Notes for faculty submitting Honors course proposals:

This document describes the intent and expectations of Honors seminars and the course selection process. Before deciding whether to submit a proposal, please read these materials carefully and examine the overview of Honors Fellows’ curriculum and requirements that is posted on the Honors website (www.elon.edu/honors) by following the links to “Requirements” for the “New Program.” You can also talk with Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler (x6453) or Mike Carignan (x5744) for more information and context.

General information
Each year approximately 40 Honors Fellows are accepted as incoming students to Elon. On average, they have an average SAT of about 2140, adjusted high school g.p.a. of 4.8, and are ranked in the top 5% of their class. In their first two years at Elon, Honors Fellows take a fairly structured curriculum intended to give them a firm foundation in the arts and sciences and help prepare them for a thesis in their major. Honors Fellows may choose any major at Elon, so in Honors courses there will be students with interests ranging from art to zoology.

Instructions
Only full-time, permanent faculty members are eligible to teach an Honors seminar. Please address all the parts of the proposal form, and talk with your department chair before submitting a proposal so as to avoid scheduling misunderstandings. If you are thinking of team-teaching, it is wise for each of the faculty pair to observe one of the other’s class meetings to help anticipate teaching style, philosophy, and compatibility issues. Proposals are due to Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler in mid-September (date will be announced via facstaff) and a Word document or PDF file attached to an email message would be a convenient format.

The Courses
The first year Honors Seminar is always offered in the spring. It should be a new course, not simply an “honORIZED” version of a current course. It should be a discipline-based, liberal arts course that presents concepts though multiple lenses, utilizes reading beyond a textbook, encourages the development of research and writing skills, and promotes good critical thinking. While it is firmly based in a discipline, it should be intellectually stimulating to students considering a variety of different majors. The term “seminar” implies that active discussions should occur fairly regularly. As an introductory level course, it should not assume knowledge in the discipline.

The Team Taught Interdisciplinary Seminars are offered both fall and spring semester of the students’ second year. Each seminar should illustrate both the synergy and differences that result from studying a set of issues or problems from more than one disciplinary perspective. The course should be truly team-taught, meaning that it is developed together and taught by two professors who are present every day, and who are regularly interacting in class (rather than the model where one professor is present part of the semester, the other in charge the other part of the semester). At least one of the professors must be from a department in the arts and sciences. The Director of General Studies and the General Studies Committee, in consultation with the faculty and the Director of the Honors Program and Honors Advisory Committee, will determine which areas of General Studies requirements are fulfilled by each offering. The course should be inter- or multidisciplinary. Because the Honors curriculum is intended to help prepare students for a thesis, there should be a fairly substantial project which further enhances the research and writing skills students have developed in the first-year courses.

Both types of courses should encourage intellectual growth; they should stimulate the asking of sophisticated questions and teach students how to find and evaluate answers. They should have a great deal of student discussion and engagement, and offer students a significant but reasonable challenge.
Assignments and expectations should be clear, and faculty should offer structure and support to guide students through a series of stages in the research and writing process that will help students produce strong final products. While Honors students are motivated to excel, it is important to bear in mind that as first- and second-year students, they rely on faculty to provide explicit instructions and guidelines that will enable them to build the necessary skills and expertise that are required for future independent research. Both types of courses will carry an HNR prefix (e.g. HNR 174). They can be accepted as substitutes for major or minor requirements at the discretion of the departments.

Process for consideration
The Honors Program is seeking proposals for high-quality courses taught by faculty who possess strong records of effective teaching. Teaching effectiveness will be evaluated based on consultation between the appropriate Dean and the Director of the Honors Program, and the endorsement of the professor as highly qualified will be necessary in order for the course proposal to be submitted to the Honors Advisory Committee for consideration. The Committee will make recommendations about which courses should be approved, and the Director of the Honors Program will decide which courses will be offered and when. It is possible that strong courses will not be chosen because of the need for balanced offerings (too many courses from a particular perspective or discipline offered recently, for example), but those courses might be appropriate at a later date.

If a course is selected
Each professor who develops a new Honors course will have access to a summer stipend of $1,200. (Each of the professors in a team-taught course will receive $1200.) The Honors Program asks professors to commit to teaching their course twice, so there can be some continuity for the Honors Program and so that faculty can refine the course in the second offering. Ideally the second offering will not be the next year, but scheduling can be difficult since the program needs a balance each year in terms of topics, areas of General Studies, and new and repeat courses, and because individual faculty have constraints on their availability as well. Faculty whose courses are chosen will be expected to attend one meeting prior to the year in which they offer the course, in order to learn more about the program expectations and to hear about what has and has not worked well for other faculty.

In a typical year, the Honors Program will need two first-year Honors Seminars and four Team-Taught Interdisciplinary Seminars. Honors courses are intended to have about 20 students in them. There are already approved courses from a previous round of proposals, so it is possible that a course might be approved this fall but not offered for a couple years because of the complexity of scheduling.

For a list of courses offered recently, please consult the honors website at [http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/honors/courses/](http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/honors/courses/)

Thanks for your interest.

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Note: This document was developed by previous directors Mary Jo Festle and Janet Myers, and we thank them for their diligent and careful work in this regard!