Primary Syllabus

URCA 290: Mentored Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity

Catalog Description: Zero-credit individualized project in faculty-mentored research, scholarly, or creative activity, intended for non-curricular or co-curricular scholarly engagement.

Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor who will mentor the student.
Note: Requires concurrent enrollment in at least 6 credit hours.

Course Description: In URCA 290, students participate in mentored research or creative activity under the guidance of a faculty member. Projects may originate from faculty-led research programs, funded undergraduate research initiatives, or student-initiated scholarly/creative projects approved by the mentor. Work may involve data collection, creative production, scholarly inquiry, literature review, or other forms of discipline-appropriate academic engagement.

Because the course carries zero credits, expectations and workload are determined individually by the faculty mentor and tailored to the nature of the project.

Students may not enroll in URCA 290 for work that is already being counted toward academic credit in another course. URCA 290 is intended only for mentored scholarly or creative work that does not otherwise appear on the academic transcript.

Student Learning Outcomes: Regardless of discipline or project type, students who complete URCA 290 will be able to:

1. Describe the purpose and goals of their mentored project within the context of the discipline or creative field.
2. Engage in discipline-appropriate scholarly or creative practices, such as inquiry, design, data collection, production, analysis, or revision.
3. Demonstrate responsible and ethical conduct relevant to the project (e.g., research ethics, studio safety, professional standards).
4. Communicate aspects of their work through one or more formats such as written summaries, creative documentation, progress updates, or mentor meetings.
5. Reflect on the learning experience, including skills developed, challenges encountered, and connections to academic or professional goals.

Additional objectives may be defined by the faculty mentor according to disciplinary norms.

Course Rationale: Many undergraduate research and creative experiences occur outside formal coursework (e.g., paid research assistantships, volunteer scholarly projects, non-curricular programs, creative productions, Teacher-Scholar Program). These experiences provide meaningful training but typically do not appear on the academic transcript.

URCA 290 provides a standardized mechanism for students across all disciplines to document mentored scholarly or creative engagement. The course also enables faculty to record and report their individualized mentoring, supporting accurate documentation of mentoring contributions.

Course Content, Format, and Bibliography: Content will vary depending on the project and discipline. The mentor determines:

- Expected activities
- Meeting schedule
- Materials/readings
- Project-specific requirements (e.g., documentation, progress reports, creative drafts, laboratory procedures, fieldwork, design iterations)

Because this is a zero-credit individualized course, the format may include independent work, one-on-one meetings, laboratory or studio time, fieldwork, or other forms of mentored engagement.

No textbook is required unless specified by the mentor.

Evaluation and Documentation of Progress: As a zero-credit individualized experience, evaluation is based on the satisfactory completion of activities agreed upon by the student and faculty mentor.
Assessment may include:

- Participation in project activities
- Completion of assigned tasks or milestones
- Professional conduct and reliability
- Reflective writing or meetings
- Any additional project-specific deliverables

Students will have the opportunity to participate in formal evaluation of the course and instructor at the end of the term.