ISU University Honors Contracts

What is an honors contract course: An honors contract course is a regular class that a student receives honors credit for by working directly with their instructor to enrich the learning experience. The honors contract course is a great option for classes in the students’ major or minor, and upper-level classes. An honors contract is a mechanism for adding an “honors dimension” to a course or section that is not already an honors course. Projects should add an academic dimension by introducing new material or by allowing the student to go into greater depth than normally required in some aspect of the course.

Project Ideas: There is no standardized model for an honors contract – the more individualized and imaginative the better! Specify how Honors course requirements will differ from the general course requirements. These requirements may include but are not limited to: independent research, collaborative projects, service learning, outreach programming, leadership training, alternative media development, professional or technical applications, student teaching and mentoring, and the enhancement of critical, synthetic, comparative, interdisciplinary, or creative thinking.

Examples of assignments include: portfolio of responses to academic and other forms of reading, listening, viewing or experiential assignments, a research project on a specific topic identified as an area of interest to the student, which can be expressed in writing or in a visual format, a significant annotated bibliography / literature review, job shadowing and reflective paper on the experience, original musical composition or other work of art, etc.

Note to Instructor: The honors contract will ideally help both the student and you, e.g., you may have the student do a project that covers material useful for the entire class to know and then present it to the class. In general, work done for an honors contract should be qualitatively different in nature from that already assigned for the class. For example, honors contract work may rely on primary sources not formally introduced in the class, or it may focus more intensively on particular topics.

Submission Details: Meet with student to discuss course syllabus and how honors course requirements will differ from the general course requirements. Provide a description of alternative assignments, testing, or performance criteria. Note that Honors options should focus on different or alternative work, not additional work. Specify how these Honors assignments will be integrated into the final grade and the date which all assignments should be completed. Upon agreement of contract, signature is required by student and instructor. This contract must be submitted within the first three weeks of the semester for which the Honors Contract Course will be completed.

Honors Contract Course Value: When the student completes the coursework and grading is complete, the course will be denoted on the student transcript as an “honors” course. The student will receive honors credit which will count toward an “Honors Distinction” or “Honors Degree” upon graduation.