

HOW TO MAKE AN HONORS CONTRACT

A contract course enables an Honors Student to turn any course into an Honors Course. Honors contracts are very simple: the student and instructor agree on a change or enrichment for the course. During the semester, the student performs the Honors work. At the end of the semester, the student and instructor sign a form indicating that the Honors work was completed. Submission of that form ensures that the Honors credit is noted on the student's transcript.

Groups of students may do a single contract together. They may either all choose to do the same individual work (say, everyone has to do an independent literature review on a topic) or they may do a group project (perhaps a service project). If they do a group project, there should be sufficient work for each member of the group.

As a general rule: the Honors work in a contract should strive to *replace*, not merely *add to*, the work for the course. Our slogan is, "not just more work, but rather a different kind of work." This does not mean that Honors Course should not be more challenging. But they should always be enriched.

The process should look like this:

1. Student(s) initiate Honors Contracts by approaching a faculty member with whom they would like to contract a course. Faculty members are always free to decline.
2. The student(s) and the faculty member decide upon the Honors enrichment. (Possible ideas below).
3. Using the [Honors Contract Form](#) student(s) and faculty describe the Honors enrichment, and sign the form to indicate that they intend to perform this work.
4. At the end of the semester, if the student(s) complete the work, they and the faculty sign the [Honors Credit Completion Form](#) and submit it to the Honors Office.

Some options for contract enrichment:

- **Changes to assignments or exams** – The idea here is to substitute as much as possible and add as little as possible. Papers instead of in-class essays, a research project or lab work instead of an exam, substituting some more difficult problems for easier ones on an exam, presenting material to the class instead of giving it to you through an exam or paper, etc.
- **Covering additional material** – As said above, instructors are strongly discouraged from merely adding *work*. However, students and faculty may decide to look at some additional material provided it genuinely adds to a course and does not prove too burdensome. Students might wish to read an additional work by an important author in a literature course, cover the historical context in which a specific scientific theory developed, or do some additional problems and questions to learn more advanced skills or theories.
- **Independent research** – this would typically be done as a replacement for a regular assignment, and is strongly encouraged as it prepares students for research in their field.

It is not required that Honors Students and faculty meet separately outside the regularly scheduled course times, although it is strongly encouraged. You may find it rewarding and time well spent. If a student is motivated enough to do a contract, they will likely be motivated enough to be interesting and inspiring to work with.