

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in teaching an honors course. Our goal is to offer a curriculum that is challenging and unique for Austin Community College students, and your interest is vital to achieving that goal.

Please submit your course proposal following the guidelines in this packet. The proposal first must be submitted for approval to the Honors Program Coordinator, who then sends it to the Department Chair and the Dean for their signatures. The approved document is returned to the Coordinator, and your course is entered in the schedule.

If the prospective course is a Distance Learning class, two *additional* forms must be completed after the proposal is approved. I will tell you where to find these forms on the DL website. Once completed, each form comes first to the Honors office, and then is sent to the Department Chair and the Dean for their signatures. Finally, each form is submitted for approval to the Director of Distance Learning.

Send a copy of your syllabus to the Honors Program Office before the semester begins.

Thank you again for your interest in offering an honors course at Austin Community College. I look forward to assisting you with its development and implementation. Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Roy Ruane
Honors Program Coordinator

Distinguishing Characteristics of Honors Courses

Honors courses differ from regular courses in substantial ways. Any honors course will incorporate some, if not all, of the following criteria:

1. Students in honors courses will develop high-level cognitive skills, which emphasize a breadth and depth of learning as well as the acquisition of information.
2. Students in honors courses will develop a heightened appreciation for the methodology of the discipline to prepare them to succeed in upper-division courses. Students will be encouraged to develop appropriate research skills; to this end, the assignments may include research models, literature searches, annotated bibliographies, term papers, and focused analyses.
3. Students will present original interpretations and analyses and demonstrate competencies. Emphasis will be placed on quality, logical presentation, and originality.
4. Students in honors courses will study and evaluate primary source material (e.g. literature, painting, official documents, diaries, journals, statistical data, and letters).
5. Students in honors courses will be introduced to the normal content of the course, and will gain a heightened understanding of that content through participation in extra learning experiences on and off campus (e.g. debates, mock trials, term papers, interviews, student presentations, field trips, international experiences, etc.).
6. Students in honors courses will become involved in activities that encourage them to become independent learners.

What is an Honors Course?

According to the National Collegiate Council, in comparison with non-honors courses, “The course objectives of honors sections generally reflect more emphasis on the higher levels of the cognitive domain as students spend more time on application and analysis. Students are expected to contribute more to analytical discussion in class, and writing assignments are generally more demanding in composition and research methodology” (From “Honors in the Two-Year Colleges,” 1985, p.9).

In the experience of honors instructors at Santa Fe Community College, honors courses are characterized by a discipline specific combination of one or more of the following traits.

1. Honors courses **focus on the nature knowledge**. They introduce the methodology of discipline, offer insight into how theories are developed, encourage the application of different theories, and expose students to cutting edge research.
2. Honors courses **emphasize critical thinking skills**. They offer in-depth coverage of the subject matter, stress reasoning and synthesis of information, take an interdisciplinary approach to learning, present views and theories not available in non-honors courses.
3. Honors courses **develop discipline-appropriate research skills**. They stress independent research and learning, present primary sources and original documents, offer access to updated literature from the field, urge originality in writing and analysis.
4. Honors courses **offer a variety of learning experiences**. They encourage collaborative learning, offer experiences outside the classroom, seek frequent faculty-student interaction, and accelerate student intellectual growth.
5. Honors courses **are limited in size**. They allow greater participation and discussion, create a community of learners, encourage students to direct their own learning, and emphasize development of social and leadership skills.
6. Involve the **community**.

Based on

1. NCHC and the *College Book*
2. Vahland Community College Mission Statement

Honors Course Proposal

Include copies of your most recent student evaluation (summary sheet and individual course evaluations) with this proposal.

Course title and number:

Statement of course goals and objectives:

Course description (include in this area what distinguishes your course from a non-honors course):

Class activities:

Assignments:

Grading/assessment measures (tests, presentations, papers, off-campus activities):

Texts and course materials:

Curriculum Development Request Academic Education Programs

Implementation Date: Year _____ Semester _____

Name of Requestor: _____

Course Title and Number: _____

Date of Completion _____

*I understand that I will receive no stipend or release time for developing this course.

1. _____
Signature of Requestor Date

2. _____
Signature, Honors Program Coordinator Date

3. _____
Signature, Department Chair Date

4. _____
Signature, Dean Date

Classification:

TFC/PC _____
Asst. TFC/Asst. PC _____
Full-Time Faculty _____
Adjunct Faculty _____

Type of Request:

Curriculum Development _____ NCBR _____
Pilot Project _____ Other _____
Administrative Project _____
Special Project _____