Self-Designed Experience Proposal

**Guidelines**

* **Timeline**: Submit proposals and revisions to the UHP database by the 5th of each month. Proposals should be submitted one month prior to the expected start date of the experience. International travel experiences require at least two months’ notice.
* **Format**: Maintain the proposal format (e.g. headers, layout). Do not delete boxes.
* **Submission process**: Access the UHP Database (https://webapps.uc.edu/uchonorsstudent). Add a new record in the “Tracking Project” tab and upload your proposal document as an attachment (Word documents only – no PDFs).

***Note regarding Financial Aid and Honors Grants****: All proposals with a grant request are reviewed in collaboration with the Office of Student Financial Aid. There is no guarantee of grant funding nor of a specific grant amount. Honors grant awards are typically 20% or less of the approved budget. The quality of your proposal can also impact a grant award. Honors grants are posted to students' accounts as scholarships and can affect an individual student’s financial aid. Some students may not be eligible to receive a grant due to their financial aid status. If awarded an honors grant, students acknowledge full awareness of possible financial aid implications.*

**Independent International Travel**

If you are proposing travel independent of UC faculty, staff or a UC student group, you must submit your self-designed proposal by the following deadlines:

* October 5 – winter break experiences
* January 5 – spring break experiences
* March 5 – May/June experiences
* April 5 – July/August experiences
* June 5 – fall experiences

All independent, international honors experiences require a completed Worldwide Honors Experience application through UC International. UC International will verify successful completion of the application before an experience can be approved. Additionally, the Student Travel Policy restricts UC-sponsored travel to countries under a U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory. Those who wish to visit a country or area within a country with a **Level 3 or higher Travel Advisory Level** must seek an exemption through UC International. Students traveling without a faculty or staff leader must individually request an exemption. ***We cannot allow you to count this travel as an honors experience nor can we give you a grant without an approved exemption.*** See more information on the UHP international travel page.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK**

*Assumption of Risks: The honors experience and related experiential learning as described below may contain certain inherent risks that cannot not be eliminated. Aware of the risks, dangers, and hazards known and unknown to me, I agree individually, and on behalf of my heirs, successors, assigns and personal representatives, to* ***ASSUME AND ACCEPT ALL THE RISKS, DANGERS, HAZARDS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES*** *resulting in or arising from my participation in the experience.*

*Your e-signature, which will be completed in the UHP database prior to proposal submission, confirms that you acknowledge that you have read the entire proposal, that you understand its terms, that you have had the time and opportunity to read and ask questions regarding the proposal, you are fully aware of possible financial aid and tuition implications, and that you have signed it knowingly and voluntarily.*

**Basic Information**

Full Name: Shwetha Bindhu

Title of Experience: How to Read Intersectional Literature Like a Scholar

Competency/Competencies: Global Studies, Creativity

Expected Start Date: 9/1/2020

Expected End Date: 8/31/2021

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| **Personal Connection****Section must include:*** Explanation of why this experience matters to you
* Explanation of how this experience will help you progress toward becoming a global citizen scholar

*The current selection of literature taught in many high schools is mostly centered on white male experiences, from* The Tales of Huckleberry Finn *to* Hamlet*. This curriculum has remained stagnant for the past several decades, for a generation or more. The lack of diversity in our English syllabi becomes even more dire on the collegiate level, where many classes are bereft of literature studies in general. That is the case for STEM majors such as myself who are bombarded with courses that emphasize science and math without encouraging exploration of the people around us. Instead, we enclose ourselves in a bubble, with Hardy-Weinberg equilibrium and cobweb-ridden stories from high school English as our only companions.* *Of late, I have felt this gap in my knowledge more acutely. As an aspiring medical doctor, I am expected to have an appreciation and wholistic understanding of the human condition and the threads of complex societal factors through which the fabric of the healthcare system is woven. However, not only has my past and current education left this need unfulfilled, the stories that I have been asked to read do not reflect the society we live in today. Indeed, the past few months have shown us the danger of using the narrative of a single community to speak for the narratives of all communities. In order to fully understand the experiences of another group of individuals, you must be willing to hear about those stories. And, while I have criticized the education system thus far, this is the point where I admit my own fault: I have not taken the initiative to read and understand these stories myself.* *I hope to explore stories which will help me become a more broad-minded person--someone brave enough to consider diverse perspectives instead of staying safe in conventional understanding--and I hope to engage in a level of literary analysis I have craved for a long time.*Advisor Revisions/Feedback |

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| **Abstract****Section must include:*** Brief description of the experience and explanation of how you will reach the 75+ hours requirement
* Description of risks (if any) inherent in this experience and safety precautions you will take
* Itinerary, including locations and dates, for any travel experience

*In this project, I will spend the next 12 months reading and reflecting on a series of different fiction and nonfiction books. In order to understand how perspectives on different communities, movements, and individuals have evolved under the contexts of time and environment, each book has a counterpart. For example, as a parallel for Audre Lorde’s Sister Outsider, I am using Roxane Gay’s Bad Feminist. At the beginning and end of each month, I will write a reflective letter and throughout the month, I will keep a journal of quotes that will help me retrace the phrases that resonated with me. Additionally, I will meet with my advisor for this project, Dr. Cheli Reutter, every two months to discuss the books’ content as well as their larger impact. Since this project will take place over the course of several months, the time requirement will be fulfilled. There are no apparent risks or travel required. The works and the corresponding subjects are as follows:*1. *Sister Outsider by Audre Lorde: The Complexity of an Intersectional Identity*
2. *Bad Feminist by Roxane Gay: Feminism in the 21st Century*
3. *The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin: Race and Religion in American History*
4. *Between the World & Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates: The Persistent Struggle of Racism in America*
5. *The Namesake by Jhumpa Lahiri: The Facets of the Indian American Diaspora*
6. *Goat Days by Benyamin: The Malayali Immigrant*
7. *When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi: A Medical Practitioner’s Awareness of Death*
8. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman: Cultural Barriers in Medicine*
9. *Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe: Impact of Colonialism on Dismantling Existing Societies*
10. *Americanah by Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie: The Aftermath of Colonialism and the Diaspora*
11. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith: The Reality of Growing Up*
12. *The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros: The Reality of Growing Up*

Advisor Revisions/Feedback: |

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| **Advisor****Section must include:*** Experience advisor name and contact information
* Description of why advisor was selected
* Specific plans to engage with advisor

*Note: Advisor(s) should have knowledge or expertise in an area related to the experience and be able to help you craft your experience goals. Honors advisors, undergraduate students, and family members cannot be experience advisors.**My advisor for this project is Dr. Cheli Reutter (**reuttemm@ucmail.uc.edu**), whose areas of specialization include American and African-American literature and who co-founded the Medical Humanities minor at UC. Dr. Reutter has extensive experience in understanding and analyzing intersectional literature, which is the focus of this self-designed proposal. She is familiar with most of the titles I have listed. Over the course of the project, she and I will engage in several discussions regarding the books I have chosen and has offered to guide me in the analysis of the writing and content of these works so that I may improve my capacity to critically understand and discuss intersectional writing.*Advisor Revisions/Feedback: |

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| **Goals Related to Competency/Competencies:****Section must include:*** Two specific and measurable **experience** goals related to chosen competency/competencies outlining the intended results/outcomes/achievements
* Two specific **personal** goals related to chosen competency/competencies outlining how you hope to grow as a result of this experience
* Examples of activities and explanation of how each will assist in the progress toward the goals

*Experience goals:*1. *Produce a set of 12 reflective letters/papers (2 for each book) that show development of understanding of intersectional experiences and literature and progressively better critical thinking/writing abilities*
2. *Produce a journal of at least 120 quotes (10 from each book) that show reflections and key quotes from each narrative that also provides references for subsequent analyses of the writing*
3. *Produce an introductory reflection, halfway reflection, and final reflection for the project overall.*

*Personal goals:*1. *Improve my understanding of intersectional literature and experiences: this can be measured through the quality and depth of my writing and discussions with Dr. Reutter over the course of each month and over the course of the experience as I continually expand upon my knowledge of each topic of focus*
2. *Improve my ability to conduct critical analysis of literature: this can also be measured by the quality of my writing and discussion with Dr. Reutter. For several years, I have limited myself to scientific research writing, which will be evident in my initial papers. However, I hope to learn to incorporate more imagery, flow, and personality into my writing, as well as meaningful deductions and critiques of the subject material.*
3. *Improved understanding of my own history and place: I describe myself as a feminist, aspiring doctor, an immigrant, and an Indian American woman. These books were chosen not only because they foray unknown subjects but also because they are each tangential to my own identify, explicitly or implicitly. From these stories, I hope to see threads of connectivity to my own life and the journey that has brought me to my current state.*

Advisor Revisions/Feedback: |

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| **Academic Resources Connected to the Goals** **Section must include:*** Two to three academic resources connected to your goals
* Title and author of each resource
* Description of how resources will help make progress toward the goals

*Note: Academic resources are professional/academic works that can be used to assist your understanding of the topic. Some examples are books, research journals, documentaries, or videos.* 1. *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: this book discusses methods of literature analysis, especially on the interconnectedness of all narratives, and is a point of reference to improve my methods of critical analysis.*
2. *“Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics:” this essay coined the concept of intersectional theory and is a preliminary read in understanding the principles behind this movement to which many of these books contribute.*
3. *“Intersectionality as Method,” “Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory:” these articles analyze the progression of intersectional theory and its broadening impact on research methodology.*
4. *“Narrative Ethics,” by James Phelan: this article offers sample questions and reflections while conducting narrative analyses, especially on the intersection of narratives, moral values, ethics.*

Advisor Revisions/Feedback: |

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| **On-going Reflection****Section must include:** * Method for ongoing reflection
* List questions you plan to ask yourself to gauge your growth related to your goals as well as understanding of the selected competency/competencies

*The on-going reflection should help you process the experience and progress toward the goals you have identified.* *Note: A variety of methods can be used for reflection. Some examples are videos, drawings, blogs, songs, and journals.**My methods of reflection are threefold. First, I will compile quotes from each book in a journal as a means of self-reflection and tracking that I may look back on later to identify points that struck me as poignant and/or relevant as I read. Second, I will write an introductory reflection to the project and two final reflections at its halfway point and end. Additionally, I will write letters after I finish each book. These letters will include both personal ruminations on my expectations of the book and a preliminary understanding of the subject material as well as my analysis and subsequent reflection on the author’s intent, writing, and messages after I finish. Third, I will meet with Dr. Reutter every two months to discuss the counterpart books and correspond with her regularly regarding my thoughts and writings on the material. The meetings will serve as modes of reflection as well as periods of instruction on intersectional literary analysis. The following questions were taken and inspired by “Narrative Ethics.”*1. *What are the ethical dimensions of characters’ actions, especially the conflicts they face and the choices they make about those conflicts?*
2. *How does a narrative’s plot signal its stance on the ethical issues faced by its characters?*
3. *What key historical and cultural contexts shaped the background of this narrative?*
4. *How do narrative techniques help convey the author’s intents through the characters to the audience?*
5. *What are the ethical responsibilities the author holds toward the audience?*
6. *What are the implications of the point of view the author uses with regards to the narrative content and the audience perception?*
7. *What schools of thought, authors, or narratives does the author draw inspiration from?*

Advisor Revisions/Feedback: |

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| **Sharing Your Learning****Section must include:** * At least one method to actively share what you learned focused on growth connected to competency/competencies
* A specific audience and why the audience was selected

*While social media can be an effective platform for sharing, only posting on your learning portfolio or social media account(s) does not reach a targeted audience.* *I hope to share my growth and lessons learned from this experience by presenting them at the Global Citizen Scholar Showcase next fall. I hope to reach my advisors, friends, classmates, and the UC community through this sharing process. This campus and the people I have met here have taught me the importance of empathy and understanding diverse experiences. Through the course of this experience, I am putting those lessons into practice, and by sharing my growth at the end of it, I hope to inspire other individuals to pursue their own journey of expanding their horizon of understanding.* Advisor Revisions/Feedback: |

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| **Budget (if applicable)****Section must include:** * Itemized budget of expenditures with sources to justify estimates (review information on Honors Grants)

*The UHP no longer provides honors grants for unpaid research or internships. You can still complete these as honors experiences, but cannot receive a grant.**The materials for this proposal are not expendable, as any purchases I make will be of books that can be used after the experience ends.*Advisor Revisions/Feedback: |