



MATERIALS SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

210 HEARST MINING BUILDING

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MARCH 2, 2018

Dear Committee on Courses of Instruction,

I am writing in regards to the proposed course MSE 198: Introduction to MSE, Fall 2018. I am serving as the instructor of record for this one-unit student-facilitated course.

The instructors of the course are all members of our student chapter of Materials Science and Engineering Association. I have known the leaders of this team for (at least) a couple of years now, first in my capacity as Vice Chair of the Department, and now as Chair. In addition, I have had some of the students in my upper division undergraduate crystal structure, bonding and defects course. This is a great group of students.

The course idea was developed entirely by the students. They noted (rightly) that within the current curriculum students within the Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) major do not take courses within the major until late in their sophomore year. This leads some students to pursue other degrees. Moreover, though there is an abundance of cutting edge research taking place in the Department, there is no one venue in which it can be presented at a level that first year undergraduates can understand. This student facilitated class fixes this problem by inviting faculty to present their research interests to the members of the class. I think this is a great idea. The syllabus consists of lectures from the faculty, interspersed with discussions of the mechanics of completing our degree and the mechanics of securing a research position within one of our laboratories. It also serves to introduce the students to the faculty at an early stage in their academic careers.

In addition to the intellectual content of the lectures, the course will serve an important role. Students pursuing a degree in MSE need to be well versed in a broad array of difficult topics. During the curriculum, it is easy for students to get lost amongst the details. This course will serve to focus their interests, and to remind students of why they need to learn the material in the classes they are taking. The course will also provide improved access to the research going on within the Department, and will encourage more students to participate in research during their time on campus.

As the formal supervisor of the course, I plan to meet with the student instructors weekly to keep tabs on the progress within the course.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daryl C. Chrzan", with a stylized, flowing script.

Daryl C. Chrzan

Professor and Chair, Materials Science and Engineering