



What exactly are honors contracts?

Honors contracts were developed to give students a way to enrich their upper-division courses while establishing close working relationships with faculty. Honors contracts allow undergraduates to participate in seminar-style discussions and to assist faculty on research projects, gaining the kind of scholarly experiences normally reserved for graduate students. Honors contracts are the primary method for earning upper-division honors units.

Who is eligible to establish honors contracts in their classes?

Only students in the College of Letters and Science Honors Program may do honors contracts. In addition, honor contracts may be completed **only in upper-division Letters & Science** courses (numbered 100-199).

What kind of work will I be expected to do in an honors contract?

Some students write short papers about material related to the course. Others read extra material and discuss their readings weekly with their professor. In addition, you may opt to complete a specified number of hours of laboratory work for the contract. The format and schedule of the work is at the professor's discretion.

Will completing a contract consume a great deal of my time during the quarter?

Since the work required to complete an honors contract supplements the work assigned in a course, you should find that the additional load is not overwhelming. You are not expected to take on the work of an entire additional course. You might agree to write a short paper or two, to write a slightly longer term paper than other students, or perhaps to work in the laboratory for additional hours during the quarter. For ideas, ask other honors students or even check with honors peer advisors to see if they have some suggestions to get you started. In addition, you will have weekly meetings with your professor to discuss your progress with your contract work.

What benefits do I receive from completing an honors contract?

Honors contracts provide faculty and highly motivated students the opportunity to get to know each other more closely than is possible in traditional classes. Students have reported that honors contracts enrich their experience in a course, allowing them to delve more deeply into course material and to benefit from the additional contact and mentoring that faculty members can provide. The honors contract provides you with the opportunity to explore a topic of particular interest to you that may not be covered in the regular class. It is a way for you to take control of your education and pursue your own interests with the help of world renowned scholars. You will get to know your professors very well, and this can be useful when you request letters of recommendation. Provided that you earn a B or higher in the course, course Honors will be noted on your transcript. In addition, upon completion of the required number of honors units and community service hours, you will be eligible to receive the Certificate of Academic Excellence at commencement.

How do students choose which classes are suitable for honors contracts?

The course must be an upper-division course within the College of Letters & Science. Most students choose a course either because they are interested in the subject matter covered, they are interested in working more closely with a specific professor, or both. To learn more about professors, contact the department office, or check departmental web-sites for their research interests and office hours, or look up their names on www.library.ucsb.edu, on Indexes and Databases for disciplinary search of the database to see what types of publications they have produced. You can then chat with selected professors to find one with whom you would enjoy collaborating on a project. If you don't have detailed knowledge about the subject matter of a course but are still interested in doing a contract, it is important that you speak with the professor as soon as possible so that you can develop a contract appropriate to your level of knowledge.

How do I actually develop the contract?

Approach your professor either before the quarter begins or during the first few days of instruction to discuss the possibility of establishing an honors contract. If the professor agrees, together you can formulate an honors curriculum. Remember that this is supposed to be a fun, beneficial experience for both you and your professor, so be creative in devising your contract. Try to choose a topic that will be interesting and intriguing to you both. Next, submit an honors contract proposal to the College of Letters and Science by the end of the second week of instruction. The online submission form is active during the first two weeks of the quarter, until the deadline to submit contract proposals. At the end of the quarter, your professor will receive a request for verification by email to indicate whether you have satisfactorily completed the honors contract assignment.

Where should I direct other questions I might have about honors contracts?

If you have more questions or would like to see samples of honors contracts, please contact the Honors Program at honorsmail@LTSC.ucsb.edu. Or see our "Contact Honors" page on our website for options.