

Guidelines for the Honors Contract

The Honors Contract should create a partnership of mutual benefit to the student and faculty member. For the Honors student, the contract should involve a project or activity that takes one deeper into the course subject and results in an experience highly relevant to one's preparation as a professional. For the faculty member, the contract work should be an opportunity to try innovative or professionally interesting projects or activities that would be difficult to do for an entire class. In all cases honors contract work should strive for achievement in at least one of these three areas: scholarship, leadership, or service. The contract may be achieved in many ways as long as the work is relevant to the subject of the course. Above all, the Honors Contract should never feel like "busy work" for either the student or the faculty member involved. **Questions regarding the nature of a specific contract are welcome, and should be directed to Matt Nickerson, Honors Advisor (586-1955).**

1. Any student enrolled in the Honors Program may negotiate a contract with a faculty member to take a non-Honors course for Honors credit. Courses at the 1000 and 2000 level may only be contracted for honors when the course is not currently offered as an honors section. The faculty member alone shall determine whether or not s/he wishes to create a contract.
2. The contract should state explicitly the work that the student will undertake to earn the Honors designation. The honors student's engagement with the course material should be more rigorous than that expected of the other students in the class. The student seeking honors credit might, for example, undertake a more demanding research project, pursue a course assignment in greater depth or breadth, give a special presentation to the class, participate in a workshop with a faculty member, expand a term paper for presentation at a conference, work as a research assistant, engage in an internship or field work and a paper, create/show exceptional art work, give a performance or concert, or other significant creative work. The contract should also state specifically how the work proposed by this contract is different from that required of the other students in the course. For example, a description such as "Michele will write a research paper" will not merit approval. The description should detail the work to be done and how it differs from the general course: "For honors credit, Michele will write a 10-page research paper on a theory of ethics not covered in class. This assignment is not part of the regular work load for this course. This writing assignment will require Michelle to use at least one primary source, and to apply in-depth research methods and critical thinking." It is very important that the honors work be clarified before the submission of the contract. Thus, a description such as the following is not acceptable: "The student will complete additional projects to be decided upon by the student and instructor." If for some reason the project cannot be refined before submission of the contract, the instructor should discuss the reason with the Honors Advisor to receive approval.
3. Once the contract has been negotiated and signed by both the faculty member and the student, the student will bring the original contract to the Honors Advisor no later than the last day the student can drop a class with an automatic grade of "W". Should the Honors Advisor have any questions or reservations about the contract, s/he will first discuss these with the student and if necessary, then with the faculty member.
4. At the end of the semester the professor will sign the completion portion of the contract if the student has completed the contract to the instructor's satisfaction. The student should then return the signed form to the Honors Office no later than 7 days after the last day of class. The Honors Office will inform the Registrar who will then add the Honors designation to the student's transcript for the appropriate course.