

Sierra College Honors

Honors Course Contracts

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is an Honors Course Contract?

Students* interested in a more challenging classroom experience may contract with a willing instructor to complete the course with Honors credit. These are not separate Honors course, but rather standard, degree-applicable courses (with the exception of Developmental Education courses) for which a contract is created detailing higher-level assignments, projects, internships, or other activities that qualify as Honors-level coursework to be completed by the student. The student and instructor create the contract together at the beginning of the semester. Its requirements must be completed by the end of the semester. Instructors are not required to engage in Honors contracts, so it is a good idea to email or call instructors prior to registering for classes to ask if they would be willing to enter into Honors Contracts. Completion by a student of the Honors Course Contract stipulations along with an earned course grade of A or B will result in a notation on the student's transcript indicating that the course was "Completed with Honors." Please note completion of Honors Contracts does not affect the student's GPA.

Honors contracts are not meant to make students work more; they are intended to enrich the educational experience of Sierra students by facilitating greater student-faculty interaction and allowing students to develop their skills and learn beyond what is required of other students in the course.

Sierra College Honors Course Contracts may vary in format, but all require regular meetings with the professor of the course and shall culminate in tangible evidence of the student's additional effort. The elements of the contract should include a focused problem-centered objective involving several of the following: additional emphasis on reading, writing, critical thinking, leadership, problem solving, research, technical skills, and gaining educational knowledge and experience beyond the classroom.

How does the Honors Course Contract process work?

If a student wishes to convert a regular course offering to Honors, the student needs to approach the professor before or soon after the first day of class to ask if the professor is willing to supervise an Honors contract. Similarly, faculty may offer honors contracts to their students during the class's initial orientation lectures. **When a student and an instructor agree to contract for honors credit for the course, they must follow four steps:**

1. As soon as possible, the student should download a copy of the Honors Course Contract Proposal form, Student Checklist, and Instruction Packet from the Honors website at www.sierracollege.edu/programs/honors.htm. Instructors may also find these documents within Honors folder in the online Sierra College Public Folders. The Proposal and Checklist are Adobe forms with fields where information is to be entered electronically. **Do not use previous versions of the Proposal and Checklist. If you have problems opening the forms, please download the latest FREE version of Adobe reader at <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.**
2. The instructor and student should then schedule an appointment together to discuss what to include in the Honors Course Contract Proposal and to read over the Instruction Packet. All information (except signatures) is to be typed directly into the Proposal document. The Proposal can be saved and emailed back and forth between the student and instructor as they complete their respective parts. Once complete, 2 hardcopies are printed and the instructor and student initial and sign the Honors Course Contract Proposal.

3. After the Proposal is completed, the student must fill out the Student Checklist electronically, print one copy, and sign the Checklist.
4. For review and approval, submit two copies of the signed Honors Course Contract Proposal and the Student Checklist to the Honors Committee by a deadline determined as follows.
 - a. The submission deadline is 3:00 pm on the fourth Thursday of the semester.
 - b. Honors Course Contract Proposals are only accepted in the Fall and Spring semesters. No Proposals are accepted in the Summer semester.

Address for submission of contract proposal and checklist: Honors Committee, c/o Prof. Jennifer Kattman, Weaver Hall, Room 217.

After a member of the Honors Committee has reviewed a submission, a designated member of the Honors Committee will notify the instructor to relate whether or not the contract proposal meets the Sierra College Honors objectives and requirements. Should a proposal fail to meet these objectives and requirements, the instructor and student must make the recommended corrections and resubmit the Honors Course Contract Proposal to the Honors Committee within a few days (the exact day and time will be provided). **One revision only will be permitted.** If an Honors Course Contract Proposal is approved by the Honors Committee, then once a student completes the Honors Course Contract requirements and receives a grade B or higher for the course, his/her transcript will reflect "Course Completed with Honors."

What if a student signs an Honors Course Contract and then fails to fulfill the stipulations of the contract?

Should a student fail to fulfill all of the requirements of an Honors Course Contract but completes the regular course work and requirements, that student will receive whatever grade he or she earned for the course, but will not receive an honors transcript notation for that course.

What if a professor is unwilling to offer an Honors Course Contract?

Honors Course Contracts are voluntary. No Sierra College instructor is obligated to provide Honors Course Contracts for any student or course (any degree-applicable course at Sierra College, with the exception of Developmental Education courses may be taken for Honors credit). If a student approaches a Sierra College instructor about an honors contract and the instructor is not offering the Honors option, the student may inquire of other instructors teaching that course, or contact the Honors Committee Chair for additional options. It is advised that a student contact instructors prior to selecting his or her courses to ensure the instructor is willing to offer the honors option.

How many Honors Contracts may a student undertake within a given semester?

A student is restricted from submitting more than one Honors Course Contract in a given semester unless he/she has successfully completed one contract in a previous semester. After successfully completing one Honors Course Contract, a student may attempt a maximum of 10 units of Honors Course Contracts per semester. The Honors Committee will consider requests for more than 10 units of Honors Course work per semester on a student-by-student basis, but recommends that students do not attempt more than 10 units of Honors Course work in any semester to ensure the quality of their work in all classes does not suffer.

***Please note that high school enrichment students may NOT participate in Honors Contracts.**

**If you would like more information, please contact:
Prof. Jennifer Kattman, Honors Committee Chair
jkattman@sierracollege.edu (916) 660-8067 Weaver Hall, Room 217**