

Guidelines for the Honors Contract

*Please keep this page for personal reference. It does not need to be submitted.

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 the Honors Office (865-8451).**

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 or student should discuss the reason with the Honors Director 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 Director no later than the last day the student can drop a class with an automatic grade of "W". Should the Honors Director 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. The student must earn at least a B- in the course to receive honors credit for the completed contract.

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 *and* copies of the contract artifact(s) [paper, presentation, pictures, etc.] to the Honors Office no later than 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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As you design your honors contract, consider the following three learning outcomes and identify ways that they can be incorporated into your project.

INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

Integrative learning is the ability to make connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond campus.

Examples of integrative learning would include:

- Comparing your life experiences and academic knowledge to appreciate perspectives other than your own,
- Connecting examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective,
- Creating a product that enhances the assignment by utilizing the most appropriate format, language or visual representation, and,
- The ability to evaluate and change your own learning over time.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem solving requires that you design, evaluate and implement strategies to answer open-ended questions or achieve a specific goal.

Examples of problem solving would include:

- Defining a problem by constructing a problem statement with relevant contextual factors,
- Identifying multiple approaches for solving the problem,
- Thoroughly evaluating all solutions,
- Implementing the solution in a way that addresses multiple contextual factors of the problem,
- Reviewing results, defining need for future work.

CREATIVE THINKING

Creative thinking is the ability to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways, as well as think, react, and work in an imaginative way.

Examples of creative thinking would include:

- Creating an entirely new object, solution or idea that is appropriate to the domain,
- Taking a risk by actively seeking out and following through on untested and potentially risky directions or approaches to the assignment in the final product,
- Extending a unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

The unique nature of honors contracts is a hallmark of what makes the experience rewarding for both the student and faculty member. Many other learning outcomes, in addition to those listed above, will certainly be met by the completion of your honors contract. It is helpful to reference the full list of SUU's Learning Outcomes as you work through and assess your honors contract. You may view the full list of Essential Learning Outcomes at:

<http://www.suu.edu/academics/provost/pdf/elo-definitions.pdf>

