

Request for Faculty Proposals: Courses incorporating a technology sabbatical For Summer 2024

Digital technology and communications now permeate our lives and the lives of our students. Many students text or monitor their social media feeds even while studying or in class, and turn to their phones to fill any spare moment. Obviously, checking phones or surfing the internet during class can directly affect learning and comprehension. But the constant connection to phones and other devices throughout the day can also have far-reaching cognitive and emotional effects, such as diminishing the ability to sustain focused attention, interfering with relationships, and impairing sleep.

Recognizing that the intensive, short format of summer session provides a good opportunity for students to develop a more thoughtful relationship to their devices, **the provost's office is inviting proposals from faculty for Summer 2024 courses that incorporate some version of what might be called a *technology sabbatical*.** A recent [New York Times article](#) describes some examples of such courses at other institutions. At a minimum, these courses will require students to commit to refraining from using laptops or cell phones during class (with reasonable accommodations for emergency uses). Those interested in proposing a course are encouraged to consider additional measures, such as asking students to refrain entirely from social media or other specific uses of technology for the duration of the summer session in which the course is offered, assigning tech-free activities as homework outside of class, etc.

Commitment. In submitting a proposal, faculty agree that, if their proposal is selected for the pilot, they will teach the proposed course in Summer 2024 and will incorporate a “tech sabbatical” in at least one additional course in 2024-25 (Fall 2024 or Spring, J-term, or Summer 2025).

Compensation. Faculty selected for the pilot will receive one-time course development funds of \$4,000 in addition to the standard summer course compensation. Eligible faculty members may choose to receive these funds as either summer wages or research funds. All disbursements are subject to University, state, and federal guidelines, policies and procedures. Classes will be subject to [Summer Session policies](#), including policies on minimum enrollments. Faculty wages for summer session are available on the [Summer Chair](#) site.

Eligibility. All faculty eligible to teach in summer session may apply. (Ordinarily, twelve-month faculty are not eligible to teach in summer session.) **Please consult your department's summer chair before submitting your proposal, to ensure that your proposed course fits with your department's summer curriculum plans.** A list of summer chairs is available on the [Summer Chair](#) site. Unfortunately, graduate students are not eligible for this opportunity.

Proposal. Proposals should include:

- A brief description of the course (two pages maximum) that includes a description of the

proposed technology sabbatical and explains how it will advance the course's learning objectives and/or enhance the class experience, and specifies whether you have previously taught this course;

- a brief statement of teaching philosophy (no more than one page); and
- the elements required for all summer course proposals, as follows:
 - Course Subject and Number (e.g. PHIL 2559)
 - Course Title
 - Preferred Session
 - Instructor Name
 - Instructor Faculty Rank
 - Any TA or Grader Information (for classes larger than 20)
 - Brief Course Description for the Website and Promotion

Proposals must be submitted to vpaa@virginia.edu by **Monday, October 23**. Faculty will be notified of whether their course has been selected for the pilot by October 30. Please direct any questions to the office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at vpaa@virginia.edu.