Introduction

Summer Session at the University of Chicago welcomes over 1000 academically talented high school and undergraduate students from around the world each summer to participate in intensive study within our unique scholarly environment alongside our own College students. The Summer Session Office hires faculty, lecturers, and senior lecturers to teach Summer Quarter undergraduate courses in a variety of subjects, as well as specially designed courses for pre-college students. For more information about Summer Session programs, visit summer.uchicago.edu.

Summer Teaching

Summer Session at the University of Chicago is administered out of the College, and seeks proposals for two different types of courses for Summer 2021:

- **Summer Quarter undergraduate courses**, which are part of the regular College curriculum, and
- **Pre-college courses**, which are especially designed for high school students ready to tackle undergraduate-level material

All Summer Session courses are taught in an intensive format, which means that they cover the amount of material usually covered in a ten-week quarter in a shorter amount of time (either three or five weeks; see individual descriptions below for session lengths). People who teach during the summer tell us they appreciate the intensive schedule, as it allows them to still have a good portion of the summer remaining to dedicate to research, writing, and travel after their course is over. For remotely taught courses, the intensive format allows for more flexibility in scheduling, which better accommodates students in different time zones, and instructors may teach from any location.

For those on 9-month appointments, all Summer Session teaching is considered extra service, whether you are a postdoctoral fellow, lecturer, or faculty member. This means that it does not count towards contractual service obligations for lecturers, senior lecturers, and faculty. It does mean, however, that you will receive additional compensation for your teaching, above and beyond your annual salary or stipend. Those on 12-month appointments should consult with their department supervisor and HR staff regarding summer teaching, which may not be compensated as extra service.

Because they involve more contact hours, certain pre-college courses provide remuneration at a higher level than standard Summer Quarter courses.
How to Propose a Summer Course

• Ask your department, committee, or program office about their individual curricular needs, criteria, and procedures regarding undergraduate course offerings, and use that information to inform what course you decide to propose. For pre-college, review the current offerings listed at summer.uchicago.edu to make sure you are not proposing something that is already offered.

• Read both sections below about undergraduate and pre-college courses carefully as you consider what course to propose, so that you are sure to meet the needs and interests of the target audience. For those interested in testing out new course ideas, you might find that your proposal fits the pre-college population better than the undergraduate one.

• When submitting your proposal, postdoctoral fellows, research associates, and other academic or administrative personnel must provide proof from your supervisor or department chair that you are pre-approved to take on additional teaching duties during the summer. This can simply be an email that says you are approved to teach if your proposal is selected.

• Provide a CV, which is required by the Provost’s office of all non-faculty summer hires. If you are a departmental administrator submitting a course that doesn’t yet have an instructor assigned, just upload a document that says “Instructor TBD.”

• Your proposal form must be accompanied by a draft syllabus. You do not need to plan the course day by day at this stage, but you should provide a title; a clear idea of what concepts, readings, and activities will constitute the course; and a description of student learning outcomes.

Submit your online course proposal form, draft syllabus, a copy of your current CV, and pre-approval to teach (if required) to the Summer Session Office by October 19, 2020:

https://tinyurl.com/SummerSessionCourseProposal

Applicants will be notified in early November whether or not your course will be offered. The Summer Session Office will then work with you and the appropriate department, committee, or program office to finalize details regarding your course offering.

If you have questions about the course proposal process at any point, contact Sarah Lopez, Assistant Director of Academic Programs, at slopez@uchicago.edu.

Undergraduate Courses

During the summer, the majority of College students do not take classes unless they have a compelling reason to do so, such as completing a required course so they can graduate on time, retaking a course, or studying abroad in the coming year. Since the student population is smaller than during other quarters of the academic year, the number of courses offered is reduced accordingly, and preference is given to course offerings that will best serve student needs.

Simply put, electives rarely draw student enrollments during the summer, no matter how compelling the topic. Strong preference is given to Summer Quarter undergraduate course offerings that fulfill a major or degree requirement in the College.

How do you determine if your proposed course might be a fitting addition to the Summer Quarter? You should be able to answer “Yes” to more than one of the questions below:

☐ Does it fulfill a Core or major requirement, especially one which students have trouble fulfilling?
☐ Is it a course which is often oversubscribed or very full?
☐ Is it a course that students might want to take at a time when they can focus on it with fewer distractions?
Is it the sort of course which is offered at many different institutions, so that a visiting undergraduate student could likely transfer credit from UChicago to his or her home institution?

Does this course showcase well-known strengths of this University or otherwise appeal to students from other institutions who would be looking for an opportunity to study here?

Is the department, committee, or division which offers the course willing and able to help recruit students to take the course?

Need to Consult About Your Proposal?

Talk to your department or committee chair or director of undergraduate studies about the suitability of your proposal, as they should have a good sense of what undergraduate courses fit the parameters described. You can also contact Summer Session Director of Academic Programs Stephanie Friedman at sfriedmn@uchicago.edu to discuss your course ideas.

Undergraduate Schedule Options and Dates for Summer 2021

If you propose an undergraduate course, you will be asked about scheduling information (dates, days, and times). Summer Quarter consists of four sessions:

- Session I: 3-week courses, June 21 – July 9, 2021; no class July 5
- Session I: 5-week courses, June 21 – July 23, 2021; no class July 5
- Session II: 3-week courses, July 12 – July 30, 2021
- Session III: 5-week courses, July 26 – August 27, 2021
- Session IV: 3-week courses, August 2 – August 20, 2021

All undergraduate courses in The College must meet for a minimum of 30 contact hours. During Summer Quarter, this means a 3-week course should meet for a minimum of 10 hours per week and a 5-week course for 6 hours per week. Stand-alone course offerings (meaning those not part of a sequence) can be scheduled for session I or session II; sessions III and IV are for continuations of courses offered in sequence (such as Organic Chemistry or Self, Culture, and Society).

When you fill out your form, request the meeting days and times you would prefer, but please be aware that you might be asked to make changes, such as teaching in the afternoon rather than the morning, or in a different session, as we try to balance the overall schedule.

You will also be asked if you would like to teach your course in-person, online, or have no preference. We intend to offer a mix of in-person and remotely taught courses for Summer Quarter 2021; if circumstances are such that the university mandates that all courses must be taught remotely, then the Summer Session Office will consult with instructors and determine which courses will continue to be offered in that format.

TAs may be hired if warranted by course enrollment and pedagogical needs. You will be notified about the TA nomination process if your course is selected.

Pre-college Courses

Teaching a pre-college course is a great opportunity for those interested in deepening their teaching experience, as you design and teach your own course for academically advanced high school students from around the world who are ready to study at the undergraduate level and who want to experience life as a College student at the University of Chicago. Every year, faculty and lecturers alike tell us that some of their favorite teaching experiences have been working with the pre-college programs, which allow them to be creative pedagogically and to open up their fields of study to bright, ambitious young scholars.
Pre-college Students

Participants in pre-college programs (rising 10-12 grades, mostly ages 15 through 17) gain entrance through a competitive admissions process, live in a university residence hall for the duration of their program, and are overseen by a dedicated residential program staff (composed mostly of UChicago College students) outside of class.

Overall, more than 1 in 10 Summer Session pre-college participants eventually matriculate in The College, so these courses serve as powerful pipelines into The College and individual departments.

Pre-college students apply to specific courses, and are admitted based on their academic readiness for that course, as well as their particular interest in the course subject matter.

Pre-college students are enrolled in only one course during their three weeks here, during which they engage in traditional classroom activities like lecture and discussion, but also in hands-on experiences like labs, field observations, field trips, guest lectures, and group projects, all of which provide access to the rich resources available on campus and throughout the city. Pre-college programs allow students to “test drive” the university, and help them make decisions about their future academic and professional paths.

Pre-college Courses

We are seeking course proposals for the UChicago Immersion program, which has two curricular models:

- A 3-week deep dive into a specific topic, taught by one instructor or two co-instructors; e.g., The Physics of Stars, Developmental Psychology, Happiness in Western Thought and Culture.
- A 3-week broad exposure to a field, usually taught by a team of two or more instructors (one of whom serves as the Lead Instructor who coordinates the curriculum components and teaching team) from a particular department or program; e.g., Pathways in World Politics, Pathways in Human Rights. This could also be an interdisciplinary course with instructors from different departments.

Pre-college courses allow for a wider variety of potential themes and topics to be covered than is often possible in summer quarter undergraduate courses. When deciding on a topic, consider what would be both interesting and accessible to these students, and is not something already represented in our pre-college offerings. To further expand our variety of offerings, we are especially interested in proposals in the following subjects:

- Computer Science
- Physics
- Mathematics
- Social Sciences
- Interdisciplinary Sciences

For more information on pre-college programs and the full list of existing courses, visit summer.uchicago.edu to review our Summer 2020 offerings.

How Pre-college Compares to Undergraduate Teaching

Immersion courses are not “high school” courses, despite the age of the students enrolled in them. They have course numbers assigned by an appropriate department or program, and carry 100 units of credit, like regular undergraduate courses do. Their participants are registered students of the university with the same access to university facilities as College students (except where precluded by their legal status as minors). They receive a quality letter grade, which is recorded on an official university transcript maintained by the Registrar’s Office. Most importantly, they are expected to tackle undergraduate-level material in their readings, labs, essays, and other assignments.

In terms of what you can expect from them academically, pre-college students:

- are not very different from first quarter, first-year students.
- have the ability to take on undergraduate-level material, but need some additional scaffolding as they make the transition to working in an undergraduate environment, with its different expectations and structure.
- specifically applied for the courses they are enrolled in, so they bring carefully vetted academic qualifications as well as focused interest in the subject, making them exceptionally motivated and enthusiastic learners.

In addition, given the greater number of contact hours, it is important that the daily schedule for pre-college courses include a variety of teaching modalities, providing a mixture of lecture, small group work and discussion, and other forms of active engagement.
What Experienced Pre-College Instructors Have to Say About Summer Teaching

Rich Kron (Astrophysics):

The students are excellent and already motivated. It is rewarding to watch the cohort take shape and help each other as the course progresses, i.e. seeing the social dynamics acting in a positive way to achieve the academic goals. The summer course I teach is similar to PHSC 12700, a core course, which I also teach. PHSC 12700 is designed for non-science students. The summer course, by contrast, includes students ready to use math and computers and analyze data, so the summer course is tailored to exercise and develop those skills and interests. The intensive format means that the instructor has all of the students’ attention for the period of time, which means the instructor can depend on what was accomplished an hour ago to be remembered for the next hour or next day. This in turn allows projects to be extended from one day to the next, for example, giving a lot of flexibility.

Christopher Schonbaum (Biological Sciences):

The extended period of interaction each day and the ability to meet daily allows us to do experiments that we can’t do very easily during the school year. Typical once a week undergraduate labs are disruptive, especially when working with living organisms. In RIBS, we can have students perform experiments in a more natural manner, and similar to the way they would perform experiments in a research lab. An experiment that might stretch out for several weeks in an undergraduate lab can be done in three days in the summer. The experiment is fresh in their minds and we can more easily discuss outcomes as a class. Moreover, the summer students can carry out experiments that are not possible during the school year. In RIBS, the students perform experiments on cancer cells that require daily observations and follow-up. In addition, in undergraduate courses, students are often asked to design an experiment but there is not time to actually do the experiment. In the summer course, the students not only design experiments but they have the opportunity to carry out the experiments and test their hypotheses.

One other aspect of the summer course that I find appealing is that the students are all excited about studying biology and in general, are eager to talk about science. They are taking the course and spending all day in lab because they want to be here, not because it is a requirement. The students have lots of interesting questions based on something they read in the news and because of the extended day, we have time to digress and talk about science topics other than what was scheduled.

Katherine O’Doherty (Psychology):

I love working with the high school students! The group is typically very diverse and includes many international students — so we have many different perspectives brought to the classroom. Their diverse educational experiences really enrich our discussions. I enjoy the high school students’ enthusiasm and excitement for the future — particularly when they begin collecting and analyzing the data for their research project. They work so hard to finalize the methodology and when they get to put it into practice, collect actual data from human subjects, and present the results they are thrilled.

The content and assignments are actually quite similar to my college courses, what differs greatly is the timing. Having a full day of class 5 days a week for 3 weeks straight is really different from the school year and very fun. I do get to incorporate longer videos in the summer, which are great in psychology courses, I just don’t often have time to show them during the school year. I would say the research project is a fun summer assignment that only works because we have time each afternoon to meet individually with each group to plan and implement their study, analyze the data, etc. It is really fun to end the class with their research presentations — it feels like a real celebration of learning.

David Reid (Physics):

I find the students to be the most appealing aspect of the course. They are very eager to learn and work hard and no complaints if the course is challenging. They want the challenge. For this program, because of the length of the class periods, I definitely plan things differently. I spend much more time with students working on things, and on in-class discussions, than I would during the regular year. The main thing I am able to do is to have much more in-depth discussions because of the longer class period. Another less conventional assignment students really enjoy in the intensive summer class is to give them a quiz in the form of a game; it takes 90 minutes, and so doesn’t work well in a normal class.
Pre-College Schedules

Immersion courses meet during one of two sessions, and have 13 class days:

- Session I: Monday, June 21 – Thursday, July 8, 2021; no class July 5
- Session II: Tuesday, July 13 – Thursday, July 29, 2021

All pre-college courses meet daily Monday through Friday, usually from 9:00am to 3:00pm with a 90-minute lunch break, although the daily schedule can vary at times depending on that day’s activities (such as a field trip or group projects). Both sessions end on a Thursday, with students departing campus on Friday morning. When you fill out your proposal form, request the session you would prefer, but please be aware that you might be asked to teach in a different session, as we try to balance the overall schedule.

Pre-college courses are usually taught in person, and most students live on campus. If circumstances lead the university to shift all classes to remote instruction again, the Summer Session Office will consult with instructors and determine which courses will still be offered in that format.

FAQs

Can you provide some examples of hands-on learning activities?

- Using Lexus-Nexus to write a formal legal brief
- Sequencing a portion of a bacterial gene
- Curating your own museum exhibition
- Writing a computer program that plays chess
- Conducting an observational study of the psychology of crowds
- Writing a research paper on an unmet clinical need, and proposing a solution for it

How do I fill four-and-a-half to five hours of instruction per day in pre-college courses?

In such an intensive program, it is important to vary the type and style of instruction and academic engagement throughout the day, mixing direct instruction with small group work, discussion, and actively engaging projects and assignments that can be initiated or completed by students in class. Additional enhancements such guest speakers or academic field trips should also be scheduled during the academic day.

The typical schedule is class from 9:00am to 11:30pm, a lunch break from 11:30pm to 1:00pm, then class again from 1:00pm to 3:00 or 4:00pm.

Do I need to have experience teaching high school students to be eligible to teach a pre-college course?

No. While we do require candidates to have some undergraduate teaching experience, those who do not have experience with pre-college students but have strong interest in gaining that experience will also receive full consideration.

I have a colleague from another university who is interesting in summer teaching opportunities. Will you consider proposals from those not currently affiliated with the University of Chicago?

Yes. Proposals from both affiliates and non-affiliates, especially those with strong teaching records, are encouraged and will receive full consideration.

Course Proposal Submission Deadline: October 19, 2020

- To ask a question about the proposal process, contact Sarah Lopez at slopez@uchicago.edu
- To request a consultation on your proposed curriculum, contact Stephanie Friedman at sfriedmn@uchicago.edu