

Distinguishing Characteristics of Honors Courses

Honors courses will differ from regular courses in substantial ways. These courses are not necessarily designed to produce more work but instead a different kind of class experience. Any honors course will incorporate some, if not all, of the following criteria:

1. Students in honors courses will develop high-level cognitive skills, which emphasize a breadth and depth of learning as well as the acquisition of information.
2. Students in [lower-level] honors courses will develop a heightened appreciation for the methodology of the discipline to prepare them to succeed in upper division courses. Students will be encouraged to develop appropriate research skills. (This may include research models, literature searches, annotated bibliographies, term papers, and focused analytical assignments.)
3. Students will present original interpretations and analyses. Emphasis will be placed on quality, logical presentation, and originality.
4. Students in honors courses will study and evaluate primary source materials (e.g. literature, painting, official documents, diaries, journals, statistical data, and letters.)
5. Students in honors courses will be introduced to the normal content of the course, and will gain a heightened understanding of that content through participation in extra learning experiences on and off campus. (e.g. debates, mock trials, term papers, interviews, student presentations, field trips, international experiences, etc.)

The purpose of any honors course is to nurture the attitudes, behavior, and cognitive skills necessary for student progress as scholars and researchers.