

SIDECAR FACULTY MANUAL

2020-2021



*Interdisciplinary Exploration and Scholarship Fellowship
A project of the Institute for the Liberal Arts*

WHAT IS A SIDECAR COURSE?

A Sidecar course is a one-credit pass/fail course taught by two faculty from different departments to address a point of connection between two “parent” courses they are currently teaching. Faculty from each course collaborate to develop a one-credit course taught during the same semester that integrates aspects of each parent course in an innovative way. Students enrolled in each of the two parent courses can enroll in the sidecar course for an additional academic credit. After priority is given to students in the parent courses, other students may enroll with permission of the instructors. These courses are designed to facilitate innovative interdisciplinary teaching, including experiential and community outreach components, and to create spaces for intellectual risk and exploration for both faculty and students. One or two teaching assistants from the Interdisciplinary Exploration and Scholarship (IDEAS) Fellowship join each Sidecar course to help faculty plan and instruct. They also provide additional perspectives on interdisciplinary learning and connect the course to the larger Emory community.



WHY ARE SIDECARS IMPORTANT?

Sidecar courses were explicitly developed to achieve four specific goals regarding innovative, integrative, and interdisciplinary undergraduate experiences, including:

1

To facilitate interdisciplinary faculty team-teaching across diverse disciplines and perspectives; to increase faculty awareness, interest and skills in providing a broad interdisciplinary framework for their students.

2

To cultivate relationships both between faculty across the college and between faculty and students as collaborators in creating shared learning environments, and in this way, to flatten traditional hierarchies.

3

To increase and support both faculty and student access to experiential and community components in their curricular choices.

4

To provide a space where students can take intellectual risks to explore new areas of study, learn multiple perspectives on an issue or problem, and approach learning in new ways.

As opt-in courses, Sidecars present unique opportunities to faculty, teaching assistants, and students to engage with topics they care about in an environment of like minds.

HOW DO I CREATE A SIDECAR COURSE?

The origin of all Sidecar courses is a point of connection between existing courses. Faculty may already recognize such a connection and have the motivation to further explore it, or IDEAS Fellows (potential TAs) may suggest connections to faculty whose classes they have taken. Existing relationships between faculty members are often the best places to begin exploring ideas for Sidecar courses.



Some examples of previous Sidecar course titles and their parent departments are:

- “Your Brain on Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Evidence in Political Speech” – English and Psychology
- “African Futures in Verbal and Visual Arts” – Art History and English
- “Bodies in Space: Dancing Dynamical Systems” – Theatre and Mathematics

A call for proposals for Sidecar courses is circulated to all Emory College and Oxford faculty shortly after the Course Atlas goes live each semester. The call will ask for a brief description of the proposed course format and meeting times.

Class meeting patterns can be innovative and flexible, to allow for experiential learning. For example, previous Sidecars have included Saturday field trips or longer meetings for half the semester. It is essential however that the class has fifteen contact hours in order to meet the one-credit requirement and that students are able to attend all sessions (for example, a student who has another class during the meeting time of the proposed Sidecar cannot be given permission to register).

The call for proposals also asks if the instructors already know IDEAS Fellows who would be appropriate as TAs for the Sidecar; if not the IDEAS Fellowship will match a fellow to the instructors of the Sidecar.

Once the Sidecar proposal is approved, the ILA will list the course in the Course Atlas/OPUS at the designated meeting time and registration is on a permission-only basis (further registration details, below).

Faculty are each compensated \$1,000 per Sidecar course, payable at the end of the semester.

How do I identify an IDEAS Fellow as my TA and what is the role of the TA?

Once a Sidecar class is approved for a subsequent semester, selection and/or solicitation of an appropriate IDEAS Fellow to serve as TA for the class will be discussed in the weekly meeting of the IDEAS Fellowship, which includes 28 selected undergraduates and the five regular ILA faculty members. One or two IDEAS Fellows with similar interests or experience with the topic will be suggested as teaching assistants for the course to help navigate course planning and organization. Faculty sponsoring the Sidecar can express their preference for particular fellows, if they are familiar with members of the fellowship; in some cases, the fellows themselves may have suggested the idea of the Sidecar and would thus be naturally suited as IDEAS TAs. ILA faculty will facilitate introductions between Sidecar course faculty and suggested IDEAS TAs, if need be.

Sidecar IDEAS TAs serve a purpose distinct from a typical undergraduate TA. In accordance with the second goal of Sidecar courses, IDEAS TAs are critical collaborators in the design and weekly pedagogy of a Sidecar course. IDEAS TAs should be involved in planning course sessions, creating learning goals for students, leading discussion, and proposing topics and pedagogical strategies. IDEAS TAs receive payment or academic credit for their work with Sidecar courses. Faculty and IDEAS TAs will meet as soon as possible after the approval and listing of the Sidecar course topic to begin planning specific components of the course. Weekly meetings between faculty instructors and IDEAS TAs are encouraged. It is expected that faculty instructors and IDEAS TAs will attend all meetings of the Sidecar class.

Do I need a syllabus for the Sidecar course and what should it include?

Yes. Like any course, a syllabus should be distributed and supplied for ILA files. The syllabus should be available to interested students at the time of registration and include, at minimum, the following:

1. Course description and learning outcomes

Faculty and IDEAS TAs should work together to determine students' learning outcomes or objectives of a Sidecar course, and it should be evident how meeting times and activities relate to such goals.

Faculty and IDEAS TAs should also discuss the IDEAS TAs' own objectives for the course. Since this is an opportunity to experience planning and instructing a course with mentorship, it is helpful for IDEAS TAs' professional development if there are separate learning objectives for them.

2. Hours requirement

To fulfill the requirements for a one-credit, pass/fail class, Sidecar courses must meet for a total of fifteen hours of instruction during the semester. These hours do not necessarily need to be filled through weekly meetings. For example, if a field trip to a location related to the topic lasted for four hours, those four hours count towards the fourteen hours requirement. Faculty and IDEAS TAs can determine the structure of how these hours are filled in whatever manner they deem appropriate for the content of the course from weekly meetings to field trips. Students should be informed of all Sidecar meeting dates and times during course registration.

3. Attendance policy and makeup work

Each Sidecar course syllabus should include an attendance policy and requirements for makeup work if a student misses a scheduled meeting. Students should be informed that they risk receiving an unsatisfactory grade in the course if they do not attend class meetings or complete makeup work as directed.

Student registration

Registered Sidecar courses will be listed in Emory's Course Atlas as soon as possible after the Sidecar course is approved. Students enrolled in parent classes will be given priority to enroll in the associated Sidecar course. Faculty should advertise the related Sidecar course to each parent class and provide students with a syllabus for the Sidecar course during add/drop/swap. IDEAS TAs can also visit each parent class to provide an overview of Emory's ILA, their role as an IDEAS Fellow TA, and answer questions about the course itself. Names of interested and eligible students should be collected by the sponsoring instructors and supplied to Ms. Litisha Cooper in the ILA office, who will directly register the students into the Sidecar class. Please contact Ms. Cooper at litisha.m.cooper@emory.edu.

After all students in the parent classes are given the opportunity to enroll in the Sidecar course, the faculty may elect to allow other Emory undergraduates to enroll in it if appropriate. Names should be communicated to Ms. Cooper, as described above.

It is important that the registration process be completed before the end of add/drop/swap.

Sidecar courses are typically most successful when about ten and no greater than fifteen students enroll, but the class size is up to the discretion of faculty and IDEAS TAs.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES IN EACH CLASS MEETING AS A SIDECAR INSTRUCTOR?

Sidecar courses challenge traditional pedagogical methods. They are a collaboration between faculty, IDEAS TAs, and students and provide a chance for everybody to learn from each other. While faculty initiate and instruct Sidecar courses, IDEAS TAs are also involved in planning and instructing. Further, students' individual interests should be considered as the semester progresses to allow for maximum participation.

Including IDEAS TAs

It is the responsibility of faculty to ensure that IDEAS TAs are included in planning, organizing, and instructing appropriate class meetings. Faculty should work together to make the final decisions in curriculum and plans. The core of Sidecar courses are the topics of overlap between the two sponsoring classes. IDEAS TAs should be coached to become familiar with such topics, so that they can suggest student perspectives on pedagogy and extensions of the questions that will lead to lively discussion and shared experiences in the class.

Student engagement

Sidecar courses support students in their intellectual pursuits inside and outside the classroom. In accordance with the fourth goal of Sidecar courses, we encourage faculty members to create spaces where students learn in new ways and leave with newfound abilities to think and solve problems in interdisciplinary ways. To make the most of students' time and experience in a Sidecar course, we encourage faculty and IDEAS TAs to ask students for their interests about the topic, motivation for taking the class, and their own objectives for their learning experience.

For additional questions, concerns, and troubleshooting, please visit the ILA website at ila.emory.edu/IDEAS or contact Dr. Kim Loudermilk, Director of the IDEAS Fellowship: klouder@emory.edu.