



FACULTY GUIDEBOOK

Revised Summer 2013

Honors Program

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Honors Program Reflection

There is no single definition that truly defines an Honors Program.

The National Collegiate Honors Council does not define an Honors Program, but actually gives a description—“An honors program is a part of a complex educational structure to which it must mold itself with creativity and sensitivity; it cannot be a free standing enterprise.”

The South Texas College Honors Program provides an avenue for motivated students in all disciplines to challenge themselves in a prescribed course of study. A key component to the success of the STC Honors Program is the faculty who chose to teach Honors classes. All STC faculty are highly qualified individuals from all content areas; however, Honors faculty have chosen to break away from traditional pedagogy and implement a student centered approach. They use creative and innovative techniques to meet the needs of all Honors Program students. It is through their efforts that STC offers a premier and recognized Honors Program.

Honors Program Guidelines and Procedures

Faculty will:

- **Identify the course, section number, date and time.**
- **Request Honors course designation from Department Chairs.**
- **Submit Honors syllabus, which incorporates all five Honors components.**
- **Sign and submit Memorandum of Understanding to Honors Program Facilitator.**
- **Inform students that after the posting of the 12th Day Roster, no student can change to a regular class. They must either continue in the Honors class or drop the class.**
- **Refer all students to the Honors Program Facilitator if concerns arise regarding the Honors Program.**

Department Chair will:

- **Designate courses as Honors through the Curriculum and Accreditation Office.**
- **Appoint Honors faculty.**
- **Refer all Honors faculty to Honors Program Facilitator if questions or concerns arise regarding the Honors Program.**
- **Meet with Honors Program Facilitator prior to semester schedule courses.**

Honors Program Facilitator will:

- **Work closely with Valley Scholars Program and PTK Honors Program.**
- **Work with Department chairs on Block scheduling and hybrid sections.**
- **Ensure all Honors Program students complete the Honors Program Application.**
- **Provide support for PTK Honor Society activities.**
- **Review and revise the Honors Program Handbook and Procedures.**
- **Advise Honors Program students**
- **Ensure all documents related to the Honors Program are submitted in a timely manner such as the Honors Faculty Memorandum of Understanding, Honors Program Student Contracts, and Honors Program Student Evaluations.**
- **Initiate NOE process based on the following:**
 - 5 or less students = \$50 (One time only)**
 - 6 or more students = \$100 (One time only)**
 - Pure Honors class= No stipend awarded.**
- **Promote Honors Program during Academic Excellence events and selected student recruiting events.**
- **Develop stronger ties with 4-year university Honors Programs.**
- **Make sure that the Honors Program website is updated regularly.**
- **Research information regarding additional resources for Honors students through National Collegiate Honors Council.**

Honors Program/Distance Education Advisor will:

- **Advise all Honors and potential Honors students.**
- **Enroll all students in Honors courses.**
- **Maintain Honors students' documentation and monitor student progress.**

Honors Program Timeline

All of the following must be turned in or approved by the posting of the 12th Day Class Roster:

Students:

- **Must have Honors Application filled out and on file with Honors Program Office.**
- **Must have all Honors Program Documentation on or before the posting of the 12th Day Class Roster.**
- **Must meet with Honors Program Coordinator or Honors Advisor.**

Faculty:

- **Must agree to teach a ‘split’ section.**
- **Must request that department Chair create a ‘split’ section.**
- **Must sign and turn in Memorandum of Understanding, Honors Syllabus, and Honors Program Student Contract(s).**

Memorandum of Understanding

In order to ensure a quality and consistent Honors Program, all Honors Program faculty will adhere to the following requirements once an Honors course has been approved by the Department Chair and Honors Program Facilitator:

- Inform your students that they cannot change from your Honors class to a non-Honors class once the 12th day Roster is posted. They must either continue in the Honors class or drop the class.
- Include the Five Honors Components and Honors theme in Honors syllabus
- Turn in MOU and Honors syllabus by 12th Day Class Roster deadline to Honors Program Facilitator.
- Ensure completion of the five Honors components.
- Upon completion of all requirements, the Notice of Employment (NOE) for the Honors faculty stipend will be processed.

The success of the Honors Program is based on the dedication of the students, faculty and administration.

Please sign below if you agree and will abide by all the Honors Program requirements.

Faculty Signature

Date _____

Department

Division _____

Honors Program

Course Components

These FIVE components must be included in an Honors course syllabus. The Honors Program stresses a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)/ Discipline Approach.

- **Interview**—Students must interview an individual from the field of study.
- **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving activities**—these activities make the students look at a problem or situation and develop a creative solution.
- **Research Techniques**—Students can either do a traditional research paper or possibly a research project. The research paper does not have to be longer, but should have more depth than an informative paper.
- **Technology Usage**—Students need to develop a presentation and this can be PowerPoint or Smart Board, etc.
- **Outside Reading**—the instructor assigns a book, essay or article that is a ‘must read’ for that specific subject matter, and then the students write an essay based on the instructor’s instructions and requirements. Reading assignment should be higher level reading.
- **Service Learning Project (Optional)**—Student will develop a service learning project that is directly related to course content. This project is subject to instructor approval.

Section Outline Format for Honors Courses - (Minimum Essential Information)

The following essential minimum information must be included in the Section Outline:

Institutional Information:

1. Name of Institution (*South Texas College*)
2. Name of Department
3. Document Title (*Section Outline*)
4. Semester and Year

Instructor Information:

1. Instructor's Name
2. Office/Building/Campus Location
3. Office Telephone Number
4. FAX Number
5. E-mail Address
1. Office Hours

Course Information:

1. Course Name
2. Course Number and Section Number
3. Classroom Location
4. Days and Time Class Meets
5. Catalog Course Description
6. Program Learning Outcomes (From Master syllabus)
7. Course Learning Outcomes (From Master syllabus)
8. Exemplary Educational Objectives (Only required for Core Courses)
9. Intellectual Competencies (Only required for Core Courses)
10. Perspectives (Only required for Core Courses)
- **11. Five Honors Components (Required for All Honors Courses. See Honors Guide)**
12. Course Requirements, Evaluation Methods, and Grading Criteria
13. Required Textbook & Resources
14. Each Major Assignment and Examination
15. General description of each lecture or discussion

Developmental Studies Policy Statement:

The College's Developmental Education Plan requires students who have not met the college-level placement standard on an approved assessment instrument in reading, writing, and/or mathematics to enroll in Developmental Studies courses including College Success. Failure to attend these required classes may result in the student's withdrawal from ALL college courses.

Statement of Equal Opportunity: *No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored or conducted by South Texas College on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability.*

Alternative Format Statement: This document is available in an alternative format upon request by calling (insert phone number of the department contact person who maintains the syllabus and can provide a copy upon a student request).

ADA Statement: *Individuals with disabilities requiring assistance or access to receive services should contact disABILITY Support Services at (956) 872-2173.*

Topic Outline

Sample Honors Program Addendum

Addendum PSYC 2301 Honors Requirements

Interview

You will be asked to come up with a minimum of five questions (you will expand on this based on the answers you receive) to ask a psychology faculty member of your choice at either STC or UTPA. The interview will focus on what the person has achieved as a masters level or doctoral level psychologist. You will be allowed to tape record the interview and then transcribe it accordingly (make sure you get permission from the instructor to record).

Questions (you may modify and/or add to these questions as you deem necessary):

- How did your interest in psychology develop?
- What is your area of specialization?
- What made you decided on that area of specialization?
- What led you to decide to get a masters/doctorate?
- Would you describe what it was like to apply to graduate school?
- What can you do as an undergraduate to increase your chances of getting into a graduate program?
- Would you describe your educational background including where you attended school, the types of courses you completed, how long it took?
- What are your research interests (if any)?
- Would you describe some of the research you have done?
- What does it take to get research published?
- What are your future goals as it relates to psychology?

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Activity

You will be directed to the following websites: parapsych.org, randu.org (and related websites). You will be asked to read the information and think about the controversy regarding the validity of ESP phenomenon. You will then discuss your thoughts with the instructor for a period of 15-30 minutes. (refer to the “Technology Usage” section below)

Research Techniques

You will be asked to complete a research paper on the topic of **ESP** using the following guidelines:

The research paper will be review of the topic area using articles from **psychology journals (not magazines)** and related books. A **minimum** of 8 references will be required, four of which must

be journal articles (a minimum of one reference can be a website). This review will be in your own words. Paraphrases and quotes must be cited (what source the information came from) within your paper. You will be required to use APA (American Psychological Association) style for these internal citations. If you are unfamiliar with APA style, you will need to familiarize yourself with this system.

Paper Guidelines: must be a **minimum** of ten (10) full pages. This paper will be graded on a 100-point scale. I will evaluate the appropriate use of APA style, grammar, and the overall flow of the paper. References from psychology journals are to be no older than 1996 (books-1990). This paper has to be **typed** or **word processed**, with standard margins (1 inch top, bottom, and both sides) and standard spacing (double spaced) between lines.

Technology Usage

You will be asked to take what you have learned from the “Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Activity” discussed above and create a power point presentation that supports your opinion regarding the validity of ESP phenomenon.

Appendices

- A. Honors Program Application**
- B. Conditional Acceptance Agreement**
- C. STC Honors Program Student Contract**
- D. Sample Honors Program Contract**
- E. National Collegiate Council Information**
- F. Service Learning Information**
- G. Writing Across the Curriculum/Disciplines**

IV. Write a paragraph stating your short and long term goals.

V. List any honors you have received or activities you have participated in.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

VI. Honors Program Course Components Student Agreement:

I understand and agree that once enrolled in an Honors class, I will be required to complete/participate in the five Honors Program Components: 1. Interview 2. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Activities 3. Research Techniques 4. Technology Usage 5. A must “read” book, essay or article. I, also, understand that I cannot change from a “split” section Honors class to a regular class after the posting of the 12th Day Roster.

Applicant’s Name _____
Date

**Please return application to the Academic Excellence Office Annex Bldg., Rm. X—103
(956) 872-6440 / E-mail: honors@southtexascollege.edu**

Approved / Disapproved Date Submitted: _____

Honors Program Facilitator Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



**Honors Program
Conditional Acceptance Agreement**

E-mail: honors@southtexascollege.edu

You have been conditionally accepted into the South Texas College Honors Program. You have one long semester- Fall ____ or Spring ____ to remove any deficiencies. If deficiencies are not removed, you will be dropped from the Honors Program, but can re-apply once you meet all Honors Program requirements.

Reasons for conditional acceptance: _____



Honors Program

Student Course Contract

In addition to meeting all the course objectives/competencies of the course, an Honors Program student must complete the five components/objectives stated below in order to earn Honors credit.

Honors Program Components:

- Interview
- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Activities
- Research Techniques
- Technology Usage
- ‘Must’ Read Book, Essay or Article

Semester: _____ Year: _____ Date: _____

Student: _____ Student ID #: _____

Course Title: _____

Course Number: _____

Instructor: _____

Read the following: *I understand and agree that once enrolled in an Honors class, I will be required to complete/participate in the Five Honors Program Components—Interview, Critical Thinking/Problem Solving Activities, Research Techniques, Technology Usage, and a ‘Must’ Read Book, Essay or Article.*

I, also, understand that I cannot change from a ‘split’ section Honors class to a regular class after the posting of the 12th Day Roster.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Instructor’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Sample Honors Program Contracts

By Theresa A. James

Oklahoma City Community College

Contract for Honors Credit

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____ ID#: _____

Course Title and Number: _____

Course Section Number: _____

Semester (Fall Spring Summer): _____ Fiscal Year: _____

Instructor's Name: _____ Division: _____

Describe as fully as possible the additional work or project that this student must complete in order to earn "honors" credit for the course. After both student and instructor sign the contract, return it to the Honors Coordinator for final approval.

Student's Signature: _____

Instructor's Signature: _____

Approved by: _____

Honors Coordinator: _____

Date: _____

Oklahoma City 1 of 1

National Collegiate Council Information

**Beginning in Honors
A Handbook-Fourth Edition
National Collegiate Honors Council
By: Samuel Schuman**

CURRICULUM

The single most important feature of any honors program is its people: the students who learn there and the faculty who teach them. Next would have to come the substance of what they teach and learn together: The Curriculum.

Types of Honors Courses

The curricular arrangements that have been employed in collegiate honors programs are nearly limitless. That infinite variety, however, turns out to be, in virtually all cases, some choice or combination of four basic course types:

1. *Honors sections of regular courses.* This option is especially popular in institutions with fairly prescribed general education curricula, and hence several multi-sectioned courses (e.g., freshman English, introductory biology, beginning calculus, and the like.) Honors sections usually cover most of the same material as the regular course for which they substitute, but may involve different and/or extra readings or writing assignments, altered pedagogy, more difficult material, higher expectations, and/or smaller sections. This sort of course is attractive in situations in which especially bright or well-prepared students may find themselves undertaking coursework that might be repetitious and unchallenging to them.
2. *Enriched options within regular courses.* This curricular model differs from honors sections in that honors students and non-honors students are enrolled or embedded in the same sections of the same course, but honors students are expected to complete some extra project or assignment. Often this involves doing an additional or much more in-depth paper. Sometimes it involves separate discussion groups. Needless to say, this pathway is one of the easiest to follow since it tends to involve absolutely no instructional costs: usually the

instructors of such sections can be asked to undertake the slight burden of assigning and grading the extra work, gratis.

- 3. *Special Honors Courses.*** Perhaps the most popular curriculum option for most honors programs is the distinctive honors course. Often such courses are interdisciplinary, although not always. Sometimes, but not always, they are team-taught, sometimes by teams of more than a pair of instructors. Frequently these honors courses are conducted on some variant of the graduate seminar model, where the goal is much high-level, well-prepared give and take among students and professors. This sort of course is in some ways the most inviting curricular choice, but it is also of the most expensive and by far the most time-consuming for the honors administrator. That is especially the case when the course is perpetually reinvented and the instruction perpetually re-brokered. An honors director generating one team-taught, one-time-only honors course per semester, or even per year, will quickly discover that as soon as one course is established, it is past time to begin work on the next. Particularly at smaller schools, the amount of negotiation necessary to put such a course together can be intimidating. For the part-time honors director, especially, special honors courses can be a high-risk, high-gain venture. At larger schools, the burden of generating special honors courses is somewhat lighter for at least two reasons. First, the more ample the curriculum of the institution as a whole, the smaller a sacrifice it will probably seem to create one additional special course. An academic department with fifty faculty members is probably going to find it easier to spring one of them to teach or team teach a special honors course than is a department of five. (Knowing this may not make the actual negotiations with a reluctant department chair one whit easier.) Of course, this general rule is subject to considerable variation. Well-to-do smaller colleges may, in fact, have more flexibility with staffing than some quite large schools working on a tight budget or with rigorous controls on faculty assignment and workload. Secondly, the more administrative time the director of the honors program is assigned, obviously the more time there is to broker such courses. Thus large programs with full-time administrators may realistically contemplate a

perpetual calendar of special honors courses, both new and recurring. The point is that while special honors courses are attractive and are often the first curricular option new honors programs turn to, the institution with sharp constraints or limited honors resources should recognize that these courses are costly. They consume much administrative energy and faculty commitment and, hence, should be approached with a bit of caution. Clearly, once successful courses are brokered, it is desirable to offer them more than once, perhaps two or three iterations, with a reasonable break between offerings.

4. *Honors Projects*. A final project or theses is probably the most pervasive characteristics of honors curricula. Usually, this work is done on a more or less independent, tutorial basis. The vast majority of honors projects are done in the senior year although some institutions permit students to begin in their fifth or sixth semester. In many situations some sort of quasi-doctoral final exercise, such as an oral exam, outside readers, public presentation, or some combination thereof, culminates the honors project. Sometimes the honors project is required to be part of a student's major; sometimes it is not. In some cases, in fact, cross-disciplinary projects are encouraged or mandated. Formal requirements for honors projects also vary wildly: some are quite flexible and informal, permitting creative or even experiential work, while others are rather strictly modeled after graduate thesis production.

Obviously combinations and variations of these four curricular types will be found. Some institutions have directed study options that do not lead to a project or thesis; some have arranged classes with very few students-three or four sometimes-per instructor; some have student-led seminars.

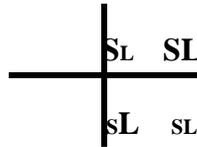
Few small or two-year college honors programs offer all four types of honors courses. Many offer only one. Probably the majority combines two or three elements: special honors courses and a thesis, say. The larger the honors program, logically, the greater the chance that several or all these types of curricular options will be available. Many major university honors colleges offer all four options, sometimes with additional combinations and variations. Obviously, decisions regarding the type of honors work and how much to offer

should depend upon a hardheaded assessment of institutional ability to populate courses, both with students and teachers. An institution with relatively few professors, large classes, high teaching loads, and little fiscal flexibility will find creating an extra honors course every term, especially a team-taught seminar-style offering, exceptionally difficult. An institution with an all-college senior thesis might not want to invent an honors version of that requirement.

Service Learning Information

Service Learning is a pedagogical approach to connect course content with community or business involvement. It takes the classroom into *real world* situations. It allows the students to practice content concepts in the community or work force. It allows students to reflect on the value of course content through hands-on experiences and reflective journals. Service Learning is a viable part of a college/university curriculum. It can be designed in many ways

Service Learning Designs



The scope of a Service Learning design is based on the commitment of administration and faculty. This includes funds for site visits, stipends for faculty, and resources. Any of the following designs work, but the question to ask-Where is the rigor?

Goals of Service Learning

- To enhance student learning by joining theory with experience and thought with action
- To fill unmet needs in the community through direct service which is meaningful and necessary?

Benefits of Service Learning

- Enhances the mission of South Texas College
- Increases student learning through active learning experiences

Developing a Service Learning Course

- Identify specific content
- Identify specific objective(s)
- Identify community or business contact person
- Arrange meeting to discuss scope of classroom activity objective(s)
- Gather all necessary documentation for student signature
- Explain all procedures and expectations with students
- Give time table for completion of all assignments
- Have students turn in their 'product (i.e. journal reflections)
- Discuss and relate to course content the various experiences during class
- Do it again!!!!

Excerpts from STC Service Learning Faculty Guidebook, Spring 2008

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)/Disciplines

Many students take Composition I and do well, but they see composition as an island and do not use their composition skills in other classes. They forget or leave behind the basic rules of good writing and standard grammar. WAC is a movement that hones students' writing and analytical skills because as students write, they take time to reflect. No course in Academia is void of writing or the opportunity to write; therefore, faculty in all disciplines should assign writing assignments that are designed for their content area. All faculty members can identify both good and bad writing and it is the responsibility of each faculty member to guide their students toward the 'good.'

The benefits to WAC are obvious. This pedagogical approach allows students to refine their writing skills in each discipline. Writing allows students time to reflect and rethink their responses to assignments or research papers. In time, students lose their fear of writing because it becomes a tool not an obstacle. Writing and reading go hand in hand, so students who are exposed to continuous writing become more accustomed to reading which broadens their academic and real world horizons. Using WAC is an *all win* situation for students.