar, go to Faculty Home > Classroom Locks.
3. On the Classroom Lock Combinations screen, in the Lock Combination column, you will see a 4-digit lock combination if you are teaching in a classroom equipped with an AV cabinet.

For questions and issues with lock combinations, please contact AIMS at 413-545-5768. For more information on multimedia equipment loan and support, see: [http://www.oit.umass.edu/multimedia-equipment-loan](http://www.oit.umass.edu/multimedia-equipment-loan)

Academic Instructional Media Services (AIMS) in 302 Goodell (545-5765) will deliver TVs, DVDs, VCRs, data projectors, video recording equipment, tape/CD players, etc., to classrooms during regular daytime class hours. (No laptops are available through AIMS.) For evening classes, instructors may pick up equipment from AIMS before 4:30 p.m.; equipment must be returned to AIMS by 9:00 a.m. the following morning.

**COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS**

When do I distribute course evaluations?
Course evaluations will be distributed to you before the final meeting of your section. Evaluations should be completed by the students at the final class meeting.

As an instructor, you are not allowed to hand out or collect the student evaluations – please have a student volunteer distribute and then collect the evaluations. You cannot be present in the room while students are completing evaluations. Please emphasize to the student volunteer that he/she must return the envelope with completed evaluations (and any extras) to Commonwealth Honors College main reception desk within two days. Also please note that evaluations are required for all Commonwealth College classes.

**HONORS SEMINARS CONTACTS**

General Inquiries: honorsseminar@honors.umass.edu
Course Web site: [www.honors.umass.edu/honorsseminar](http://www.honors.umass.edu/honorsseminar)

Brion Dulac, Coordinator, The Honors Seminars: (413) 577-3913, abdulac@honors.umass.edu; contact for technical assistance and general academic and administrative questions.

Angela McCall, Director of Administration: angelam@honors.umass.edu; contact with questions about compensation.

Roland Packard, Scheduling Coordinator: (413) 545-0136, rpackard@honors.umass.edu; contact about reserving a laptop or projector.
Faculty-submitted Resources

If you would like to submit an exercise or other material of interest to your colleagues, please email them to us at honorsseminar@honors.umass.edu. We will post them here.

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