Request for a new topic to be housed under: **LA&S 292. Topics and Problems on: _____. 1-6 Hours. U.** An interdisciplinary study of different topics. Designed especially for freshmen and sophomores. LEC.

**LA&S 292 Topics and Problems On:**
**Global Challenge: Building Communities and Expanding Opportunities**
This course introduces students to faculty experts on the topic of water, a grand challenge that will provide first-year students with an early opportunity to see how different disciplines provide unique solutions to a problem and the innovations that can come from collaborations across disciplines. Access to quality water poses important questions across the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. In particular, this course will consider ways that water issues engage questions of equity in communities. This topic is particularly relevant for students to study at a point when they have recently left their home communities and are transitioning into the KU community.

1 credit hour

**Lecture and mandatory discussion**

**Grading Basis:** SUI

**Spring semester**

**Rationale:**
A one-credit hour, 8 week topics course in spring 2016 featuring faculty experts from a range of disciplines to promote intellectual inquiry and engagement with a theme that facilitates major exploration. The program will conclude with a shared experience, for example, participating in KU’s Undergraduate Research Symposium.

This course will feature KU faculty connected to the *Building Communities, Expanding Opportunities* Strategic Initiative and recent participants in the Ideate session on the topic of water hosted by the KU Libraries. When faculty introduce aspects of their scholarship into the classroom, it fosters intellectual curiosity and provides a deeper learning experience for the student. We also know that college graduates who report feeling supported in college (professors cared, professors made them excited about learning, and they had a mentor) and who engage in experiential learning score higher on indicators of professional well-being than those who did not. This course will provide students who did not have a small class experience in the fall semester (through a First Year Seminar, UNIV 101 or other some other type of high impact retention program) with the opportunity to deeply explore a grand challenge through a weekly course meeting in the spring semester with faculty and staff experts on the topic of water. Students will explore research questions pertaining to water across a variety of disciplines and by doing so will learn about possible majors. The course will be designed around the following learning outcomes:

- **Teamwork and Problem Solving:** Each lecture will include interactive activities so introduce students to research questions in this field as well as team-based problem solving assignments.
Personal and Social Responsibility: Students will be led through various discussions on the importance of water in our society and what are the issues surrounding its use/misuse within the community, in our country and the world.

An example of this type of assignment for social interaction would be for students to be distributed into small groups of three and given the assignment of interviewing a business owner to discuss the importance of water to their business.

In 2015, the Undergraduate Research Symposium had 165 student presenters with over 600 KU students attending the poster and oral presentations. It is our intent to have the students in this course attend the symposium, interview two student presenters and draft a reflection on how he or she could get started in a research project. The goal is to introduce students to research and scholarship, then show students peers who have been involved with research.