

University Honors Program Contract Courses

In the light of an increasing number of requests for “Honors Contract” courses, the program has established clear criteria and procedure for accepting such courses. Exceptions may be made at the Director’s discretion.

What is an Honors Contract?

The student and the faculty member agree on a course of independent, mentored research conducted over the entire quarter which results in the student’s acquisition of a deeper and richer command of some aspect of the course material. In some sense, the “contract” is the equivalent of an Oxford tutorial, with set meetings, a reading list, and expectations for an outcome. The student is afforded an opportunity to present the results of the research to the class. Honors Contract courses are especially valuable in the student’s junior year as a precursor to the senior thesis and as an opportunity for students pursuing nationally competitive fellowships to develop a working relationship with a faculty member.

What are the criteria for an Honors Contract course?

1. Courses taken in place of or as a substitute for Honors sections of Core courses will not be accepted as suitable for Honors contract without a cogent intellectual rationale. That is, a religious studies class will not be accepted as an Honors Contract course in place of an Honors section of Religious Studies unless the student’s program of studies makes a coherent case for doing so.
2. Honors Contract courses will not be accepted in fulfillment of the requirements for level I.
3. Honors Contract courses will not be accepted if a student has elected to take any non-honors classes to fulfill Core requirements.
4. No more than one Honors Contract class may be used to fulfill UHP requirements unless there is a cogent intellectual rationale.
5. Honors Contract classes should be utilized to extend and deepen a student’s course of study in the major or minor.

What is the procedure for establishing an Honors Contract course?

1. Before the quarter in which the course is to be offered, make an appointment with the Director to obtain permission to pursue an Honors Contract course. Following the appointment, permission will be sent in writing via email. Permission to pursue an Honors Contract course does not mean that the faculty member is obligated to offer an Honors Contract.
2. Meet with the faculty member teaching the course to obtain approval and to establish the nature of the research, the dates of tutorial, the reading list, and the expected outcomes, including how and when the results will be shared with the class.
3. Put the elements of the contract established in step 2 into an email to the faculty member. Be sure to copy the Director (William Greenwalt, wgreenwalt@scu.edu) and the Assistant to the Director (Carole Wentz, cwentz@scu.edu).
4. The Director will approve the contract via email to you and the faculty member. A copy of the email will go into your file.

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