Honors Course Contracts
Background Information and Process Overview

Completing a contract course allows students to earn Honors course credit in a non-Honors course. There are two different pathways:

1. Enroll in a 3000- or 4000-level non-Honors course. With instructor approval, an Honors student may complete additional work that represents an enhancement to the standard course curriculum. The completed course, along with the additional contract work, qualifies as one Honors course and may count towards the number of credits required to graduate in the Honors College.

2. Enroll in an independent study. An Honors student can earn Honors credit through a departmental independent study (e.g., PHYS 4321 “Undergrad Research,” or FCD 4391 “Independent Study”). At the start of the term, the student must submit an Honors Course Contract form that details the scope of work to be completed. Once the Honors Course Contract Assessment form is submitted at the end of the term, the Honors College will assess the results and apply Honors credit if earned. (Note: If you plan to enroll in HON 4391 “Honors Independent Study,” please submit the form found on our website to receive approval to enroll in that course.)

Criteria for an Honors Course Contract (a minimum of two must apply):

- Work towards gaining a deeper and more intense approach to the subject matter
- Complete an additional set of readings
- Discuss additional readings with the professor
- Collaborate on a project with the instructor
- Lead a dialogue in the classroom or co-teach classes with the professor
- Complete alternative assignments that are more intellectually challenging than those designed for other students, possibly including work demanding higher level reasoning skills
- Complete an additional project not expected of other students in the course
- Conduct experiential learning outside of the classroom, e.g., attend lectures or performances on or off campus; engage in field research with a special connection to the course content

How does the Honors Contract work?

1. In a 3000- or 4000-level non-honors course, the student and professor enter into an agreement that the student will complete additional work to earn honors credit. The additional work should approximate, but not exceed, a 15% increase in the work required of other students. In addition to basic course requirements, the contract should stipulate the goals, timetable, methods, materials, and assessment of an Honors-level academic activity. Approval is at the discretion of the Dean of the Honors College.

2. Both the student and professor must sign the contract form by the 12th class day—no later than four weeks from the first day of the fall or spring semester, or the first week of a summer semester. Both the student and professor should retain a copy of the Honors Course Contract form, and a digital version must be submitted to Melanie Liddle, Student Development Specialist II of the Honors College, at ugresearch@txstate.edu.
3. The student will receive a performance evaluation for the Honors Course Contract at the end of the semester. This assessment will address: 1) whether or not the professor agrees the student’s work represents Honors-level quality; and 2) whether the student engaged deeply with the material. The assessment should result in a portfolio containing the Honors Course Contract form, the assessment form, the writing assignment (if required) or a written synopsis of the Honors-level assignment, and any other material relevant to assessing the student’s achievement.

4. The student must earn an overall grade of A or B in the course for the completed course to qualify for Honors credit. Once Honors approval has been granted, the course will count toward the required number of courses to graduate in the Honors College.

5. If the student is enrolled in a departmental independent study, indicate this on the Honors Contract form, and submit the form to Melanie Liddle at ugresearch@txstate.edu by the 12th class day. The procedures listed above will apply.

**Other pertinent information:**

1. The student may undertake more than one contract during their undergraduate career.

2. The student cannot substitute a contract for HON 4390B, the Honors Thesis.

3. For students who pursue a Minor in Honors Studies, undertaking an Honors course contract will result in either Honors credit or enrolled course credit, not both.

4. Indication that a student has successfully completed an Honors contract will be designated on the student’s transcript as follows: “Honors work included.” This will appear as a standard comment beneath the course designated as an Honors contract course.

5. To acknowledge the professor’s work with the student, letters will be sent to the professor, his or her chair or director, and dean.