# Honors Contract Guidelines

**Overview:**

The honors contract system allows a student to take any regular course and to work with a faculty member to upgrade the course requirements and expectations to the honors level.

In the honors contract system, students may honorize any course they are enrolled in at the instructor's discretion. The honors student is responsible for meeting with one of their instructors to agree upon the activities, projects, and assignments that will be added for honorization. This work must be above and beyond the usual requirements of the course. The goal for honorization is not to add "busy work," but rather to enrich and/or deepen their academic experience and build stronger mentoring relationships. There are two main ways that a student and faculty mentor might think about a contracted course.

1. If the course is a general education course (not in the student's major), finding a way that the course content can relate to the student's major can be a good way for a student to find interest and motivation.

2. If the course is a major or minor requirement, the contracted course could be used to help identify a possible senior project topic to develop a skill or knowledge set needed for completing the senior project or applying professional opportunities.

**Instructions for the honors student:**
Signed contracts must be submitted using the online form. To honorize a course, the student must contact a professor teaching a class on the student's schedule that semester for a meeting to discuss this option.

**Instructions for the instructor:**
Benefits: Mentoring an honors student can be very rewarding. It provides the instructor an opportunity to mentor one of Suffolk's best and brightest minds and explore a field of interest to a deeper level that is not possible in a typical course.

Crafting an honors project: There are many ways for a student to fulfill the honorization requirement. The instructor and the student should design a plan, the assignments, and due dates. Ideally, the student will explore some issue that is related to the course material that they find intriguing or challenging. Usually, it involves the student completing several of the following: additional readings, discussions, projects, class presentations, opinion papers, blogging, creative works (artwork, photography, online material), poster presentations, research, and/or writing outside of the requirements of the course. It is recommended that the student will use analytical/critical thinking, creativity, and/or integration of ideas to successfully

complete the project. The instructor should meet with the honors student on a regular basis to discuss the honors work.

The student should share the knowledge/skills/experiences gained with a greater audience. It is required that students share contracted honors work in at least one of following ways:

- Presentation of work in a formal oral presentation of 10 or more minutes to other students in the contracted class;
- Presentation of work at another Suffolk event

Assessing an honors project: The instructor will assess the honors coursework to determine whether the student satisfied the requirements agreed upon. The honors component is treated separately from the course grade as a pass or fail grade. A grade of B, or better, is required for all contracted courses. Instructors must email Dean Lenzie at slenzie@suffolk.edu when the contracted course work is successfully completed.

**Examples of honorization projects:**

- Choose a related topic for further exploration. The student can read one or more books or articles on a related subject. They can be asked to synthesize/analyze the material and write a themed essay and/or present a talk to the class on the topic.
- Attend off-campus events. Many projects may involve the student attending events off-campus (e.g. research talks at other universities or shows in the theater district), taking advantage of our location in the heart of Boston. The student can research the material before the events, attend the events, and then write reflection papers about their impressions on the events.
- Conduct novel laboratory research. The student can conduct a lab project with your guidance and then write up the results in the style of a professional scientific journal article and/or share their research with the class.
- Add a service learning project. An honors student could complete a community service project related to the course. A student can plan, lead, and conduct the project. Afterwards, the student can be asked to write their reflections on their project and share those with the class.
- Create research-driven artwork. The student and professor choose a related topic for research. The student develops a visual project that integrates technical and conceptual skills in order to create work(s) responding to the area of research. An artist statement and oral presentation can accompany the final work(s).

**NCHC Conference**:
An honors contract project might be created in a way that would allow a student to submit a proposal to present a poster at the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) conference.

**If you have questions about contracts, please contact Dean Lenzie at slenzie@suffolk.edu.**