Looking for an interesting class to add? Check out one of the below Meliora Seminar options! Meliora Seminars offer you opportunities to explore exciting topics in the humanities in small classes that have no prerequisites.

A Meliora Seminar is not your average course. These seminars are designed to be small seminars that explore important questions, major figures, key historical periods, or classic works and to be taught by top professors at the University. You work closely with faculty to examine issues, texts, people, and topics in-depth using innovative and collaborative modes of teaching and learning.

Meliora Seminars are an excellent opportunity to learn together with a close-knit community of students and to develop relationships with faculty. Additionally, Meliora Seminars may be used by students as a replacement course for WRT105 should you desire to petition to use the course for that purpose. You can learn more about the Meliora Seminars here.

You may register for the Spring 2021 Meliora Seminars through UR Student. Please email the instructor if you have any difficulty with registration.

Spring 2021 Seminars
Course Number: HIST/AAAS/GSWS/ENGL 167M
Course Title: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and Little Women: Race and Gender
Instructor: Joan Rubin, director of the Humanities Center and professor of history
Description: This discussion-based seminar will focus on Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852) for the first half of the semester and Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women (1868-69) in the second part of the course. Stowe’s book was the best-selling novel of the nineteenth-century and famously earned its author credit for starting the Civil War. Alcott’s semi-autobiographical novel was likewise a great commercial success. Both books were repeatedly adapted for the theatre and the movies, inviting consideration of what those new forms meant to viewers. Together the books have become touchstones or markers for ways that Americans have thought about race and gender for the last one hundred fifty years. Topics include: the reception of Stowe’s book in relation to abolitionism, colonization, and other depictions of slavery; authorship for women; ideals of domesticity in the North and South; the role of religion in both works; constructs of American girlhood and masculinity; and sentimental culture in Victorian America. Uncle Tom’s Cabin will especially raise questions about how we should handle language and images that modern readers may consider offensive. Students will be encouraged to voice their views on ways to grapple with racism and gender stereotypes in books that have shaped Americans’ current quests for justice and equity.
Course Number: DANC 167M
Course Title: EcoLinguistics – Language and Movement
Instructor: Anne Wilcox, Dance & Movement Program faculty member; professional choreographer and dancer
Description: In the context of sustainable living, the course will examine how verbal and non-verbal expression manifest and shape overall well-being. Every year, a different theme will be addressed. The themes for this year are memory and forgetting. We will explore the scale of emotional polarities from rage to serenity, in connection to well-being. The course will address questions such as: What role does memory play in our physical being and outward expression? What distinguishes the range of mundane—ritualized movement and communication? How does context influence experience and expression? What role do patterns play in verbal and non-verbal communication and memory?

Course Number: PHIL 167M
Course Title: The University Values
Instructor: Rich Feldman, former University of Rochester president and professor of philosophy
Description: The University recently adopted a Vision and Values statement, identifying as its values Meliora, Equity, Leadership, Integrity, Openness, Respect, and Accountability. Over the years we have also expressed commitment to values such as freedom, fairness, and responsibility. In this course, we will read important essays examining the meaning and significance of these concepts and then examine their implications for a contemporary university setting. We’ll use examples of incidents that have occurred on campuses around the country to examine the challenges that arise in an effort to live up to these values.