



Penn State Berks Honors Option for a Course

Dear Faculty Member: To be carried out successfully, an honors option for a course requires careful planning early in the semester, close collaboration between student and faculty member throughout the semester, and a serious commitment by both parties to see the project through. THANK YOU for your willingness to undertake this responsibility. We hope that your participation in the student's undergraduate honors education results in a mutually engaging and rewarding experience. The following are guidelines to assist you in the development of a productive honors option. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the honors option, please contact Sandy Feinstein (sxf31@psu.edu). We're happy to lend our assistance.

GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY

- ◆ In an honors option, the honors course project should not be an add-on to all the routine assignments, but should be done as an alternative to some or all of the assignments. The project should also fit within the content and intent of the course syllabus.
- ◆ The honors option course project should go more deeply into methodology, structure, and/or theory; address more sophisticated questions; and satisfy more rigorous standards than is generally expected.
- ◆ Simply increasing the volume of work required does not constitute an honors option. The character and quality of the work should be augmented, but the time required for the honors project should remain commensurate with the number of credits for a comparable honors course.
- ◆ A successful honors option experience will include planned regular meetings between the faculty member and the student to review, discuss, and revise as the project develops. Whenever possible, specific deadlines should be identified.
- ◆ Faculty should feel free to stipulate clarifications, modifications, or alternatives to student proposals and to reject proposals which reflect no serious preliminary thought about projects worthy of honors treatment.
- ◆ Students may not be given monetary compensation for work done for honors option credit.
- ◆ The student's grade should reflect all the student's work in the course, including work done in common with other students as well as work done in the Honors mode. Completion of the honors portion of the course cannot be deferred without deferring the grade in this course.
- ◆ **REMOVING THE OPTION-**The filing of an honors option represents a commitment by both student and faculty member to see the project through. **The course may not revert to non-honors status without the permission of the faculty member. The Honors Coordinator must receive written notification immediately of such a change, but no later than the end of the sixth week of the semester.** This rule applies whether or not a student continues in the Honors program throughout the semester.
- ◆ Honors work must be supervised by members of the regular faculty who have professorial appointments. **GRADUATE STUDENTS AND STAFF MAY NOT SUPERVISE AN HONORS OPTION.** This is required so that students are able to work with tenure-line faculty who may later be able to provide letters of reference and possibly serve as thesis supervisors.

The student and faculty member should complete the attached form which is to be submitted by the student to the Honors Coordinator by the published date (end of the third week of the semester). Please retain copies for your own reference.

COMPLETION OF THIS FORM DOES NOT REGISTER YOU FOR THE COURSE!

HONORS OPTION FOR A COURSE

BERKS
HONORS
PROGRAM

Student _____ I.D. # _____
Course _____ Semester (check one) FA 20 ___
Course Section _____ Credits _____ SP 20 ___
Local Address _____ SU 20 ___
Local Phone _____ E-Mail _____ @ _____

PLEASE NOTE: THE CHARACTER OR KIND OF COURSE WORK SHOULD BE ENRICHED WITH AN HONORS OPTION. SIMPLY INCREASING THE VOLUME OF WORK REQUIRED DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN HONORS OPTION. ATTACH A ONE-PAGE, TYPED DOCUMENT THAT ANSWERS THE THREE QUESTIONS BELOW.

1. PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW THIS HONORS WORK WILL REPLACE/ENHANCE SOME REGULAR REQUIREMENT(S) OF THE COURSE.

2. PLEASE PROVIDE THE RATIONALE FOR THIS PROJECT AS HONORS WORK.

3 AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF HONORS WORK IS REGULAR CONTACT BETWEEN THE STUDENT AND FACULTY MEMBER FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE PROJECT AS IT DEVELOPS. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE AGREEMENT REACHED AND APPROPRIATE DEADLINES FOR MEETING THIS REQUIREMENT. WRITTEN FINAL PROJECTS SHOULD HAVE A FIRST DRAFT DEADLINE TO PERMIT REVISIONS INCORPORATING FACULTY MEMBER SUGGESTIONS (i.e., please provide a tentative schedule with dates and deadlines).

COMPLETION OF THIS FORM DOES NOT REGISTER YOU FOR THE COURSE!

STUDENT (signature) _____ DATE _____

SUPERVISION -- IMPORTANT:

Honors work is to be supervised by members of the regular faculty who have professorial appointments. GRADUATE STUDENTS AND STAFF MAY NOT SUPERVISE AN HONORS OPTION.

NAME OF PROFESSOR (please print) _____ TITLE _____

PROFESSOR (signature) _____ DATE _____

PROFESSOR ADDRESS _____ E-MAIL _____

TO THE HONORS ADVISER: If you approve of the request for honors in this course for this student, please sign:

HONORS ADVISER (signature) _____ DATE _____

HONORS ADVISER ADDRESS _____ E-MAIL _____

LOCATIONS OTHER THAN UNIVERSITY PARK

Honors Coordinator (Signature) _____ Campus Location _____