

Angelo State University Honors Program



Faculty Handbook

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The Honors Program

Mission Statement and Goals

The Angelo State University Honors Program is designed to add value to an ASU education by offering academically talented students an enriched learning experience. While its focus is primarily academic, the Honors Program is also dedicated to providing its students with a well-rounded, individualized experience that addresses their personal and professional goals.

The Honors Program seeks to foster self-confidence, campus involvement and independence through a variety of experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Honors students receive personalized career advising, work with top notch faculty, participate in numerous cultural events and are members of a special, intellectual and exciting community of students.

Mission Statement

The Honors Program at Angelo State University will provide students with the opportunity to:

- 1) Participate in undergraduate research opportunities
- 2) Achieve a deeper understanding of course material
- 3) Have access to cultural and intellectual events that will broaden their appreciation of the world that surrounds them
- 4) Develop leadership qualities that will help them through their careers and personal lives
- 5) Nurture an understanding and appreciation of the diverse needs of society and how their personal service can enhance the quality of life for their family and others

The Honors Program achieves these goals through course offerings and extracurricular activities designed to challenge and enhance the intellectual and personal abilities of Honors Program students.

Honors Program Goals

- 1) To provide students with enriched academic experiences
- 2) To challenge students to achieve to the best of their academic and personal abilities
- 3) To provide students more direct contact with faculty and distinguished guest speakers
- 4) To encourage students to participate in undergraduate research and present their results at regional and national meetings in their fields
- 5) To provide students with a core group of academically focused individuals who share the common goal of personal achievement and success
- 6) To assist students in pursuing postgraduate degrees by providing them with experiences that help determine what career fields they should follow
- 7) To provide students an enhanced interdisciplinary educational experience
- 8) To encourage students to actively, not passively, learn from their studies
- 9) To provide students with opportunities for personal enrichment through access to cultural events and service opportunities

Honors Program Student Basic Needs and Core Values

Basic Needs Assessment

1. Development of good study skills and habits
2. Development of good interpersonal skills
3. Professional development and guidance in career choices
4. Inclusion rather than exclusion of individuals
5. Learning to treat others with respect and compassion

Student Core Values

Students in the Angelo State University Honors Program should:

1. Take personal responsibility for themselves and the continued improvement of the Program
2. Develop a connection with the academic, local and international community through direct interaction and service
3. Treat others with respect and compassion
4. Exhibit excellence and personal integrity in all personal, academic and professional endeavors
5. Collaborate with and exhibit respect for fields of study other than their own
6. Be willing to participate in active, not passive, learning

Applying

Admission Criteria

The honors criteria for new and existing students are provided below. Students failing to meet these requirements, but still wishing to be considered as an honors student, are encouraged to talk to the Honors Program director. Exceptions to the criteria may be made provided that evidence of extenuating circumstances does exist.

Entering Freshman Requirements

- Top 10% of high school class
- 1200 SAT (Critical reading + Math sections) or 27 ACT
- Completed Honors Program Application, two (2) Letters of Reference, and Applicant Disclosure Form
- Extracurricular activities
- Agree to follow the current Honors Student Handbook

Existing (Spring Admission) or Transfer Students

- GPA 3.25 or better
- Top 10% of high school class
- 1200 SAT (Critical reading + Math sections) or 27 ACT
- Completed Honors Program Application, two (2) Letters of Reference, and Applicant Disclosure Form
- Extracurricular activities
- Agree to follow the current Honors Student Handbook

Application Procedures

Students interested in the Honors Program must complete an application form, provide two academic references, fill out an Applicant Disclosure form and provide a copy of an official transcript from their high school and any college that they have attended (if applicable). The deadline for regular admissions is in April and may be found at the Honors Program website. The deadline for our spring admission program is in early March and this deadline may also be found at the Honors Program website. We try to provide a very quick turnaround in regard to admissions decisions though this may take a week or so during times of the year when we receive a large volume of applications.

Spring Admission Program

Current ASU students who have achieved a 3.25 GPA or better may apply for admission to the Honors Program after their first fall semester through the Spring Admission process. Although Honors coursework will typically not begin until the following fall semester, newly accepted students are immediately extended Honors benefits, such as 24/7 access to the Honors Lounge. We conduct information sessions during February each year in order to provide potential spring admission students with an opportunity to learn more about the Honors Program and to ask any questions in regard to the program. Faculty and staff may also nominate good students for the program. A nomination form is available on our website. The deadline for applications for spring admission is in early March and is posted on our website.

Student Benefits

As a faculty member in the Honors Program, you are likely going to be asked what benefits there are to being a student in the program. One of your responses to this question needs to be something along the lines of “don’t just join the Honors Program for the perceived benefits.” This may sound strange for us to encourage this approach but, trust us, students who join the program solely because of benefits typically do not last that long or (even worse) do not fully understand what we are trying to accomplish with the program.

Having said all of this, we still realize that faculty who teach in the Honors Program should be aware of the benefits that we offer students in the program. These benefits are described below, and further details are available on our website.

Honors Designation on Diploma

By participating in an enhanced educational experience, Honors students add value to their Angelo State education. An Honors seal on their ASU diplomas and special designation on their transcripts demonstrate hard work, commitment and the desire to make the most out of their college education.

Additional Scholarship Opportunities

After one year in the Honors Program, students who maintain a GPA of 3.25 and attend specified meetings and events are eligible for special scholarships through the Honors Program. Additionally, more than 85 percent of incoming Honors freshman are recipients of a Carr Scholarship. (Honors students must apply separately for a Carr Scholarship.)

Early Registration for Classes

Honors students register for classes each semester with the first eligible student group, regardless of current classification. This allows Honors students to balance their ambitious class schedules and to increase their chances of registering for classes that fill up quickly.

Honors Residence Space

Honors students create living-learning communities with designated, premier space in one of our most popular residence halls. Students wishing to reside in the Honors-designated section of Texan Hall must meet one of the following requirements: 1) be a member of the Honors Program, 2) meet one of the criteria for the Honors Program or have a 3.25 GPA at Angelo State University. Contact Residential Programs for more information.

The Honors Lounge

Honors students and their guests have 24/7 access to the Honors Lounge. The lounge is located on the third floor of the Porter Henderson Library and has exclusive amenities, including computers, large work areas, comfortable furniture and free copying privileges.

Honors Activities and Events

The Honors Program provides students direct access to special campus visitors, such as former ambassadors and featured conference speakers. The program also provides opportunities to participate in local cultural and enrichment activities, including theater, symphony, rodeo and

ballet performances. Barbeques, luaus and other social functions are conducted at the ASU Lake House, a place where Honors students can take a break from their studies and enjoy food, fun, games and friendships.

Greater Student-Faculty Interaction

Highly motivated and dedicated faculty directly interact with Honors students. Smaller class sizes promise academically enriched courses and more personal attention, so faculty can challenge and mentor students. These close relationships can also manifest into stronger and more personal letters of recommendation upon graduation.

A Strong Mentoring and Support System

Many resources are available through the Honors Program to help our students achieve their academic and personal best.

Staff Support – The Honors Program has a designated, devoted staff that nurtures students and provides career guidance, personal attention and special opportunities for growth outside the classroom.

Peer Mentoring – One of the most treasured benefits of being in the Honors Program is the interaction with other talented and committed students who understand the importance and share in the challenges of college. Through association, Honors students receive peer-to-peer acceptance, assistance and friendship. We also provide each incoming student with an upperclassman mentor who will act as a mentor guide and friend.

Networking Opportunities - Honors students have numerous opportunities to network with successful alumni, students, community leaders, and as well as faculty from other universities.

Additional Travel Opportunities

The Honors Program organizes numerous trips geared toward the educational development of its students and the presentation of student research. Students presenting research projects or academic papers have access to travel funds and many Honors trips are fully funded by the program. In addition, Honors students can receive scholarships to participate in summer study abroad programs.

Personalized Undergraduate and Career Advising

The Carry Forward Program provides staff dedicated to helping all Honors Program students reach their goals, including graduate school, professional school or placement in a competitive job field. More than 90 percent of ASU Honors graduates have entered a graduate or professional school program.

Access to the Honors Alumni Network

Fellow Honors alumni know that it takes a special person to accept the challenges and potential for personal growth associated with the Honors Program. These individuals will give strong hiring and/or academic consideration to other Honors graduates, even those who did not attend the same college.

Internship Possibilities

The Honors Program works with the Washington Center to provide Honors Program and other ASU students with the opportunity to participate in internship programs in the Washington, D.C., area. To quote from the Washington Center Website, “The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars provides an integrated academic and work experience to prepare college students and professionals for lives of achievement and civic engagement.”

Exclusive Eligibility for Early Decision and Priority Acceptance Programs into Law, Medicine and Physical Therapy

Honors students who meet specific criteria are afforded the unique opportunity to participate in the Honors Advantage (Law/Medicine) and Physical Therapy Priority Acceptance programs. Students who commit to the Honors Advantage Program also receive additional scholarships and benefits.

Research Opportunities

Another substantial benefit to being a student in the Honors Program is the opportunity to conduct research. A successful undergraduate research project may help give students an edge when pursuing future job prospects or when applying to professional and graduate schools. In addition, many students conducting research present their findings or projects at professional meetings and symposiums.

Introduction to Honors Research (HONR 3281) requires every Honors student to develop a proposal for research in their academic field. Honors students are strongly encouraged to pursue the research or academic activity outlined in their proposal by submitting it for internal or external funding.

Additionally, by choosing the Honors Thesis Option, Honors students conduct a year-long research or scholarly project within their academic field. Students choosing the Thesis Option will have the title of their thesis project stated on their Angelo State University transcript.

Honors Program Curriculum Tracks

In an effort to meet each Honors student's academic goals and circumstances, the Angelo State University Honors Program offers three possible degree tracks. An Honors student may also choose to pursue the Thesis Option and conduct a year-long research or scholarly project.

Each curriculum track and the Thesis Option were developed by an interdisciplinary committee with careful attention being given to degree requirements for every major on campus. Because of this, the Honors Program is a viable option for all majors at ASU.

Option One Track

Designated as "Highest University Honors" on the ASU transcript and diploma, the Option One Track requires 27 Honors credit hours. A \$3,000 scholarship per academic year is provided to current Option One Honors students after their first full year in the Honors Program.

Option One Track Requirements (27 Honors credit hours)

1. An Option One Degree Planning Form must be completed with your advisor.
2. Must complete at least 15 Honors hours in Honors core curriculum courses. Please see the Core Curriculum Requirements Comments below.
3. Only six Honors hours may be obtained by taking Honors contract courses. Please see the Contract Comments below.
4. Six Honors hours must be within the student's academic department. Three departmental hours can be substituted by participating in a study abroad program.
5. HONR 3281- Introduction to Honors Research. This course is offered every fall and should be taken during the student's junior year.
6. HONR 4181- Honors Seminar. This course is offered every spring and should be taken during the student's senior year.

Option Two Track

Designated as "High University Honors" on the ASU transcript and diploma, the Option Two Track requires 18 Honors credit hours. A \$1,500 scholarship per academic year is provided to current Option Two Honors students after their first full year in the Honors Program.

Option Two Track Requirements (18 Honors credit hours)

1. An Option Two Degree Planning Form must be completed with your advisor.
2. Must complete at least nine Honors hours in Honors core curriculum courses. Please see the Core Curriculum Requirements Comments below.
3. Only three Honors hours may be obtained by taking Honors contract courses. Please see the Contract Comments below.

4. Three Honors hours must be within the student's academic department.
5. HONR 3281- Introduction to Honors Research. This course is offered every fall and should be taken during the student's junior year.
6. HONR 4181- Honors Seminar. This course is offered every spring and should be taken during the student's senior year.

GPHC/NCHC Track

Designated as "Highest University Honors" on the ASU transcript and diploma, the GPHC/NCHC Track is for students who have graduated from a Great Plains Honors Conference/National Collegiate Honors Conference community college Honors Program. This track requires 27 Honors credit hours, with at least 12 hours obtained from ASU. A \$3000 scholarship per academic year is provided to current GPHC/NCHC Honors students immediately upon entering the Honors Program.

GPHC/NCHC Community College Member Track Requirements (27 Honors credit hours; at least 12 hours obtained from ASU)

1. Eligibility: Students who graduate from a community college Honors Program that is an institutional member of GPHC and NCHC. For scholarship and transcript purposes only, students in this track are considered to be Option One students and will receive a scholarship their first semester in the program provided that they have a 3.25 transfer GPA.
2. Honors credit obtained from a community college Honors Program that is a member of GPHC and NCHC will be applied toward satisfying requirements in this track. Please see the Core Curriculum Requirement Comments below.
3. At least 12 of the Honors credits required to graduate as an Option One student must be obtained at Angelo State University. These credits must include HONR 3281 and HONR 4181.
 - a. HONR 3281- Introduction to Honors Research. This course is offered every fall and should be taken during the student's junior year.
 - b. HONR 4181- Honors Seminar. This course is offered every spring and should be taken during the student's senior year

Core Curriculum Requirement Comments

1. Honors core curriculum hours should be from different disciplines whenever pre-existing credit allows.
2. Exceptions to Option Two core curriculum requirements may be made for students who have already satisfied their core curriculum requirements prior to entering the program.
3. Standing contract courses may be used to satisfy Honors core curriculum hour requirements.
4. GPHC/NCHC community college member track students are exempt from Honors core curriculum requirements.
5. Honors core curriculum courses are listed below.

Contract Comments

1. The limit on the number of contract hours does not include standing contract courses (e.g. GEO 1402, ECO 2301, MATH 1332).
2. Contract courses may not be used in place of a course that is already offered as an Honors course. For example, we offer an Honors section of COMM 2301 so a COMM 2301 contract could not be used in lieu of taking the Honors section of COMM 2301.
3. Students may petition the Honors Program to make an exception to the limit on the number of contract hours based upon their individual or pre-existing course credit situation.

Thesis Option

All Honors students choosing to pursue the Thesis Option will conduct a year-long research or scholarly project. The title of the thesis project will be stated on their ASU transcript.

Honors Thesis Option Requirements

1. In order to receive the designation of Honors Thesis on their transcript, students must complete the following requirements listed below.
2. Work for the thesis project must be submitted as a proposal in HONR 3281. Students must receive an A on their HONR 3281 proposal.
3. An Honors Thesis Initiation Form must be completed before any research toward the Honors thesis is started.
4. Thesis work should span more than one academic semester and be of sufficient contribution to the academic field to warrant acceptance as an Honors thesis project. The thesis supervisor will be the individual who will make this decision.
5. The scholarly work must be presented both at Angelo State University and externally.
 - a. External is defined as an independently organized event that is external to Angelo State University.
 - b. Fall graduates may use the Student Research Symposium to present their work at ASU. Spring graduates may use the Carr Research symposium (if applicable) or Honors Thesis Symposium to present their work at ASU.
 - c. Students must present the results of their work in their HONR 4181 class.
6. Formatting for the thesis should follow the current Honors thesis manual.
7. An electronic copy of the approved thesis (if applicable) along with a completed Honors Thesis Completion Form must be submitted to the Honors Program according to the schedule below.
 - a. Fall Graduates: November 30th
 - b. Spring Graduates: April 30th

Advising

Honors Program faculty are sometimes asked what the advising requirements are for students in the program. Pre-advising in the Honors Program is a multi-step process that is outlined below:

1. Students sign a Contract of Understanding which states that they have “read the most current Honors Student Handbook, and they agree to abide by the requirements stated in that Handbook.”
2. Students also fill out a degree planning form that indicates which semester they plan to take each of their required courses in the Honors Program. Regular admission students do this during the fall of their freshman year. Spring admission students do this upon being admitted into the program. An honors advisor will help students fill this form out which is finally approved by the Honors Program director.

The actual process of advising first involves the student taking a completed Honors Degree Planning Form when visiting the designated honors academic advisor within their department. The degree planning form will help both student and advisor make plans for the upcoming semester. The student’s regular advising flag will then be tripped by their academic advisor. After this process is completed, the student will show their desired schedule to the honors advisor, who will primarily review the desired schedule to make sure that it fits with their degree planning form and any known career goals for the student. The advisor will trip the honors advising flag. After this process is completed, the student will be eligible to register for their courses.

Honors Degree Planning Forms are available on our website. Also, designated Honors advisors are listed on our website.

Honors Courses

Overview

Faculty who teach Honors courses are often gratified to see that Honors students are interested in exploring course material in more detail and with less formal structure. Due to the motivated nature of these students, faculty can explore alternative means of teaching course material. Our Honors Program is specifically designed to allow faculty a chance to “push the envelope” of instruction and experiment with presenting material in an alternate way.

Honors Course Characteristics

- ***Class Size***

Honors classes will be comprised of approximately twenty students. Enrollment in these courses will be limited to Honors students and non-Honors students that meet Honors Program requirements.

- ***Grading***

Honors students do not receive any extra dispensation on their GPA for taking an Honors course. The students, therefore, should be awarded the same grade given to a student taking a regular section of the same course, provided they accomplish the same level of work. Honors students should, therefore, be graded on what they learn rather than on a competitive grading system. Honors courses need to be an enriching experience and not a punitive one. Importantly, Honors courses should not be taught like graduate courses.

- ***Participation of Students***

Honors students are generally more interested in class participation. Faculty are strongly encouraged to use alternative teaching styles, such as group projects or group assignments, whenever these methods are appropriate. Due to the small size of Honors classes, direct interaction between faculty and students is much easier to coordinate.

- ***Written and Oral Expression***

Honors students should be expected to express themselves both orally and in writing. Indeed, it is a major goal of the Honors Program to develop these important skills in our students. This expression can take several forms, such as research papers, position papers, class discussions and journal entries.

- ***Student Involvement***

Your involvement in the Honors Program will sometimes result in a more personal relationship with the students. Do not be surprised if an Honors student asks you to be an advisor on a research project or serve as a sponsor of a student organization.

Academic Requirements

In order to remain in the Honors Program, students that are on the Option One curriculum track must take at least one Honors Program course each long-term semester (Fall and Spring). Students that are on the Option Two curriculum track are not required to take an Honors Program course each semester.

Students must also maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25. If the cumulative GPA of an Honors Program student falls below 3.25, they will be required to participate in the Honors Probation Program. Students on probation will still receive all of the rights and privileges provided to an Honors Program student. First semester freshman Honors Program students have two long semesters to bring their cumulative GPA above 3.25. All other students are provided with one semester to bring their cumulative GPA above 3.25. If, after the aforementioned period, the cumulative GPA of a student remains below a 3.25, then they are removed from the program.

Students who fail to meet the course or GPA requirements stated above have the right to petition the Honors Program Director to remain in the program. One of two things will happen at this time: additional conditions for remaining in the program will be placed on the honors student at this time, or they will be removed from the program.

Honors Course Attendance

An excessive amount of absences in an Honors Program course is unacceptable behavior for an honors student; honors students are expected to attend their honors courses on a consistent basis. If an honors student misses more than one equivalent week of lecture due to unexcused absences; (three days for MWF or two days for TR courses), they will first be required to meet with the Honors Program Director to discuss their attendance. The second absence following this meeting may result in removal from the program.

Honors Program Course Drop Policy

Drop policy

Honors students will only be able to drop an honors course under the most extraordinary or extenuating circumstances and only when the drop is approved by the Honors Director or Honors Council. Honors students are free to drop non-honors courses as regular students are. Below is the outline of the drop procedure for honors courses:

1. Fill out an honors course drop form (located on our website) that includes a 250 word essay stating why the student needs to drop the course;
2. Students wishing to drop an honors course must meet with an Honors Program staff member to fully explain why they wish to drop the course. An updated degree planning form must also be filled out in consultation with the Honors Program staff member. The updated degree planning form must provide details as to how the student will address the dropped course and still be able to finish the Honors Program;
3. In the case of a student requesting a drop for the first time or a drop of an “elective” honors course, the Honors Director will review the drop form, degree plan and any other relevant information and render a decision. In the case of a denial, students will have the right to request a review by the Honors Council. This appeal must be submitted to the Director within one week of receipt of the decision. Appeals made after this time will be automatically denied.
4. In the case of a student requesting a drop for extraordinary or extenuating circumstances, the Honors Council will review the drop form, degree plan and any other relevant information and render a decision.

Important Notes

1. Honors Program students are encouraged to take additional honors courses that are not on their current Honors Program degree planning form. Students will be allowed to drop these “elective” honors courses without penalty provided that it is clear that they are not repetitively enrolling and subsequently dropping these courses. Students must, however, still go through the formal honors course drop procedure.
2. Honors Program students may be allowed to drop one Honors Program course provided that they can document the fact that they have made an effort to succeed in the class. Evidence such as a current passing grade in the class, regular attendance in class and turning in all required assignments to date are examples. In order to exercise this option, the student must have met with their instructor to discuss their desire to drop the course and document these items (current grade, attendance record and turned in assignments). The instructor will have the ability to recommend a drop approval in this case.
3. In the case of multiple honors offerings for a given requirement (e.g. lab science), students are allowed to take a course from a different area. A student may, for example, be allowed to drop honors CHEM 1411 and take honors BIO 1480 or GEO 1402 in a subsequent semester. The intention here is to allow students the opportunity to explore other academic areas. In the case of single honors offerings for a given requirement (e.g. HIST 1301, GOVT 2301), however, students will be required to take the same course.

Current Honors Program Courses

Core Curriculum Courses

Honors Courses

HONR 1302 (for ENG 1302)

HONR 2301 - Great Books I (for sophomore literature or humanities)

HONR 2302 - Great Books II (for visual and performing arts)

Honors Sections

BIO 1480

CHEM 1411

CHEM 1412

COMM 2301

ENG 1302 (also offered as HONR 1302)

GOVT 2301

HIST 1301

Standing Contract Courses

ECO 2301

GEOL 1402

MATH 1332

PHIL 2301

Additional Honors Courses

HONR 3281 (Introduction to Honors Research)

HONR 4181 (Honors Seminar)

MGT 4308

Honors by Contract

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide faculty at ASU with general guidelines to follow when allowing a student to take a regular section of a course for Honors credit.

Background Information

The Honors Program requires our students to take 3-6 hours within their major for Honors credit. Additionally, some students are going to have to take contract courses to satisfy honors core curriculum requirements. Since we are not currently in the position to offer these courses as Honors courses, students will have to take these courses by contract.

This is very similar to the “grades by contract” that some faculty currently use to establish the basic requirements needed for students to receive an A or B in their course. The primary difference is that an Honors contract course requires students to do additional projects or assignments within that course. It is at the discretion of the instructor as to how these additional projects and assignments are used to calculate final grades; however, if any aspect of the Honors contract is not fulfilled the Honors student will not receive Honors credit for that course.

Additional Requirements or Projects

In designing projects or additional requirements, faculty need to keep in mind that Honors courses are typically taught in more depth or more breadth as compared to regular courses. A research course for example could require an Honors student to present or publish their findings. A didactic course may require a student to develop a research paper and prepare a separate presentation for the class or faculty member.

Procedure

A student who wishes to take a course for Honors credit must initially contact the faculty member for permission to take their course by Honors credit. Students should not enroll in the course until they have contacted the professor to determine whether they will consider doing a contract with the student. This must be done by the end of the preceding semester. Faculty are not expected to honor last minute requests or requests made at the beginning of the semester in which the course is being offered; this places an unfair burden on the faculty member. The student should provide a copy of this document to the faculty member or direct them to the Honors website to retrieve a copy of this document.

After the student has gained permission to take a course by Honors contract, the faculty member and student will discuss the requirements that need to be met in order for the student to receive Honors credit. The Honors Director may be involved in this discussion at the request of both the student and faculty member. While the deadline for these projects is up to the discretion of the faculty member, it is strongly suggested that the deadline be set during or prior to the last full week of the semester.

Once an agreement has been reached, the faculty member will provide the student and Honors Director with an Honors Program Course by Contract Agreement form. The form will outline the additional requirements as well as what bearing those requirements will have on the student's

final grade. This form should be submitted to the Honors Program by the end of the second week of the semester that the course is being taken by honors contract. At the end of the course, the Contract Completion Form must be completed in order to confer honors credit for the course.

Forms

Honors Program Course by Contract Agreement Form, Contract Completion Form, and Student Contact Log are located on our website.

Course Development

How do I create an Honors course?

It is important to emphasize that faculty have the freedom to teach the material they wish to teach in an Honors course. Below are the basic steps that you will need to take in order to teach an Honors course:

- Contact your Department Head to discuss whether you may teach an Honors course.
- Forward a copy of your syllabus to the Honors Program Director along with a description of how it differs from a regular section of the course.

How should I teach an Honors course?

There is no definite right or wrong way to teach an Honors course. The most important thing to remember is that Honors courses are not intended to be punitive or “just plain hard.” An Honors course should simply explore material either in greater depth or breadth. This may mean teaching parts of the course out of a different textbook or using primary literature. The overall length of reading assignments, however, should not be excessively longer when compared to a regular section of the same course.

Guidelines for Writing an Honors Course Syllabus

Below are some general items that should be placed in a syllabus for an Honors course. Please contact the Honors Program Director if you have any questions.

1. Honor students should be aware that they are held to higher expectations.
2. Some mechanism for taking attendance should be in place so that absences can be documented. Excessive absences in Honors courses can lead to a student’s removal from the Honors Program.
3. Any issues concerning student performance, behavior or participation will be documented.
4. A statement needs to be placed in the syllabus that Honors students will abide by the requirements set forth in the Honors Student Handbook, which includes the following:
 - a. Attendance
 - b. Drop policy
 - c. Retaking Honors courses
 - d. Removal from the Honors Program

Previous Honors Faculty

The following faculty members have taught a course in the Honors Program. Please contact them to discuss the Honors Program and course development issues.

- Dr. Shirley Eoff (shirley.eoff@angelo.edu), HIST 1301
- Dr. Mark Hama (mark.hama@angelo.edu), HONR 2301
- Dr. Nick Flynn (nick.flynn@angelo.edu), CHEM 1411 Lab

Course Development Reference Materials

The following documents can be found on our website and may be used to help you develop an Honors course:

- Honors by Contract
- Honors Student Handbook
- Possible Honors Course Offerings

Selecting Honors Program Faculty

Purpose

The purpose of this document is intended to provide academic department heads with some helpful guidelines for selecting a faculty member to teach a course within the Honors Program.

Criteria

Criteria for choosing faculty members to teach honors courses have been gleaned from discussions with other directors as well as a review of other Honors Program websites. This is not intended to be a comprehensive set of criteria, but it is intended to help department heads with their selection.

1. Faculty should either be tenured or tenure track faculty members.
2. Tenure track faculty
 - a. Should have two to three years of teaching experience prior to teaching an honors course
 - b. Should have preferably undergone their third year review within their department
3. General faculty criteria
 - a. Excellence in teaching as evidenced by such traditional indicators as IDEA evaluations, student comments or faculty observation
 - b. Interest and/or success in implementing varied teaching methodologies (new or traditional)
 - c. Leadership within their department and/or on campus
 - d. Interest in and understanding of the Honors Program
 - e. Some demonstrated recent scholarly activity is also preferred
4. Additional criteria for a new honors course
 - a. Ability to adapt to a changing environment or situation (sometimes, changes need to be made to a new honors course mid-stream)
 - b. Willingness to take student comments into consideration in regard to improving their courses

Procedure

Existing honors courses

Due to a variety of reasons, a faculty member may choose not to teach an honors course again. When this occurs, both the department head and Honors Program director should be notified. A discussion concerning replacement of the faculty member will then be initiated between the department head and the Honors Program director. The criteria listed above should be taken into consideration when choosing the faculty member to teach the course. In the event that the faculty member who previously taught the course is still in the department, they should be contacted by the selected faculty member to discuss the honors course. Additionally, a copy of the proposed syllabus from the new faculty member should be provided to the Honors Program director. It is important to emphasize that faculty have some latitude in the material they teach in an Honors course. The proposed syllabus is **only** provided in order to help determine if the requirements and activities of the course will make it an honors experience for the students.

New honors courses

New Honors Program courses are typically initiated in one of two ways. The most predominant manner is one in which the director identifies a course that has potential to be taught as an honors course. We try to stay with the core curriculum as much as possible since a course offering in that area would likely appeal to most, if not all, of the members on campus. The director will then contact the respective department head to discuss the possibility of offering the course within their department. As is the case with an existing honors course, selection of a faculty member to teach the course is discussed using the criteria listed above after the decision has been made to offer an honors course within the department.

The second method in which a new honors course could be offered would be for a faculty member to propose offering a new honors course. The method for accomplishing this is fairly similar to the methods described above. The faculty member should contact either the head of their department or the Honors Program director. A copy of the proposed syllabus as well as a description of how the proposed course differs from a regular section of the course (if applicable) should be provided to both the department head and director for consideration. There will then be a discussion between the department head and director to determine the feasibility of offering the proposed course. It is important to emphasize that faculty have the freedom to teach the material they wish to teach in an Honors course. The proposed syllabus is **only** provided in order to help determine if the requirements and activities of the course will make it an honors experience for the students.

Course Evaluation Forms

We do a separate evaluation of each honors course that is essentially the same as supplemental course evaluations that some faculty conduct. Please note that this evaluation is in addition to the IDEA evaluation which must be given to every appropriate course, including honors course. This evaluation is an evaluation that is between the faculty member and the Honors Program director. Of course, the faculty member may choose to provide results of the evaluation form to their department chair. An abbreviated version of the form is provided on the following page.

Angelo State University Honors Program Individual Faculty and Course Evaluation

Commitment to the course

1. Rate your overall commitment to this particular course.
2. On average, rate the commitment of your fellow students to this particular course.

Organization

3. Rate the level of organization of class meetings.
4. Rate the degree to which the instructor guided class discussion toward learning.
5. Rate whether the main objectives of the course were made evident to the class.
6. Rate whether the main objectives of the course were reached in the class.
7. Rate the degree to which the course description accurately reflected the content of the course.
8. Rate the degree to which the instructor presented information clearly.

Grading

9. Rate the degree to which exams reflected course material.
10. Rate the overall fairness in grading for the class.
11. Rate the degree to which assistance was available outside of class.
12. Rate the degree to which you understood the instructor's expectations.

Enrichment

13. Rate the degree to which you felt appropriately challenged in this class.
14. Rate the degree to which outside-of-classroom academic activity was encouraged.
15. Rate how well a diversity of student opinion inside the classroom was encouraged.
16. Rate the degree to which this course met your expectations of an Honors class.
17. Rate the degree to which you would consider taking another class taught in this fashion.
18. Rate the overall quality of the course.

Please include your comments on the items below:

What did you consider most effective about this course?

What did you consider least effective about this course?

What suggestions can you make for improving this course?

Please provide any other additional comments you wish to make about the course:

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

This section answers common student questions about the Honors Program, including the application and admission process, the program, Honors benefits and Honors courses. If you have additional questions, please contact us.

The Application and Admission Process

Who is eligible to apply to the Honors Program?

We are looking for students who are bright, self-motivated and leaders in their high schools and communities. Students who receive a composite score of 27 on the ACT or 1200 (combined verbal and math) on the SAT, are in the top 10 percent of their high school classes and have demonstrated extracurricular involvement in school and community activities are strongly encouraged to apply.

What if I do not meet all the criteria?

We do not judge applicants solely on the stated criteria of the program. The application gives you the opportunity to provide further information about your experiences and background, which will help us evaluate your likelihood of success in the program. We encourage you to contact us and discuss your specific situation.

I go to a private school that does not participate in class ranking. What should I do?

We still require some form of ranking in order to evaluate your application. Please have your counselor or school administrator contact us to provide an estimate of your rank.

How do I apply?

All application materials are on our Web site. A completed application (which must be filled out online, then printed and signed), two academic references (using the required form), an applicant disclosure form and a copy of high school and college transcripts are required.

Is there a cost for the application or a university fee for participation in the program?

No.

When should I apply?

Complete applications will be processed within two-to-three weeks and are accepted any time before the priority deadline listed on our website. Applications will be accepted after that date, space permitting.

Program Description

What is the “Honors experience” all about?

The “Honors experience” is intended to provide academically talented students with opportunities to enrich their educational experience at ASU both inside and outside the classroom. Enrichment activities include our HIST 1301 course taking a trip to San Antonio to

visit the Institute of Texan Cultures, class debates on course-related material and paid attendance at cultural events.

What are the program options?

There are two major curriculum tracks, which we call Option One and Option Two. Option One students are required to complete 27 credit hours (10-11 classes) of Honors coursework. Option Two students complete 18 hours (6-7 classes). Usually, students who have 18 or more pre-existing college credit hours when they arrive at ASU are better candidates for Option Two. Option One students graduate with “highest university honors” while Option Two students graduate with “high university honors.” Another difference between the two tracks is that Option Two students only receive 50 percent of the Honors Scholarship. There is also an Honors thesis option, which is available to either Option One or Option Two students.

Is the program limited to only certain majors?

We built the Honors Program around the core curriculum, so there is no reason why any undergraduate student could not be an Honors student. We are represented by students in every department on campus and nearly every major.

What GPA is required to stay in the program?

A 3.25 cumulative grade point average is required to stay in the program. A student who falls below the required GPA may be eligible for a probationary period to improve his or her GPA.

What do I have to do to graduate as an Honors student?

You must take the courses in the Honors Program curriculum track that you are pursuing (Option One or Option Two). Additionally, you must have at least a 3.25 cumulative GPA.

Will my AP credits and transfer credits count towards my Honors requirements?

With the exception of students who enter the ASU Honors Program after graduation from a community college that is a member of the Great Plains Honors Council (GPHC) or National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC), no pre-existing college credits will count toward your Honors Program course requirements. If you have 18 or more college credit hours, the Option Two curriculum track may be a better fit for you. Each student will complete an Honors degree planning form that is tailored to the student’s area of study. No previous college coursework will have to be repeated to satisfy Honors requirements.

What are Honors students like?

Honors students are a highly diverse group, not just in majors, but also in backgrounds, nationality, ethnicity, race, personality, interests, etc. Honors Program students come from the same geographical areas that non-Honors students come from. As a result, they have the same basic values and attitudes as students that are not in the Honors Program. Honors students are as fully a part of college life as is possible. They take a mix of Honors and non-Honors courses and they find their friends and roommates both within and outside the Honors Program.

Will I be able to participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities on campus and still be in the Honors Program?

Absolutely. While we do have a strong focus on academics, we want our students to have a well-rounded undergraduate experience. Honors students have always been involved in and are often leaders of extra-curricular activities all over campus. Honors students compete on athletic teams and others are dancers, artists, actors, mathematicians and scientists. Many are heavily involved in student government, clubs, musical groups, sororities, ROTC, the campus newspaper and residence hall activities. Time management skills are essential, but being involved in Honors does not prohibit students from any activities that they choose to pursue.

Can I do an internship or study abroad if I am in the Honors Program?

Yes. We strongly encourage our students to seek out opportunities to study and learn outside the classroom and in less conventional arenas, such as the Washington Center. Honors students can also receive Honors credit and scholarships for internships or study abroad.

Benefits

What are the advantages of being an Honors student?

There are numerous benefits to being a student in the Honors Program. Students get to register as seniors during registration. Honors students also get to know professors in their Honors courses better. This will help when it comes to providing letters of reference or selecting students for awards or projects. Students in the program also have the option of living in the Honors-designated residence hall. We provide peer mentors to every incoming student in the Honors Program to help them with their transition to Angelo State University. Related to this is the fact that the Honors Program provides personalized academic and career advising that has helped students identify what it is that they want to do once they graduate from ASU. Students also have 24/7 access to the Honors Lounge. This can be a particularly useful benefit when it comes to finishing a project or studying for a test. Finally, students have the opportunity to apply for travel grants to attend Honors conferences and participate in course-related field trips.

Are there Honors scholarships available?

Yes. Every Honors student can receive an Honors Scholarship after their first full year in the Honors Program. Option One students must complete at least eight Honors hours in order to be eligible to receive a scholarship. Option Two students take fewer hours than Option One students; therefore, Option Two students receive 50 percent of the scholarship amount given to Option One students. The Honors Scholarship requires students to be active members of the Honors Student Association.

Is there an Honors residence area?

Yes. Honors students create living-learning communities with designated, premier space in Texan Hall, one of our most popular residence halls. Students wishing to reside in the Honors-designated section of Texan Hall should contact Residential Programs to request Honors housing.

Honors Courses

What is the difference between a collegiate Honors course and a high school Honors course?

Collegiate Honors courses stimulate your thinking; they use provocative and innovative materials covering central concepts and cutting edge explorations, ranging from the classics to the ultra-hip; and they provide the informal, small-class environment that encourages discussion and debate on important topics. Collegiate Honors courses also offer extensive experiences outside of the classroom. Another major difference here at Angelo State University is that students may take any course for Honors credit, pending approval, by taking it as an Honors contract course.

Are Honors courses more difficult?

Honors courses are designed to be different, but not more difficult than a regular section of the same course. The difference between Honors classes and regular classes is not the amount of work assigned, but rather, how a subject is approached. Honors classes often take a much more in-depth look at the subject matter. Honors classes are usually smaller, taught by top faculty, limited to students with superior academic abilities, and emphasize class discussions rather than lectures. Honors students must be well prepared for class, which makes the educational experience even better.

Will my GPA suffer if I take Honors classes?

An analysis of Honors course GPAs quickly reveals that there is little or no difference between the GPA of an Honors course and a regular section of the same course. Quite often, the GPA of an Honors course is actually higher than that of the regular section. The strong support system within the Honors Program, the smaller classes and greater interaction with professors all help our students perform well academically.

How will my Honors work be recognized on my transcript?

All Honors classes, including contract classes, are designated on your transcript. Therefore, anyone who sees your transcript can tell how much Honors work you have completed.

Can I take an Honors class if I am not in the Honors Program?

Yes, with instructor or Honors Program Director approval, and depending on space available. Honors students have priority enrollment in these courses. A typical reason for allowing a student to enroll in an Honors course is that they meet (or nearly meet) Honors admissions requirements or they are pursuing a degree in the department that is offering the Honors course.

What is a course by contract?

When a student wishes to take a course for Honors credit, the student and professor decide what modifications will be made to regular course requirements to satisfy an Honors course contract. Typically, students will do a research project or paper, expanding or enhancing what is already in the course syllabus. Some professors may require regular meetings with the students to discuss course concepts or readings. All Honors contracts will be approved by the Honors Program Director. When the contract is completed, the professor will certify that all requirements have been met.

What Honors classes are offered?

See Course Offerings on our website for a full list of Honors classes.

Other Questions

Will participation in the Honors Program help me get a job or get into graduate or professional schools?

Yes. There is good evidence that it can be an asset for your future. As an Honors student, you will be identified as possessing not only superior academic abilities, but also as having the commitment and motivation to take on challenging work. Honors students are eagerly sought by employers and preferred for admission to graduate and professional schools. Your Honors research projects will provide you with graduate-level research experience and prove your ability to work independently at an advanced level.

Who advises Honors students?

Honors students are first advised by their Honors departmental academic advisors and then by Mr. Richard Jones, the Honors advisor in the Center for Academic Excellence. The departmental academic advisor ensures the student is on track with the degree requirements and the Honors advisor ensures the student is taking Honors coursework as scheduled on the Honors degree planning form.

Why do some students drop out of the program?

Some students leave the program because their life goals change once they enroll in college. Other students do not believe the program is relevant to them. Still others have work, family or other activities that detract from their ability to fulfill the requirements of the program.

If I do not want to join the program immediately, is it possible to join later?

We do offer a spring admission program. Freshmen and some sophomores who achieve a GPA of 3.25 or higher at the end of their fall semester will be invited to apply. The deadline for spring admission is in early March. A major disadvantage to applying later is that the student will not receive the Honors Scholarship until after the first full year in the program, which for a true freshman would not be until they were a junior.

How do I reach the Honors Program staff?

We welcome and encourage you to contact us by phone, email, fax, or by requesting information on line.

Honors Program Website

<http://www.angelo.edu/dept/honors/>

Contact Information

Contact information for the Honors Program is provided below. Please do not hesitate to contact the Honors Program if you ever have questions about the program or an honors course that you are teaching or are planning to teach. We are always available to talk to prospective honors students or students who are interested in taking an honors course.

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