

Honors Contracts

Definition and Eligibility

An honors contract is an agreement between a student and a faculty member that the student will do an enriched version of a non-honors course and thus be eligible to have that course count toward Baccalaureate Honors requirements. Students whose academic curricula seriously inhibit the completion of an honors program may petition through the approval process for up to three honors courses to be completed through honors contracts. Honors contracts are not available to freshmen. They are generally restricted to specialized courses in the student's major or minor field and must be approved by the faculty sponsor, honors director(s), department, and dean.

Quality as well as Quantity

Honors contract projects add an enhanced dimension to regular coursework through some combination of quantity of work, sophistication of assignments, and expectations of quality. For example, honors students may be expected to read and to respond to more material or material that is more challenging, or they may be asked to engage the material on a more sophisticated level. Typically, the contract will make clear how the honors project will meet most or all of the following criteria, adapted from requirements for honors courses:

- Honors contract projects focus on, or reflect understanding of, principles of the discipline as evident in expert habits and practices.
- Honors contract projects nurture the ability to communicate effectively both one's conclusions and the process by which one reached them.
- Honors contract projects include primary literature, scholarship, criticism, and other texts, as appropriate, rather than rely on textbooks alone.
- Honors contract projects are designed to build knowledge and conceptual understanding, not merely foster mastery of factual detail.

If the contract is based primarily on a creative project, evaluation will be based on the criteria appropriate to the genre as determined and specified by the professor and agreed to by the student.

Grading

Honors students are typically expected to complete all work required on the standard syllabus. To receive honors credit for the course, honors students must complete the course with a grade of "B" or better and satisfactorily complete the terms of the contract during the semester that credit is earned. Also, students receiving an "A" or "B" in a contracted course who have not satisfactorily completed the terms of their contract will not receive honors credit. Instructors will not penalize students who do not complete the terms of their honors contracts; these students will receive the grade earned in the class.

Planning a contract

To receive Honors credit for a course, the student must: (1) obtain the instructor's consent to take the course for Honors credit; (2) develop, in conjunction with the instructor, a description of the course enhancement activity or activities that s/he will engage in to earn Honors credit; (3) complete a Contract to Earn Honors Credit for a Non-Honors Course with the instructor; and (4) have the contract approved also by the instructor's department, the honors director, and the appropriate dean. *Contracts must be approved and signed by all parties by the end of the second week of the semester in which the contracted work will be undertaken.*

When is the contracted work complete?

The contracted work is complete when the instructor is satisfied that the student has successfully completed all of the predetermined terms of the contract by the due date. An evaluation form is sent to the course instructor at the end of the semester and must be signed by the instructor before being returned to the Honors Office.

Contract to Earn Honors Credit for a Non-Honors Course

A. Student Information and Terms of the Contract

Professor and Student: Please read all Honors Contract guidelines on the back of this form before signing this contract.

Student's Name _____ Semester _____

Student's email _____ Student ID or SS# _____

Major _____

Course Name and Number _____

Professor's Name and Department _____

Professor's Office and Telephone _____

Project Description

Student: Consult with your professor to determine kind and amount of work that would qualify as an Honors enhancement of the selected course. On an attached sheet (which is also to be signed by your professor prior to submitting to the Honors Director[s] for approval), describe in detail the nature and scope of your projected Honors work. Include a copy of the syllabus distributed to students in the course and an explanation of how the contracted work complements and builds on the standard assignments and expectations. In explaining the "honors" nature of your work, refer to the criteria on the back of this page. Chart a timetable for completion, including due dates for assignments or stages, and a final due date. Plan to get periodic feedback from your professor regarding your progress toward satisfactory completion of the contract.

B. Student and Professor Authorization of the Contract for Honors Credit

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

Professor's Signature _____ Date _____

C. Administrative Approval of the Contract for Honors Credit

Department Chair's Signature and Date _____ If applicable: Honors Director's Signature and Date (CBA, EDU, or WCC)

Honors Director's Signature and Date (BHP) _____ Dean's Signature and Date _____