Request for Course Development Proposals

Development of Experimental Teaching Modules

The Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning is accepting proposals to develop experimental modules or new courses that pursue creative approaches to teaching and learning at Brown.

Whether through online environments, digital tools, or “hybrid” approaches that re-imagine class as a space for active and collaborative learning, pedagogical innovations provide many opportunities for creative change within the Brown curriculum. These novel modes of education allow for the thoughtful exploration of new teaching methods, course designs, and strategies for promoting participatory learning.

This request for proposals will identify several innovative course modules (or entire courses) to be developed over the next academic year. Proposals from all disciplines and subject areas are welcome, but we particularly encourage those that:

- Develop ideas with significant potential to enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement
- Integrate faculty scholarship into course materials and activities
- Enlist students, at either the undergraduate or graduate level, as active partners in the construction of teaching and learning activities
- Promote interdisciplinary collaboration among Brown faculty, or between Brown faculty and scholars at other institutions
- Make creative use of digital tools, online environments, visualizations, multimedia, etc.
- Lead to innovative research on teaching and learning

Accepted proposals will receive extensive consultation services and support for instructional design. Where appropriate, support for media production and other technical services will also be provided. Funding for dedicated Teaching Assistants, or support for an UTRA-funded student, may also be provided when a proposal makes a strong case for the immediate benefits of such assistance. Funds will not be provided for teaching relief or faculty stipends.

Eligibility

Any member of the Brown faculty may submit a proposal (tenure-track/tenured/senior lecturer/lecturer). Team proposals are welcome, but at least two members of the team must be current Brown faculty. Proposals for modules shared among multiple courses are also permitted, as are proposals for modules that will be taught both at Brown and another institution.

Submission and Deadlines

Proposals will be accepted beginning on April 1, 2014, and will be evaluated on a rolling basis. There is no fixed deadline for the proposal. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to meet with John Melson (John_Melson@brown.edu) to discuss their proposal prior to submission.

Proposals may be submitted to Sheridan_Center@brown.edu, with the proposal document attached. Large files, such as videos, that exceed normal size limits for attachments may be uploaded to Brown’s Digital Dropbox (http://dropbox.brown.edu); include links to any such files in the proposal document.
Consultation
We are happy to discuss and help develop ideas, research possible approaches, or assist in revising drafts of proposals. To schedule a consultation, please contact John Melson (John_Melson@brown.edu or 3-5472).

Proposal Contents
For full consideration, proposals must include all of the following components:

1. Course title and number
   If the course has not been taught at Brown previously and is not yet listed, only a course title is needed.

2. Name of instructor(s)
   If a team proposal includes participants from other institutions, please include institutional affiliations.

3. Narrative (1-2 pages)
   The narrative provides an overview of the proposed module, describing its rationale and its relationship to the course as a whole. The narrative should articulate your motivations and expectations for creating the module. It should also explain in some detail what you anticipate the module will consist of, how you imagine it will function, and why you believe it will enhance students’ experiences and understanding in the course.

   Because digital, online, and experimental modules may assume a wide range of forms based on their aims, the exact contents of the narrative are largely at your discretion. However, you may wish to respond to as many of the following questions as you find relevant:
   - Why is this module suited for the course of which it is a part?
   - What do you hope students will learn as a result of the module, and how does that differ from what they would learn if they did not have access to it?
   - What instructional methods will you use within the module?
   - What parts of the module, if any, might be used in future teaching? Is the module suited for re-use in other contexts, or is it specific to one particular course?
   - How will the module’s development invite, or perhaps even rely on, participation by Brown undergraduate or graduate students?
   - How will the module be integrated into other instructional activities within the course?
   - What specific research questions do you anticipate being able to investigate through the development and use of the module?
   - How will you gauge the effects of the module on student learning?

   Generally, the strongest proposals will include a narrative that clearly articulates the module’s potential benefits and includes specific examples of the materials it will cover, the teaching methods involved, and at least a brief discussion of how you hope to evaluate its effect on the course.

4. Syllabus (1-2 pages)
   The syllabus provides an overview of the course as a whole and shows clearly how the module will be integrated with other parts of the course, including assignments and other required activities.
5. Assessment plan (1 page or less)
How will you evaluate the impact of your module/course on student learning, the concentration, the community, etc.? For resources on assessment, see: http://www.aacu.org/resources/assessment/

6. Production needs and timeline (1 page or less)
This section enumerates the specific materials that you would like to create for the module or course. This could include instructional videos, multimedia materials, visualizations, or digital tools or features that you anticipate incorporating in the module.

For each item, please provide an estimated schedule or timeline for producing the materials.

7. Additional support (1 page or less)
In addition to specific production needs, the proposal should also include a brief description of additional support you expect to need while preparing the module and teaching the course. This should cover additional Teaching Assistants, specialized training or professional development, and requirements such as access to a computer lab or performance space.

If you would like to request the assistance of an UTRA-funded student, please include in this section a description of the work this student would perform and a brief statement outlining how this work would contribute to the student’s research or career development.

8. Examples
Each proposal should be accompanied by at least one example of the type of instructional materials or activities that will be developed for the digital module. For proposals that involve creating online lectures or demonstrations, this might take the form of a brief video (2-3 minutes) illustrating the approach a typical lecture might take. In cases where modules will involve visualizations, multimedia content, digital publications, or custom software, examples may take the form of functional prototypes or annotated wireframe sketches.

Please bear in mind that the examples need not be polished. Their purpose is to illustrate ideas, not to stand in directly for the materials you would like to produce if your proposal is accepted.

Large example files (e.g., videos) should be uploaded separately via the Brown University Digital Dropbox (http://dropbox.brown.edu) and linked from the main proposal.

Review Criteria
Proposals will be reviewed according to the following criteria:

- Clarity of purpose in relation to course goals
- Likelihood that the proposed course or module will offer students an innovative and engaging learning experience
- Potential contribution to departmental curricular objectives at either the undergraduate or graduate level
- Potential to involve current Brown students in planning, developing, or teaching the module, and the extent to which this will contribute to their learning or professional development
- Potential for creative use of resources unique to Brown University, especially resources that are underutilized are or not widely known
- Potential contribution to transferrable models for other courses