

## Process for Adding an Honors Component to an Existing Course

### Berkshire Honors Scholar Program

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this sheet is to give you a sense for the reasons, benefits, drawbacks, and process for adding an honors component to an existing class

#### **What is an honors component?**

An honors component is a one credit individual study project added to an existing course. It should be in the same discipline as the course to which it is added and should go beyond the requirements of the course.

#### **A few examples of honors components:**

*In a Literature class:* A student might read an additional novel not assigned in the course, and write a 10 page research paper on that novel that includes critical readings.

*In a science class:* A student might undertake an additional experiment not required by the class and write a lab report on it.

*In a history class:* a student might research at greater depth a topic related to the class, and write a 10 page research paper on their primary research.

#### **Reasons for adding a component:**

- There is not an honors course currently offered in your field of study
- Because of scheduling conflicts, there is no way for the student to graduate from the program without adding an honors component
- Because an existing honors class was cancelled and could be replaced by a component

#### **Things to consider before adding a component:**

- You will be responsible for the tuition cost of this 1 credit independent study project. Your financial aid will be used as with all other courses.
- We typically recommend that only one of your three honors courses can be a component, so choose wisely.
- Honors components work well for independently motivated students, so make sure you're committed to the project.

#### **Process for adding a component:**

##### **Timeline:**

Before the semester starts

1. Ask permission from the course instructor to insure that they are willing to undertake a project with you
2. Ask permission from the honors program coordinator.

#### First week of class

3. Meet with the honors coordinator, in person or virtually, to go over the honors component contract and to discuss the project. **You must meet with the honors coordinator no later than the first week of class in order for your project to be considered.**

#### Second week of class

4. Meet with your instructor to discuss the project and fill out the contract together. This may require more than one meeting, or some follow up emails, since the contract includes a written project description.

#### Third week of class

5. Meet with honors coordinator to go over the contract and project description and to make any final changes or adjustments. **Project contracts must be submitted to honors coordinator by the end of the third week of the semester.**

#### Your responsibilities:

- To set up the component, it is your responsibility to communicate with your instructor as well as with the honors coordinator
- You will be responsible for writing and crafting the project description in consultation with your faculty instructor and with the honors coordinator. This often take quite a lot of time and should be treated a bit like writing a paper
- To set up meetings that follow the timeline
- To submit the contract and project description by the dates set out in the timeline
- Once the project is accepted, you will often meet bi-monthly with your instructor to work on the project, though it will be up to you and your instructor to figure out the exact meeting schedule.
- Complete the project by the end of the semester.
- Share your project with the honors coordinator so that it may be displayed in the Honors Center.

#### Evaluation:

- Honors components are given their own grades, separate from the course to which they are attached.
- For the component to count toward graduation from the honors program, you must earn a B or better.
- Your instructor will grade the component based on metrics you will agree on together.