

## Simmons World Challenge AY 2020-2021

### Request for Proposals

We are seeking proposals by teams of faculty for Simmons World Challenge (SWC) courses for **AY 2020-2021**. SWC courses are open to *sophomores only*, and aim to create a unique learning experience wherein student teams develop actionable solutions to social justice problems. SWC is held during the January intersession, but also includes: fall semester sessions for laying an intellectual foundation to the course; student presentations of their solutions to the Simmons community in February; as well as, a fully funded<sup>1</sup> faculty-led short-term travel course in May.<sup>2</sup>

SWC courses present an opportunity to engage and empower students as well as to stimulate faculty explorations of teaching and learning. SWC courses focus on a pressing global social problem and challenge students to:

- 1) acquire a working knowledge of local and global dynamics at play;
- 2) develop practical organizational, technical, research and communication skills to work effectively and efficiently in teams; and,
- 3) formulate creative and actionable solutions to address the global social problem, both locally and internationally.

SWC courses celebrate student-led learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and action-oriented engagement, and satisfy the PLAN learning community requirement. Previous courses include...

*2011: Food for Thought: Health, Hunger, and Humanity*

*2012: At the Edge of Poverty: Empowering Women to Change their Lives and their Worlds*

*2013: Would I Lie to You? Media, Misinformation and the Search for Social Justice*

*2013: Migration and Immigration: The Search for Home*

*2014: Brutality: Violence in Local, National, and International Contexts*

*2015: Consumption, Sustainability, and Social Justice*

*2016: Would I Lie to You? Media, Misinformation and the Search for Social Justice*

*2017: Arresting Aggression: Nonviolence as a Solution for Change*

*2019: Infant nutrition: The global challenge of nursing*

*2020: Language, Power, and Violence in Society*

Students, faculty, and teaching assistants in past cohorts described their course experiences as transformative. Participating in this course changed how the students thought about themselves, their worlds, and their academic work. Additionally, it presents faculty a rare opportunity for curricular innovation, especially in team-teaching, as well as an interesting innovative experience with students.

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<sup>1</sup> Fully funded includes, round trip airfare, visas, some in country transportation, shared accommodation and all academic and cultural pre-planned experiences are paid for by Simmons for students accepted into the short-term travel course. Students are responsible for Simmons Spring tuition (and overload if applicable), some food, international cell phone data, passport fees, personal spending money, laundry, excess luggage fees and trips not considered part of the course.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the due date for faculty-led travel courses in October for AY 2020-2021, the SWC proposal will be due October 1, 2019 for AY 2020-2021.

**The Simmons World Challenge course will:**

- Focus on an imperative global social problem for the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- Result in student-generated, interdisciplinary, integrated proposed solutions to a global social problem;
- Feature independent, student-led exploration for which faculty and teaching assistants serve as mentors; and,
- Showcase intense and deep engagement both locally and internationally.

**Student work will:**

- Be entrepreneurial;
- Address global dimensions of the social problem and consider structural/societal factors influencing the human condition;
- Emphasize creativity, interdisciplinary engagement and self-discovery; and,
- Result in professional-style presentations and a final report detailing an actionable solution.

**Overall course design:**

- Includes two or three core teaching faculty;
- Emphasized development of team skills;
- International service learning, travel course component for May 2021;
- May involve domestic service learning as well, but must be interdisciplinary and yield student-generated projects; and
- Must articulate specific learning outcomes & use an assessment plan to measure learning outcomes.

Final course proposals are due to [pechulis@simmons.edu](mailto:pechulis@simmons.edu) **no later than Tuesday, October 1, 2019**. I invite questions, concerns, and opportunities to brainstorm together – please contact Kristina Pechulis, Simmons World Challenge Coordinator, at [pechulis@simmons.edu](mailto:pechulis@simmons.edu).

## Simmons World Challenge 2020-2021 Course Proposal Guidelines

Please provide the following *six* sections in your course proposal for the Simmons World Challenge (SWC):

### 1. Course Overview:

Please include a detailed description of the global social problem to be addressed in the course, highlighting the particular facets that will be explored. Please also describe the pedagogical approach/philosophy that will be engaged in learning about and proposing solutions to this problem.

### 2. Faculty & Support Team:

*a. Core Faculty:* SWC courses are typically run by two or three core faculty. Core Faculty are responsible for framing the theme and developing the conceptual framework; recruiting and overseeing support faculty and teaching assistants; setting the broad agenda and daily schedule; and providing instruction in the program as it runs in the fall and in January.

Please include the names and areas of expertise of the Core Faculty members, and emphasize the areas to which each will contribute (i.e. content expertise, team-building facilitation, support of student proposals, etc.).

*b. Support Faculty:* SWC courses typically include five or six Support Faculty. Support Faculty give lectures or lead workshops; are available during the intersession program as resources and point persons for students, according to their areas of study, connections to community organizations and resources; and/or for mentoring on professional skills, project development and other student needs. SWC courses have also typically included several modules on teamwork to build and maintain functional and effective teams.

Core Faculty teams are not expected to have agreement from Support Faculty when submitting the proposal. However, please indicate the Support Faculty you would hope to invite for participation, demonstrating a strong interdisciplinary approach to the social problem, and indicate the contribution each would make.

*c. Teaching Assistants:* SWC courses typically include 1-2 full-time teaching assistants. Teaching Assistants are full members of the instructional team, providing support to the faculty team and working with and mentoring student teams to provide content-based support, guidance in developing proposals for actionable solutions, and evaluating and improving student morale and student-faculty relations.

Core Faculty teams are not expected to have agreement from Teaching Assistants when submitting the proposal. However, please indicate your plan for recruiting Teaching Assistants, including a description of their anticipated involvement.

*d. Community Partners:* SWC courses typically engage several community partners in different ways, including fieldtrips/site visits to community partner organizations; presentations or workshops on campus; and participation of organization staff as panelists reviewing proposal presentations. While it is not necessary to begin outreach to community partners prior to submitting your proposal, please indicate which community partners you hope to engage, and how they would contribute to the course.

*e. Other Support:* SWC courses typically include an embedded Librarian who provides research support to student teams. Some courses have also utilized Simmons Radio, the Communications Lab, including undergraduate TA support, for development of student proposal presentations and prototypes. Please describe any additional supportive roles that you hope to include in the course.

### **3. Course Objectives:**

All SWC courses should use the three SWC objectives, and may add additional objectives or learning outcomes as well. Although students do not receive course credit for the January portion of SWC, this is a learning experience for them. Please indicate how this course will achieve the following three, and any additional, learning objectives:

*Students will:*

1. Acquire a working knowledge of global social problem, including understanding of local and global social, economic, political and cultural dynamics and existing resources;
2. Develop practical organizational, technical, research and communication skills to work effectively and efficiently in teams; and,
3. Formulate a creative and actionable solution to address the global social problem.

### **4. Faculty Led Travel Course Component:**

All SWC courses include a travel component to be completed after the end of the Spring Semester. During this component of the SWC experience, student teams will partner with a community organization on site to develop actionable solutions for problems similar to those addressed during the January program, but in a different political, cultural, and economic context. Existing travel courses, as well as those currently being developed are ideal for SWC.

**Due to the short-term global experience portion of the Simmons World Challenge (SWC), all faculty proposals for 2021 Simmons World Challenge will be due by October 1, 2019.**

This initial proposal will include descriptions of the international travel component as well as the academic focus of the program. For the selected proposal, a more detailed application will be due by January 15, 2020 for the 2021 Simmons World Challenge. SWC proposals will follow the same steps outlined on the FLTC Proposal Page, located on Simmons' Center for Global Education's webpage.

### **5. Grading & Assessment Plan:**

SWC courses utilize a standard assessment approach that usually includes the elements detailed below, and faculty will be provided with tools for student instruction and assessment related to these core elements. In addition, faculty may choose to add other assessment elements and strategies. The proposal should demonstrate how these elements, and any others, will be incorporated into the course experience:

- a. Mid-Point Presentation:* During the January intersession, student teams present initial proposals or project management plans to fellow students, support and core faculty and TAs, as well as invited community partners serving as panelists to give students feedback on the feasibility of the project, any redundancies with existing supports/resources, and other input.
- b. Final Presentation:* On the final day of the January intersession, student teams present their revised, final proposals to the SWC community in a dress-rehearsal for community presentations to

follow during the spring semester. This is followed by course debriefing and evaluation, and then a celebratory dinner.

c. *Community Presentation:* In early spring, student teams present the final proposals to the larger Simmons community, often including Deans, the Provost, President Drinan, and other administrators. Additionally, outside partners may be invited, including from foundations, to provide real-world feedback on the fundability of the proposed projects.

d. *Final Paper:* Student teams complete a final joint paper that details their research and their final proposal for an actionable solution. The paper also may include a reflection from each student on the course experience.

e. *Team Work Assessment:* Each student is asked to assess their and their teammates' contributions to the team work components of the course. Faculty also complete an assessment of each student's teamwork and overall participation in the course.

## **6. Tentative Schedule:**

The proposal should provide a tentative schedule for the course experience, which should include three or four fall sessions for laying groundwork on content, community building, and team building, and independent pre-work; and a full schedule for a presumed ten-day intersession experience. Additional details are provided below:

a. *Fall Sessions:* SWC courses should meet, minimally, for three sessions, and at least eight hours, over the fall semester. We recommend that the meetings not take place on a regular day/time, as this may prevent some students from participating due to fall course obligations. Evening and Saturday meetings are particularly desirable in order to include as many students as possible.

b. *Pre-Work:* Students are typically assigned readings and some independent research to complete over the winter break (between finals and the start of the intersession course) to prepare for the intersession experience.

c. *Intersession:* SWC will occur during January intersession; students are required to reside on campus, and commuters move into housing on the Tuesday after Intersession starts. The program concludes on the Friday before school begins again, and includes one full weekend. Typically, during the first three or four days of the program, the entire course group meets for programmed sessions throughout the day, from roughly 8:00-5:00. Sessions include content workshops, skills workshops and other interactive modules and activities. As the intersession progresses, student teams work more independently (with mentor support and check-ins), but previous experiences demonstrate that structured whole-group sessions beginning the day, and at or after lunch, help to maintain a strong group dynamic and keep students on schedule. Traditionally, about 30% of the intersession is spent in structured sessions over the full intersession period. Faculty and TAs may also schedule social activities in the evenings over the intersession, and typically, a celebratory dinner occurs on the last day of the course.