

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

University Honors Program

20 Nicholson Hall
216 Pillsbury Drive S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Office: 612-624-5522

Fax: 612-626-7314

E-mail: honors@umn.edu

Website: <http://www.honors.umn.edu>

October 21, 2009

To: All University Faculty

From: Serge Rudaz, .
Professor of Physics and Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education
Founding Director, University Honors Program

Re: Call for proposals of Honors Seminars for 2010-2011

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to request your help by contributing to the University Honors Program's curriculum for the academic year 2010-11. In particular, I would like to invite you to consider teaching an **Honors Seminar** in your area of expertise.

The campus-wide University Honors program (UHP) enters its third year with the freshman class of fall 2010, and aims to provide an ever more engaging interdisciplinary undergraduate experience to its outstanding students. The University is committed to offering a rewarding and challenging experience for all of these exceptional students, and the UHP curriculum will continue to be strengthened as a means towards that goal. This curriculum will include an expanded selection of departmental Honors courses as well as of topical **Honors Seminars**: You will find a list of Honors Seminars taught this year on the UHP website at

<http://www.honors.umn.edu/academics/curriculum.html>

Honors Seminars covering all disciplines, spanning all of the colleges, are taught at the 2xxx level for freshmen and sophomores (for example, an HSEM at this level can be an expanded version of an especially successful Freshman Seminar) and are designed to be introductory and yet comprehensive courses focused on innovative ideas and topical issues. Seminars at the 3xxx level are for juniors and seniors and may address more complex themes through advanced reading, writing, and critical thinking. Honors Seminars at either level are offered for two or three credits, typically without specific course prerequisites (although appropriate proficiencies can be expected of the students). Their enrollment will be usually be limited to no more than 20 to 25 students at the discretion of the instructor. The University Honors Program is seeking to offer between twelve and fifteen Honors Seminars at the 3xxx and about half that number at the 2xxx level each semester.

Those of you who enjoy teaching fully engaged students in an interactive environment, as well as experimenting with a variety of instructional styles (for example, consider team-teaching with a colleague) will find teaching an Honors Seminar a richly rewarding experience. As the

program grows we want to expand our honors offerings with new seminars from faculty across the University addressing the technical, economic, societal, cultural and ethical aspects of the many challenges facing our society in the 21st century.

Honors seminars carry the HSEM designator which is specific to UHP and is not attached to any college – however, tuition revenues from Honors Seminars will be returned to the offering college. Please note that Freshman Seminars no longer carry an “Honors” label: In keeping with the original vision, all Freshman Seminars are now seen as a University-wide Honors experience open to all students.

I hope you will give careful consideration to offering an Honors Seminar next year, especially if you have some flexibility in your teaching duties. Planning for an Honors Seminar should be done in consultation with your department chair or other person responsible for your department’s undergraduate curriculum. The University Honors Program has set aside some funds for the development of a limited number of HSEMs from departments for which this would be a new initiative.

Do not hesitate to contact me at rudaz001@umn.edu with any questions you may have about the program or about preparing a seminar proposal. To propose an Honors Seminar, please complete the attached Honors Seminar Proposal form to Pamela Baker at p-bake@umn.edu here in the University Honors Program office by **November 25, 2009**. This is a soft deadline: For planning purposes, it would be best to hear from you before the Thanksgiving holiday if at all possible. However, post-deadline proposals will be considered until projected targets are met. *HSEM proposals seeking LE theme designation must be submitted by the November 25 deadline.*

Please note that if your Honors Seminar proposal is accepted for a particular semester, there is no guarantee that it can be switched to the other semester should your schedule change because of the need to manage enrollments. UHP staff will attend to room scheduling, the ordering of textbooks and other important details for approved Honors seminars.

Thank you very much for contributing to the University Honors curriculum!