Honors Self- Designed Proposal

Complete this proposal **prior** to your experience’s start date and upload it in the UHP Database (<https://webapps.uc.edu/uchonorsstudent>). Create an experience (“Add a new record”) in the “Tracking Project” tab and upload your proposal document as an attachment. The deadline for [submitting proposals](http://www.uc.edu/honors/experiences/experiencesubmission.html) is the 5th of each month (excluding July).

Proposals are intended to be well developed plans for your experience. However, experiences are exploratory in nature, and we are flexible with changes throughout the experience. If your experience changes after receiving approval on your proposal, contact your honors advisor to verify the changes still satisfy the requirements of an honors experience.

**Basic Information**  
Full Name: April McPherson

Title of Project: Photography Skills of an Engineer

Thematic Area(s): Creativity

Expected Start Date: January 11, 2015

Expected End Date: April 28, 2015

**`Guidelines**

1. Proposal submission timeline: Proposals should be submitted at least one month prior to the expected start date of the experience. International experiences require at least two months’ notice. Contact your honors advisor immediately for any exceptions.
2. Proposal length: While the quality of the proposal is most important, strong proposals are typically 3-4 pages single-spaced.
3. Proposal format: Please maintain the proposal format (e.g. headers, layout)
4. Time commitment: Experiences should consist of at least 75-90 hours of preparation, execution, and reflection. This is approximately equivalent to the commitment of honors seminars and pre-approved experiences.

**Requirements for International Travel**

All self-designed international travel experiences require two months’ notice and must be at least one week in length. You will need to provide a detailed itinerary (dates, locations and activities). If participating in independent travel (not with UC faculty, staff or student group), you must also fill out a [Worldwide: Honors Experience application](http://studyabroad.uc.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.ViewProgram&Program_ID=10217) via UC International.

Additionally, the [Student Travel Policy](http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/about/docs/university_policies/student_travel_policy.pdf) restricts UC-sponsored travel to countries under a [U.S. Department of State Travel Warning](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html). Those who wish to visit a country with a travel warning must seek an [exemption](http://www.uc.edu/international/study-abroad/applying-to-study-abroad/travel-restrictions---exemptions.html) 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.***

1. **Abstract**

*Briefly describe the experience. What makes this experience personally meaningful? What goals do you have for this experience? What is your timeline for this experience?*

*\*If you are proposing an international experience, provide an itinerary.*

*\*\*If you are developing this experience from an existing opportunity (class with a study tour, campus organization, co-op, etc.) that is not already an honors seminar or pre-approved experience, how will you differentiate your experience from what is already required of other students?*

This experience is focused on developing a new skill to channel and express my creativity. I have always been interested in photography, but only passively pursued the interest. For this experience, I will have the opportunity to develop and expand my creativity through learning photography. Developing this skill is personally meaningful because it is a hobby of which I can engage in throughout the rest of my life. Furthermore, in my brief experiences thus far with photography I have noticed that not only do you view the world around you differently through a camera lens, but I also find myself carrying over that attention to detail even when the camera is not around my neck.

The experience is designed around of the course, DAAP2011 Fundamentals of Photography Design for non-DAAP majors. The following is the course description, as listed on OneStop.

“Explore the visual fundamentals of photographic design. Learn how to effectively use f-stops, shutter speed, ISO, and the various modes of a digital camera to improve your photographs and communicate your ideas. Investigate compositional techniques as they relate to photographing people, the landscape, and movement. Discover how line, form, value, color, and texture can be organized to enhance visual communication and improve interpretation.”

For this experience, I have two primary goals. Firstly, I would like to learn how to functionally use the settings and options on my digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera so that I am not simply using automatic settings. I want to manually customize and alter the settings in order to produce unique and personalized photographs. Secondly, I would like to understand different concepts of design and what others consider to be characteristics of a “good” photograph. With this fundamental knowledge and ability to manually operate the camera, I can begin to develop my own photography style.

This experience will span the duration of the spring semester, with a weekly class lecture and several class assignments. In order to differentiate my experience from what is required for the class, I will develop an individual project that is additional to those required for the course assignments. This project will incorporate the concepts from lectures on the fundamentals of photography design as well as demonstrate my ability to integrate concepts with previous feedback from fellow students and the instructor on previous assignments. Not only will this project culminate the course materials and information into one final portfolio, it will document my experiences as a University of Cincinnati student and Cincinnati resident, since this is my final semester of undergrad. I will reflect upon my experiences and create an extensive list of events, places, people, and things that have influenced my experiences. I will then implement fundamental photography design principles and concepts learned in the course to document the items on my comprehensive written list. According to the course syllabus the professor has already provided me, this is not related to any course assignment and therefore, is an additional project unique for this Honors experience.

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| **Advisor Feedback** | | |
| Must Include:  Brief description of the experience  Personal connection to the experience  Identified goals for the experience  Timeline from start to finish  \*Itinerary (international experiences only)  \*\*Explanation of differentiated experience from what is required of other students | Required Revisions:  More information about your individual project specifically would be helpful. This may be something you need to wait to provide until the course commences, but if you can let me know with sufficient detail what exactly you plan to do that goes above and beyond the course requirements, that would be helpful. | Effective: |

1. **Experience Advisor**

*Identify an experience advisor and provide their contact information. Explain why you chose this person and how you plan to utilize your advisor for this experience.*

Note: Advisor(s) should have knowledge or expertise in an area related to the experience. Honors advisors, undergraduate students, and family members cannot be experience advisors.

The advisor for this experience will be the professor of the DAAP2011 course, Professor Thomas Strohmaier. He was chosen due to the weekly interactions that will occur during the duration of the course. I will utilize my advisor by learning the fundamentals of photography techniques and design during his lecture and implement this information in the field when taking my own photographs. Furthermore, I will rely on his comments and critiques of my work in order to improve my own skills and continue to broaden my perspective and creativity behind the lens.

Thomas Strohmaier

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| **Advisor Feedback** | | |
| Must Include:  Experience advisor name and contact information  Description of why advisor was selected  Specific plans to engage with advisor | Required Revisions: | Effective:  Great! |

1. **Connection to Learning Outcomes**

*List 3* [*learning outcomes*](#ThematicAreas) *from any thematic area(s). Provide specific activities you plan to engage in to help you make progress towards the chosen learning outcomes. Describe how you expect each activity to help your progress. Include an estimated time commitment for those activities.*

1. Discover new techniques to gain knowledge, consider options, make new connections, and ask questions.

I will be learning several new photography techniques as well as design concepts through the course lectures. Photography is a unique opportunity in that for every shot taken, there are infinite options to consider in angles, lighting, exposure, etc. Therefore, I will have many opportunities to practice and experiment with different options, integrating different techniques, and making connections between techniques to determine what results in a visually-aesthetic photograph.

As the semester progresses, I expect I will gain a better understanding of what the best options are in certain environments or situations I am shooting. Furthermore, I expect that I will grow more comfortable with my camera settings and will be able to better adapt as well as adjust more smoothly to changing conditions. These, I predict, will come with more practice and as I obtain more fundamental knowledge from course lectures. By making connections between concepts and options while completing required course assignments, I will be able to implement the best techniques and combinations when I capture my specific Cincinnati-reflection project photographs.

This learning outcome will be relevant for the entire duration of the experience.

1. Understand and optimize the use of people, technology, physical resources or community in a creative process.

Generally photography requires understanding and optimizing the use of people, technology, physical resources, or a community in the fact you have to a subject to shoot! Even shooting a blank piece of white paper requires a physical resource. However, I intend on utilizing all different types of subjects so that I can develop skills necessary to document a variety of environments and activities. I plan to shoot in a multitude of styles, including portrait, landscape, architecture, and action photography.

Again, this learning outcome will be relevant throughout the duration of the experience. I intend on determining when appropriate times to practice each style would be upon receiving the course syllabus at the beginning of the course, so that I can best utilize my time and knowledge for each style. Further, I will review my comprehensive experience list and establish the best times to capture different elements relative to when different concepts are reviewed throughout the course. Ideally, I will work on each element of the project after practicing each resource or concept for course assignments and receiving constructive feedback from the professor and classmates.

1. Explore a new creative competency/medium or seek new ways to engage an existing competency/medium.

Although photography is an old medium to some people, it is a new skill to me. Furthermore, since it is my last semester as an undergraduate student, I intend to use this as an opportunity to see this city and this university in a renewed perspective, from behind the lens. I would like to develop a story of my Cincinnati and my Bearcat experience through documentary photography. By utilizing the knowledge and skills I develop in conjunction with the photography course, I will develop my story, but relay it in a format that is different than I am accustomed to. As an engineering student, I typically am reporting literature, data tables, and plots, resulting in a presentation or manuscript. “A picture is worth 1,000 words,” I could easily write 1,000 words about these last four years, but for this experience I would like to solely focus on a visual presentation, no words.

This learning outcome will be specifically focused on during the latter half of the semester, once I have had time and opportunities to begin implementing the design concepts learned in the course and developing hands-on skills with the camera. The documentary style nature of my unique project adds an additional opportunity that is not required for the course (per the syllabus the professor has shared with me already).

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| **Advisor Feedback** | | |
| Must Include:  3 learning outcomes explicitly identified from any thematic area(s)  Examples of activities and explanation of how each will assist the progress towards the chosen learning outcome  Estimated time commitment for each activity | Required Revisions:  How will you specifically work to meet these outcomes outside of class? Perhaps once you’ve fleshed out the specific project you intent to complete (above and beyond the course requirements) these outcomes will be more clear | Effective: |

1. **Academic Resources Connected to the Learning Outcomes**

*List 1-2 academic resources you plan to use to enhance your understanding of the learning outcomes. Explain how each resource connects to your learning outcome(s) and helps you execute your experience. Please include the title and author/creator for each resource.*

Note: Academic resources are professional works that can be used to assist your understanding of the topic. Some examples are books, documentaries, videos, or research journals.

The primary academic resource for this experience will be the class materials presented by Professor Strohmaier during the weekly course lectures. The information presented will be critical for understanding the basics of photography and design concepts, which will be implemented and practiced for all course assignments, my Cincinnati portfolio specific to this experience, and finally future photography opportunities!

“Lens on Life: Documenting your World through Photography” (Stephanie Roberts) will be a great resource to review and obtain ideas for my final project in documenting my Cincinnati experience. This book focuses on documentary photography, and explains how to ‘capture an authentic view of your world.’ Reviewing a professional’s work and reading their styles and tricks will help develop my existing ideas that I have for documentary project. This resource will help ensure that I consider all facets and components necessary to fully capture what I see in a manner that my intended audience can understand my experiences for themselves.

Another academic resource I will utilize are tutorials for photo editing on Lynda.com. Lynda is an online education company that has thousands of video courses on a variety of topics. I will use basic photo editing tools to optimize the photographs for my documentary project, such as correcting lighting and color that may not have been adequately captured using the camera settings during the photo session. In addition to producing the best possible quality photographs for this specific project and future projects, learning the basics of photo editing will provide a foundation for potential future learning topics. After gaining confidence behind the lens, the next step of photography development is learning about the photo editing process. Thus, this will provide an opportunity for continued learning after this specific experience.

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| **Advisor Feedback** | | |
| Must Include:  1-2 academic resources connected to the learning outcomes  Title and author of each resource  Description of how resources will help make progress towards learning outcomes and execution of experience | Required Revisions: | Effective:  Wonderful resources. I’m sure you’ll find more throughout the duration of the course. If you can find something even more specialized such as “Photography for beginners” or “Photography for engineers” (it’s a long shot but worth a look) that might inform your perspective specifically a bit more. |

1. **On-going Reflection**

*The on-going reflection should help you process the experience and progress toward your chosen learning outcomes. Describe your method for reflecting throughout the experience. Indicate specific reflection questions/topics you plan to use to guide your reflective process.*

Note: A variety of methods can be used for on-going reflection. Some examples are videos, drawings, blogs, songs, and journals. Reflection topics to consider include your ideas/insights about the experience, connection to other areas of involvement, and your progress towards the learning outcomes.

Throughout the experience, I will document my experience first through taking detailed notes during course lectures. These notes will clearly demonstrate and document learning new techniques and principles of photography design. Secondly, while completing class projects and practicing implementing the techniques during photo sessions, I will keep a journal, highlighting several topics that include:

* What worked well
* What settings or modes I need to continue practicing or refining
* What settings I still cannot seem to master on my camera
* Any new photo ideas or topics that came to mind
* Design concepts I personally like

I will be able, then, to continually reference my development as a photographer and document my progress in improving certain skills. Furthermore, I will have specific meet with Professor Strohmaier about and request guidance or suggestions. Finally, in this journal I plan to keep track of the topics and potential objects I would like to capture for my documentary project.

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| **Advisor Feedback** | | |
| Must Include:  Method for ongoing reflection  Reflection questions/topics clearly specified | Required Revisions: | Effective:  I love the idea of journaling because so much of what you think during an experience gets lost if you don’t record it. This way you can look back and see how you progressed as a photographer and years from now see how you felt when you stepped out of your “comfort zone” |

1. **Sharing Your Learning**

*Describe how you plan to actively share what you’ve taken away from this experience with a targeted audience. Explain why you chose this specific audience.*

Note: While social media can be an effective platform for sharing, only posting on your personal learning portfolio or social media account(s) does not reach a targeted audience.

My ultimate goal is developing my “Cincinnati story”, displaying my experience these last four years as a Bearcat. I will be assembling these pieces into a photo book that will be displayed in the Honors Suite as well as one that I will keep as a personal portfolio to share with my friends and family. By displaying my work in the Honors Suite, I hope that it will provide inspiration to other Honors students to pursue experiences that involve passions they may not otherwise actively pursue developing. Moreover, it is my hopes that I will be able to document various campus and city locations and activities in a unique perspective that interest other students to explore for themselves what has profoundly impacted my experience. I have chosen my family and friends as an audience to share my experience it has immensely influenced my personal development, as I have grown from a passive 18-year old high school graduate to a confident, independent female engineer. Furthermore, I will continue to share my experience during various activities and events I work as an Honors Ambassador.

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| **Advisor Feedback** | | |
| Must Include:  At least one method to actively share take-aways/learning from the experience  A specific audience and why the audience was selected | Required Revisions: | Effective:  Great idea. You might even ask your professor if your work could be used to inform other engineering students about the availability of the course. |

1. **Budget (if applicable)**

*Provide an itemized budget and indicate your source for cost information.*

*\*If you are engaged in an unpaid internship or research, please indicate the number of weeks and hours per week you plan to participate.*

The following items are requested to help offset the cost of printing and displaying project presentations.

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| **Item** | **Source** | **Budget Requested** |
| 8x10 prints (14) | CVS Photo | 56.00 |
| 4x6 prints (42) | CVS Photo | 13.00 |
| 8x10 photo mats (14) | Michaels Store | 60.00 |

The following items are for developing and printing the overall project item for this experience, my Cincinnati experience portfolio that will be displayed in the Honors suite and a personal copy.

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| **Item** | **Source** | **Budget Requested** |
| “Lens on Life” book | Amazon | 25.00 |
| Photo books (2) | CVS Photo | 60.00 |

**Total budget requested $214**

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| **Advisor Feedback** | | |
| Notes:  Detailed budget of expenditures with sources to justify budget estimates  \*Indicates the number of hours per week and number of weeks of participation | Required Revisions: | Effective:  We encourage you to check the “Lens on Life” book out at the library and instead of making two copies of your photo book, you can share the file with us to save cost. |

**Thematic Area Learning Outcomes**

**Learning Outcomes for the Community Engagement Thematic Area:**

By engaging in this thematic area, you will make progress towards learning how to…

* Identify and differentiate multiple ways to contribute towards the development or achievement of the community’s goals.
* Develop a thorough understanding of the world view, beliefs, experiences, self-consciousness, or history of community members through collaboration.
* Articulate the purpose of service on a social issue or public policy and how service mutually enhances individual growth and the common good.
* Explain how education, advocacy, mobilization, or public policy can influence social issues and transform communities.

**Learning Outcomes for the Creativity Thematic Area:**

By engaging in this thematic area, you will make progress towards learning how to…

1. Discover new techniques to gain knowledge, consider options, make new connections, and ask questions.
2. Explore a new creative competency/medium or seek new ways to engage an existing competency/medium.
3. Understand and optimize the use of people, technology, physical resources or community in a creative process.
4. Articulate the broader significance of a creative project and the value of its contributions.

**Learning Outcomes for the Global Studies Thematic Area:**

By engaging in this thematic area, you will make progress towards learning how to…

* Develop practical travel skills that promote safe, stimulating, and productive travel throughout your life.
* Summarize the interconnectedness of geography, history, cultural traits and world issues.
* Articulate the interdependence of professional fields to address current and impending global issues such as technology, the environment, human rights, or politics.
* Demonstrate an understanding of cultural diversity by acknowledging the impact of their own identity and the experience of social norms, customs, or beliefs that are different from their own.
* Demonstrate a sense of empathy, respect, and appreciation for others to build meaningful cross-cultural collaborations toward mutual growth and prosperity.

**Learning Outcomes for the Leadership Thematic Area:**

By engaging in this thematic area, you will make progress towards learning how to…

* Formulate and manage a shared vision and develop goals towards its achievement.
* Motivate and collaborate effectively with others towards completion of shared projects or goals.
* Develop strategies to identify and respond to challenges and obstacles.
* Identify personal strengths and areas of growth and evaluate opportunities to maximize skills and abilities.
* Synthesize the current trends related to a specific issue or field and evaluate how thought-leaders are currently addressing them.

**Learning Outcomes for the Research Thematic Area:**

By engaging in this thematic area, you will make progress towards learning how to…

* Demonstrate the ability to locate, interpret, and critically evaluate primary sources appropriate to field.
* Identify and apply appropriate methods to collect and organize data for analysis.
* Analyze and interpret the meaning of results.
* Produce dissemination appropriate to the field in order to share the results or impact of the research.
* Articulate the broader significance of the research project and its relationship to other fields, research and ideas.