

Lone Star College - North Harris
Honors Program

Honors Contract/Section
Proposal Guidelines
2011-2012



Welcome

The North Harris Honors Council wishes to thank you for embarking on what we hope will be a very exciting and profitable journey for you. Mentoring Honors students is an exhilarating adventure that will tap your creativity and innovation. It will give you the opportunity to stretch your wings and fly a little higher. But, don't take our word for it. Here is what the Honor students tell us:

"Honors is a way to grow, to reach beyond our limitations to achieve a higher level of performance." Susan O.



"Being in Honors is a lot of fun; it looks good on my transcript, and will help me transfer to the college program of my choice." Katherine S.

"Honors is an opportunity to expand your knowledge of a subject and hone your leadership skills." Curley W.



"Honors has given me the opportunity to work harder toward my goals." Cynthia S.

"Everyone should take Honors because it is an unforgettable, enriching, and necessary experience that gives you one-to-one interaction with your teachers and a deeper knowledge of the subjects you love." Memory J.



"The Honors Program has allowed me to explore additional topics of study while expanding my knowledge in fields that interest me." Earl T.

"The Honors Program is a unique, self-challenging, fulfilling, and rewarding opportunity. Honors students strive to further their education, to rank in the top levels of their class, and to aggressively pursue their goals." Matt M.



"Honors has allowed me to have a higher level of confidence and reach for goals I didn't know I had." Lisa W.



"Honors means *Having Serious Opportunities*- for growth, learning, fun relationships and profit. If you're serious about improving your life, your future, and your experience, this is the organization to be in." Yvette J.

"Honors has given me motivation and encouragement in many aspects of my life" Michelle T.

The Mission of the LSC - North Harris Honors Program

The mission of the North Harris Honors Program is to augment existing programs and to reaffirm the College's commitment to excellence by identifying, recruiting, and challenging academically motivated students, providing enrichment and flexibility to develop full student potential, and to offer faculty the opportunity for renewal and innovation.

Our Logo



The North Harris Honors Program Logo depicts a simple Celtic knot surrounded by the four cornerstones of the program: commitment, excellence, challenge and enrichment. Celtic knots generally represent the journey through life and eternity. This knot in particular symbolizes the four corners of the world.

To the Honors Council the logo expresses our hope that, as students journey through life to the four corners of the world, they will take with them the commitment to excellence that they exhibited in their honors work and will continue to challenge themselves to find added enrichment in all they do.

PROCEDURE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HONORS CONTRACTS/SECTIONS

The Honors Council of North Harris sees a two-fold purpose for the establishment and implementation of Honors-by-contract at LSC - North Harris.

First, we hope to meet the needs of exceptional students through an enriched and challenging educational environment. Academically advanced students are encouraged to reach their full intellectual potential by engaging in learning experiences that encompass greater depth and breadth of study than is offered in the regular classroom. These activities should spark such students' intellectual curiosity while sharpening skills for future success.

Second, we hope to allow faculty members, especially those who seek academic challenges in their subject areas, to experiment with innovative teaching techniques. Honors should allow them to develop and demonstrate their expertise in their subject areas, to pursue topics of personal interest, and to spark their own creativity and intellectual curiosity while contributing to the academic development of students who continually challenge them to remain well informed in their subject areas.

Faculty members wishing to make a proposal for an Honors contract should follow the guidelines and steps outlined below. **PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO INFORM A MEMBER OF THE HONORS COUNCIL AS WELL AS OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR DIVISION THAT YOU ARE CONSTRUCTING A PROPOSAL BEFORE YOU START WRITING.** Their help and advice will be invaluable in making the approval process as smooth as possible.

STEP 1: Proposal for Contract or Class Section Developed at the Division Level

Faculty members may apply to the Honors Council through their respective divisions or individually for an Honors course section or an Honors contract for the following semester. Honors contract students enroll in regular sections of the particular course and then indicate their intention to take a contract by completing an Honors Program application and by contacting the mentor/coordinator for the particular contract they would like to take.

Division Concerns:

When proposing that a certain course should have an Honors option available, issues, listed below, must be addressed. Feedback from within the division is strongly advised when completing this section of the proposal. If division approval is required for any of these items it should be done **before** the proposal is sent to the Honors Committee for final approval.

1. Which courses in the division should be offered as Honors-by-contract?
2. Who should coordinate the seminars in a given semester?

Note: Please keep the following items in mind when writing a proposal:

Remedial/developmental/ESL classes (those that are not college-level classes) will not have an Honors option.

Adjunct faculty may be mentors of Honors-by-contract with the approval of their Dean.

The Honors Contract

The contract should spell out **IN DETAIL** what activities, research, assignments, seminars etc. the student must fulfill in order to receive Honors credit for the course (**see #3 of the sample contract**). The contract must also detail what is expected of the instructor, as well. A sample contract accompanies this document. Please note that each contract specifies that 1) the student must complete all assignments as detailed in the course syllabus, 2) the student must participate in class discussions and attend class in a responsible way so that he/she is role model for classmates, 3) the student will attend at least one of the special events scheduled for all Honors students during the semester, and 4) the student will complete an evaluation of the contract, the mentor, and the experience at the end of the semester. Additionally, the contract will be evaluated to be sure that it includes demonstration of critical thinking, a quantifiable learning outcome demonstrating a high degree of scholarship, an oral presentation of the learning outcome, and a clearly defined mentor relationship, including specific times for meeting seminars throughout the semester.

The Honors Section

Like the Honors contract, an Honors section should show a demonstration of critical thinking, a quantifiable learning outcome demonstrating a high degree of scholarship, and an oral presentation of the learning outcome. In addition, sections should require that 1) the student must complete all assignments as detailed in the course syllabus, 2) the student must participate in class discussions and attend class in a responsible way so that (s)he is role model for classmates, 3) the student will attend at least one of the special events scheduled for all Honors students during the semester, and 4) the student will complete an evaluation of the contract, the mentor, and the experience at the end of the semester.

STEP 2: Proposal Submitted to Honors Council

The faculty member who is planning to teach Honors-by-contract or the Honors section should submit his/her proposal **in person** to the Honors Council by the middle of the semester prior to the semester when the Honors option is to be first offered. Contact a Council member for Council meeting dates. **Please bring five copies of the proposal; the contract or Honors course syllabus, and the regular class syllabus with you to the meeting. At the meeting you will be asked to:**

1. **Give a Brief Synopsis:** Describe in general terms how Honors students will be challenged and enriched beyond the regular class by fulfilling the criteria of the proposed Honors contract or section. From this the Honors Council should have a clear picture of the major components of the proposal.
2. **How Does This Honors Option Differ from "The Regular Course":** Compare the typical requirements expected of students who sign Honors contracts with those who do not. Honors students are expected to fulfill all course requirements. Note that the difference SHOULD NOT simply be doing more homework problems or reading more chapters in a book. **The contract or section should show how students will demonstrate a high degree of critical thinking and scholarship in their learning outcome and how they will translate that into an oral presentation.**

STEP 3: Proposal Reviewed by the Honors Council

The faculty member presenting the proposal should attend the Honors Council meeting at which the proposal is presented for consideration. The Honors Council, together with the faculty member making the proposal, will review the documents and any necessary additions/deletion/changes will be discussed. Approval, in large part, depends on the successful demonstration of the specifics outlined above and the completion of changes discussed at the meeting. **Approval is not automatic or immediate.** It is possible the Honors Council will request that the proposal be resubmitted for further revision after the discussion within the Council.

Through this process, the intent of the Honors Council is to ensure consistent quality and rigor among all Honors contracts and classes. Honors Council members will work hard to assist faculty in the development of successful and high-quality Honors proposals.

Step 4: Proposal Approved by the Honors Council

After the Honors Council approves the proposal, the faculty member offering the Honors option should become familiar with the *Honors Faculty Handbook* explaining the process required to implement the proposal. This handbook will include information on evaluation procedures and deadlines as well as other information pertinent to teaching an Honors contract and/or section.

Criteria for Honors

Those instructors who want to offer honors-by-contract should be sure the following are taken into account when writing the proposal and contract:

1. **In positive terms**, the key word that distinguishes Honors work from that done in a regular section is **enrichment**. This term means that the student attempting the Honors credit should gain a more profound appreciation of the subject than is typical in the regular classroom, greater depth and breadth of knowledge, as the following examples attest.
 - a. In a math Honors course, it may mean proving theorems instead of merely accepting them as proven.
 - b. In a philosophy course, it may mean a greater proportion of primary source readings, i.e., reading Aristotle's *Poetics* in translation and applying it to another work of literature, like a tragedy by Sophocles, Shakespeare, or Arthur Miller.
 - c. In chemistry, it may mean exposure to current applications of principles applied in the text or independent research.

In negative terms, Honors should **not simply be course acceleration**; neither should it require only more of the same kind of work for the student.

2. An important component of enrichment is **critical thinking**. The student's learning outcome should demonstrate that they have had to **analyze** a problem and **synthesize** a conclusion. This might take the form of cataloguing specimens of rocks and writing a manual for other students incorporating the history of each specimen with the likely location of origin. Or it might take the form of creating specialized educational tools for children with special needs after an investigation of critical periods of development in the brain.
3. The prominent feature for fostering enrichment is the **mentor relationship** between the students and the faculty member. Chief among instruments for fostering this relationship are **specific seminar meeting times**, limitations of class/seminar size, team teaching, offering more opportunities for collegial relationships between faculty members and students. Mentors contribute to the spirit of inquiry into a given subject, idea or philosophy and promote extensive student contributions to class sections through oral reports, informal discussions, projects, both individual and team, and research.
4. It is also expected that producing some quantifiable learning outcome as a result of his/her Honors experience will enrich each student. These learning outcomes may

be as varied as the students themselves. It may be a researched investigation into an area of personal interest to the student.

5. Finally, student enrichment comes through being able to **share this learning outcome** with others **through an oral presentation**. This presentation may take place in the class associated with the honors contract and/or on Honors Day at the end of the semester.

Student Expectations

1. Another expectation of the Honors contract is that students will develop a **sense of community** with other exceptional students in their seminar. There is a very real need for these students to meet, associate, and create discourses with students of similar ability. The Honors seminars meet this need as does participation in the Honors Student Organization and the special events offered each semester.
2. An Honors student should expect to spend roughly twice the time doing the work for an honors section as he/she would spend in a regular section of the course. The student should expect to do more independent work with fewer restrictions and less specific parameters, i.e., more open-ended assignments. This roughly translates into the equivalent of taking an additional course or **approximately 20-30 extra hours** per semester.
3. Honors students must be clear regarding **what they must accomplish** in order to receive the Honors designation and **how they will be evaluated** in relation to the other students in the class. This information should be in writing and should be signed by both the mentor and the student as part of the contract that should include information regarding student evaluations at mid semester and the end of the semester.
4. The mentor needs to be sure that he/she allows time for **end of semester student evaluations** of the course and mentor.



Honors Project Models

To help you in the development of your Honors contract or class, the following models are offered to give you ideas about the breadth of choice you have in developing your contract or class.

Adapted from Palm Beach Community College

Research Model

Description

This model consists of a traditional typed research paper based on original and previously published research related to the research topic.

Model Suggestions

Published research in academic journals, such as the American Sociological Review, books, Internet sites and previously completed Honors Option Projects

Resources

Original and substantial research references and a review of relevant published research literature.

Documentation

MLA or APA style may be used, but style must be consistent throughout the paper.

Guidelines

The paper must include documentation and citation in the body of the paper of all references included in the paper. All cited sources in the body of the paper must be included in a list of sources used at the end of the paper. Any source used in the paper must be properly documented to give proper credit to the source of information. Students must clearly identify which materials are their own works and which are the works of other sources.

The paper must exhibit excellent use of English. Grammar, style, spelling, sentence structure, paragraph structure and usage must be of Honors quality. The research must be accurately reported and documented. The paper should reflect input from the faculty mentor and should reflect the process of mentoring by the faculty member.

City as Text Model

Prerequisite

Previous participation in the NCHC National Convention “City as Text.”

Description

Students may explore a particular geographic location such as a city and describe their observations in terms of the academic framework of the course in which the Honors project is being written.

Model Suggestions

NCHC National Convention City as text exercises.

Resources

NCHC City as text exercises completed in past meetings as well as published materials related to the observations and course materials.

Documentation

Students should record their observations and analyze the observations in terms of the principles, theories, research models, and perspectives of the academic area in which the project is being written.

Guidelines

Students should engage in critical thinking and analysis of the city they are observing. The observations should focus on a particular aspect of the city- such as the economic, religious, cultural, arts, or political life of the city. The final paper should have a detailed description of what was observed and an extensive analysis of how the observations related to the course. Students should explore ways the course concepts can be illustrated and better understood through this observation

Work as Text or Work as Observance Model

Description

Student work experience could be analyzed in terms of the concepts, theories, and research methods of the course to develop an Honors project. This model would also be applicable to a student doing an internship.

Model Suggestions

This model might be most applicable in a program where the student work experience is relevant to the course. Students could use current or previous work experience as a basis for an analysis of materials that goes beyond regular course requirements.

Resources

The main resource would be the student’s own personal work experience as well as published materials that relate to the work experience and course materials.

Documentation

Students would be required to maintain a journal of work experience or create a journal from past experiences. The instructor would determine the length and details of the journal.

Guidelines

The work experience must be of sufficient quality and substance to allow for an in depth analysis relevant to the course in which the honors project is being carried out. The final written paper must be of Honors quality and must demonstrate how the work experience was related to the course materials.

This model would be most applicable in any course where work experience would be relevant to the course, and where the work observed would provide opportunities for the students to develop understandings that go beyond regular course requirements. The instructor should work closely with the student and monitor the

student progress. A final written paper should discuss the work observed and the ways in which the observations contributed to increased understanding of course materials. Relevant readings should also be discussed in the final report.

Product Creation Model

Description

This model allows students to create a product as part of the Honors project and then to describe the product in a final written paper.

Model Suggestions

Students could create products such as original art, literature, music, computer programming, or other original works in other fields of study.

Resources

The main resource would be the student's creative talents and abilities as well as published materials related to the product and the course materials

Documentation

Students will be expected to maintain a personal account of the creative process and resources that were used in the creative procedure as well as sources of inspiration in the development of the product. These would include but not be limited to the personal, social, cultural, historic, and artistic. Students will be expected to document on a timeline log the background research. An introduction with the rationale for the product and an explanation of the significance of the product must also be included.

Guidelines

The instructor should work closely with the student to help with and to monitor the creative process and its progress. Students should maintain a record of what they did and how their work goes above and beyond the regular course requirements. Students should submit a duplicate of the original product to the Honors Office for the Honors permanent record. The Department may require students to submit the original work and will be determine the disposition of the original product. The original product will be the property of the student. In some cases, the original product may be used to promote the Honors program.

Virtual Model

Description

Any work on the Internet or electronic media could be developed as a virtual model.

Model Suggestions

Web pages, Internet sites, or any other electronic type projects that are relevant and appropriate to the particular course.

Resources

Any virtual reality resources as well as traditional print media materials related to the virtual project.

Documentation

Students would be expected to maintain a record of all work as well as resources used in the creation of the final product. Any resources used should be documented. Students will be expected to maintain a personal account of the creative process and resources that were used in the creative procedure as well as sources of inspiration in the development of the product. These would include but not be limited to the personal, social, cultural, historic, and artistic. Students will be expected to document on a timeline log the background research. A System Development Life Cycle should be included if appropriate. An introduction with the

rationale for the product and an explanation of the significance of the product must also be included

Guidelines

This model allows students to develop a project in any course where the virtual reality is relevant to the course materials. Students would be expected to write a paper describing their experiences and explaining what they had produced. Instructors would be expected to work closely with the students to monitor quality and progress of the project.

The final typed paper should include all resources and documentation.

Foreign Language Model

Description

Students with outstanding foreign language skills could do an Honors project that allows them to develop their skills beyond the regular course materials. Students should explain the difficulties and intricacies of the Honors Project including the semantics, syntax, metaphors, figures of speech, semiotic, and hermeneutics involved in the project.

Model Suggestions

Literature or practical experience applications that allow opportunities for development of proficiencies that go beyond regular course requirements.

Resources

The instructor in consultation with the student will determine these.

Documentation

A final paper, and an English translation describing final product of the project and a discussion of how the project was completed and how it goes above and beyond the regular course requirements.

Guidelines

The instructor and student will develop a project that allows more depth of experience than is possible with the regular course work.

Clinic Model

Description

This model is especially applicable to areas of Allied Health such as Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Radiology, Occupational Therapy, or Respiratory care. Central Campus Dental Hygiene instructors have developed Honors Clinical experiences for qualified students. This model may also be applied to other health-related fields.

Model Suggestions

The Honors Clinical experience provides an opportunity for faculty to develop clinical experiences that go above and beyond regular course experiences. Students participate in these Honors experiences as way of expanding their normal clinical experience.

Resources

Clinical experiences and materials related to the clinic. Students should describe the clinic and explain the nature of the clinic and how the Honors clinic goes above and beyond the normal clinical experience.

Documentation

Students should keep a record of the honors clinical component and write a final paper documenting what they did and explaining how this went above and beyond the regular clinical experience. The faculty could develop a standard template explaining how this experience goes above and beyond the regular clinical experience for students to include in their final paper, or could attach it to the final paper. All resources used must be properly documented.

Guidelines

The Honors Clinic should be developed by the faculty and closely monitored by the faculty to insure quality control. Students would be expected to work more closely with the faculty.