

Course Honorization Instructions for Students & Instructors

Overview

As part of the Honors Program students have the choice of receiving credit for two non-Honors courses:

- Any course within their department/major (200-level or above), and
- Their departmental/major Capstone Course/Senior Seminar

Honorization allows pairing high-achieving students with faculty mentors, who are typically full-time faculty. The goal for Honorization is not to add busy work but to deepen academic learning as well as strengthen mentoring relationships between faculty and students. The overarching purpose is to enable students and faculty to foster creativity, independence, and academically robust standards of Honors within the setting of a regular course. While those activities may include additional work, the purpose is to promote qualitative over quantitative difference in course work. Besides mastery of essential elements of the course, Honors students will undertake assignments that nurture intellectual curiosity, effective communication, complex problem solving, creative interdisciplinary approaches, and/or service to the Queens community or beyond.

Courses are honorized by completing an Honorization contract. These contracts allow our Honors Learners to receive Honors credit for a non-Honors course. The contract generally involves either:

- replacing learning activities in a standard departmental course with requirements that help students explore material with greater depth and rigor, or
- completing additional work of an independent nature.

Crafting an Honorization Project

There are many ways to plan and fulfill an Honorization of a course. The instructor and the student design a plan, develop assignments and due dates. Ideally, students explore an issue or a topic that is relevant to the course content. That topic needs to be relevant to something the student finds important, intriguing, or challenging. Like previously stated, Honorization may involve replacing learning activities in a standard course (that is, an assignment(s) is modified to increase the rigor) or adding a project of an independent nature as an additional requirement. In both instances, the Honorization components are assessed separately from the typical course requirements that the student must finish to complete the course.

The following list¹ contains suggested activities that could lead to fulfilling an Honorization contract:

- Choosing a course-related topic for further exploration
 - Reading books, articles, or other relevant sources. Material can be synthesized to produce a substantive writing assignment or presented to an audience (class, students in the program, outside audience, blogging or creating podcasts).
- Conduct an independent or collaborative research project
 - Conduct a lab project with guidance, bring forth a previous research proposal into fruition, develop a research proposal, write, or prepare a manuscript for journal submission, conduct an extensive literature review or annotated bibliography
- Contribute to a course

¹ This list was adapted from Miami University, James Madison University, and Suffolk University descriptions of Honorization.

- Development of supplementary course materials (PPT slides, handouts, curricula, lesson plans, etc.)
- Attend off-campus events
 - If relevant to the course topic, attending performances, community talks, visiting specific locations can be of value. A student can research information about specific events, write reflections, or impressions, meet and/or interview event participants or organizers.
- Attend or organize a service-learning project
 - Complete a project that is intentionally related to academic content and the learning outcomes of the course. This project will be designed to respond to the needs of community partners and includes both planning and reflection about the process.
- Create a research-driven performance art, visual art, or literal art project
 - An artist/author statement and presentation to an audience can accompany the final work(s).

The instructor will meet with the honors student on a regular basis to discuss their work and progress made. It however remains the student's responsibility to complete all required work and finish the Honorization contract. All honors students are encouraged, when possible, to share the knowledge/skills/experiences gained with a greater audience.

Sample Honorization Projects

The examples below are a compilation of Honorization projects completed by Queens Students, and selected examples retrieved from the [University of Memphis Helen Hardin Honors College](#).

ANTH 320 People/Cultures of the World

The student will be expected to read one additional ethnography in its entirety and write a 10–15-page review of the text, including a summary of its major theoretical frameworks, settings, and comparisons to the other ethnographies we are reading in the course. Her review will be expected to showcase Honors-level quality of writing and critical engagement with the text and will be weighted as 30% of her final grade for the course. Non-honors students write a 5–7-page term paper in which they discuss the effects of globalization in a different cultural setting. The honors student's assignment will replace this term paper and require her to read a book-length ethnography of her choice, entailing significant additional reading and engagement with the course's themes and concepts. The paper will be due on the last day of class. The student will meet with me mid-semester to discuss the progress of the project.

MTH 421 Clinical Research

The student will conduct a literature review about songwriting with older adults. They will summarize and synthesize the information and write an 8–10-pages paper. This project fulfills honors requirements because it is done in addition to the research project she is working on for this class (investigating the effect of songwriting perception of stress among college students). She will also present the main findings of her literature review synthesis to the students in the music therapy club, towards the end of the semester.

FIR 4331 Stock Portfolio Management

The student will prepare a thorough financial ratio analysis of three publicly traded companies to be chosen by them based on their interests. Two of the companies chosen should be selected from the same industry sector (such as two trucking companies, two retailers, two utilities, etc.) and the third company should be selected from a different industry sector. The analysis must be completed using audited financial statements for the most recent 5 fiscal years. Detailed, written instructions for completing the analysis have been provided to the student. A complete preliminary draft of the paper is due by October 22, and the final paper is due by November 12. This is an additional assignment to the regular course requirements and the results will be shared informally (class discussion) with students in the classroom towards the end of the semester.

What Honors Students Need to do?

Start by...

1. Identify the course you would like to “honorize”
2. Read all the materials and the sample Honorization contracts to understand how to complete all the required paperwork.
3. Contact the instructor of the course and set up an initial meeting to discuss the feasibility of honoring the course.
4. Share this document with your instructor.
5. If the instructor of the course agrees to work with you, discuss ideas for Honorization and draft the honorization contract. You will need to work together with the instructor of the course to write the honorization contract.
6. Meet with the instructor as needed to finalize the Honorization contract and mutually agree upon all the required steps needed for completion.
7. Finish typing the contract, finalize it, and submit it on Canvas prior to the deadline. The academic chair of the honors program (Dr. Pasiali) will approve the contract through Canvas. She will either approve or ask you to make revisions.
8. Upon finalized approval, proceed with completion of the contract and all its related tasks.

You can submit the contract at any time through Canvas prior to the deadline to receive feedback by the Academic Chair of the Honors program; if you are submitting a draft in Canvas (and not the finalized contract) please indicate that in the submission comments.

Also, please note that your Honorization project must be submitted by the deadline, approved by the Academic chair of the program, and completed on time. No Honorization projects will be approved after the fact, regardless of the quality of the work, time and effort allocated to the project. You must submit your contract and get approval – there is no way around it and no retroactive approvals.

Upon Completion...

1. You must have earned at least a B in the course to authorize Honors credit.
2. The faculty member will notify the Chair of the Academic Honors Program (Dr. Pasiali) via email if the student has earned at least a B and has successfully fulfilled the contract.
3. The Chair of the Honors program will record the honors credit for the course by sharing information with the registrar, and your academic record will be updated.

What Course Instructors Need to do?

At the beginning of the semester...

1. If you agree to mentor a student through this Honorization process, please help them frame their ideas in a manner that both aligns with your course learning outcomes, the Honors Program learning outcomes, and it remains a realistic project that can be completed (or parts of it can be completed as specified in the Honorization contract) by the end of the semester.
2. Meet with the student as needed to finalize the Honorization contract and mutually agree upon all the required steps needed for completion. Faculty and students write the honorization contract together. The expectation is that the students will contribute to writing the contract and generating ideas. They will, however, need your help to finish it and write it in a way that aligns with your course and the Honors Program Outcomes.

3. A student can submit the contract for informal feedback by the Academic Chair of the Honors program at any time, prior to the semester deadline. That submission and feedback will be completed through Canvas.
4. The student must submit the finalized contract in Canvas prior to the deadline.
5. The Academic Chair of the Honors program will review the contract, either approve it, or ask for revisions/clarifications.
6. Once the contract is approved, proceed with mentoring the students and supporting them as needed for completion of the contract.
7. Please note that no Honorization projects will be approved after the fact, or at the end of the semester retroactively, regardless of the quality of the work, time and effort allocated to the project.

At the end of the semester...

The instructor of the course will assess the Honors Contract work to determine whether the student completed all the requirements. The Honors component is treated separately from the course grade. Upon completion of the honorization contract requirements, please notify the Chair of the Academic Honors Program via email if the student has earned at least a B in your course and has successfully fulfilled the contract. The Chair of the Honors Program will record the honors credit for the course by sharing information with the registrar; the registrar will update the students' academic record to show the completion of the honorization.

Alignment of the Honorization to the Honors Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)²

The program outcomes indicate the overarching learning, or what an Honors' student will be able to do (their skill set) as an Honors Program graduate. The contract needs to align (or be associated with) to the type of skills we want honors students to achieve by completing the honors program. In the contract we expect you to address at least two of the following Honors Program learning outcomes PLOs (specifically PLO1, PLO2, PLO3, and PLO5).

Below you will find a broad description of each program learning outcome (or what we expect a student to be able to do as a University Honors Program graduate), ways you can connect those to the type of learning that you will 'pack' into your honorization contract, and examples of end products/artifacts you can produce as part of Honorization.

Broad Descriptions of Program Learning Outcomes

PLO1. Students integrate diverse learning experiences through reflection.

We define diverse learning experiences as those that help you bring together ideas from multiple people/multiple places or explore different perspectives. We expect you to engage in reflecting about those diverse learning experiences in a manner that:

- Fosters your curiosity (exploring a topic in depth so that you gain a rich awareness of a topic you previously knew little about).
- Shows your initiative (in generating or pursuing opportunities to expand your knowledge, skills, and abilities)
- Encourages applicability (by making connections to previous learning and applying newfound knowledge in expanding your knowledge and personal growth).

² The following sources were used in compiling the descriptions of the PLOs:

- Association of American Colleges & Universities. [Value Rubrics](#).
- General Education; Queens University of Charlotte; Assessment Rubrics
- UNESCO [International Bureau of Education](#)
- Haskell University. [Leadership Qualities Rubric](#).

As you think of honorization projects, identify what part of the knowledge that you will be exploring in the course you are honorizing you would like to pull together (collect, combine, compose, condense, derive, develop, elaborate on, expand, generate, re-organize, etc.) through reflection to gain new perspectives. Then, think about the types of end products/artifacts you can produce that showcase or exemplify such learning. Here are some examples from previous honorization projects:

- Interviewed teachers in a school that had limited resources. Reflected on what they learned from those interviews by compiling that information, organized thoughts, and shared conclusions with students in the course.
- Used information in an investment management course to start creating a personal portfolio. Maintained a journal to help remember their own actions (why, why not, how to choose, etc.). Presented portfolio and results to other business students.

PLO2. Students demonstrate communication fluency using multiple modes of expression.

We define communication fluency as your ability to break down knowledge into parts and present the relationships among those parts to an audience. How you present that knowledge needs to be tailored to a specific audience (e.g., it will be different if you are presenting to classmates, versus a community partner, a group of school-age children, or at a conference). We expect you to demonstrate communication fluency in a manner that:

- Shows you can develop content that is applicable for your target audience.
- Is organized (flow of ideas and concepts) in a way that allows you to express your thoughts and ideas clearly and in a logical manner.
- Is broad (not limited to writing a paper but can extend to other means of sharing knowledge, such as oral presentations, using social media, blogging, podcasting, creating a website, creating visual or performance art projects, etc.)

We also expect you to think of sharing that knowledge using multiple modes. For example:

- Compile information in an annotated bibliography AND do a class presentation.
- Write an essay about readings that you have done AND create a blog about what that learning means for you.
- Write a paper about a historical event AND create a short original story based on the research you have done.
- Write a paper about a class-related topic AND present what you learned to peers or a community partner
- Researched and learned about play behaviors in animals. Wrote a detailed annotated bibliography (with course instructor as target audience) and created an interactive lesson plan about the topic which then was presented to peers in the class.

Think of what types of end products/artifacts you can produce that showcase or exemplify such fluency? Here are some examples from previous honorization projects:

- Researched and learned about a rare genetic disease (compiled that information into a short paper with the instructor of the course as the target audience) and shared the information with a parent advocacy group (parent group as the target audience).
- Explored creating an exercise program for preventing work related injuries (course instructor as target audience) and shared the results result with other students in the senior capstone class.
- Read five scientific articles and summarized the information (course instructor as target audience) and created five Flipgrid posts summarizing those articles (using more accessible language appropriate for broad audience).

PLO3. Students investigate complex problems using interdisciplinary approaches.

A complex problem is a type of question that does not have simple or straight forward answers. Those complex problems describe questions or situations that have no single solution or answer. The lack of solution is usually because these questions have many interdependent (and often contradictory) factors affecting them. One cannot begin to address a complex problem without considering evidence from various contextual factors or ways of thinking. Identifying strategies or proposing solutions includes considering both logical, ethical, and cultural dimensions.

Moreover, we define interdisciplinary approach as one that integrates themes and ideas from different disciplines. According to the [International Bureau of Education](#), the emphasis is on process and meaning (not product) and requires that one combines contents, theories, methodologies and different perspectives from at least two different disciplines.

Think of what types of end products/artifacts you can produce that showcase or exemplify such learning. Here are some examples from previous honorization projects:

- Write a position or theoretical paper that evaluates different policies that affect environmental conservation.
- Examine issues that affect public health and look at scientific outcomes that may or may not inform current public policy.
- Distinguish child development milestones and reflect and explain how physical therapists may need to modify exercises or a therapeutic exercise program at different developmental levels.

PLO5. Students develop leadership in community engagement settings.

We adopt a broad and flexible definition of what we consider ‘community engagement settings’ by stating that community is when two or more people are doing something together, share a common goal, or have particular characteristics in common. Engagement happens when those people work together in a collaborative manner to address common issues, situations, or tasks, or problems.

We expect you to demonstrate leadership when working together with others through:

- Responsibility (being timely, participating together with others)
- Respect (show cultural humility, sensitivity, and honesty; stay receptive to varying ideas and perspectives)
- Reliability (show quality and consistency both in your academic work and your interactions with others)
- Communication (being professional in all situations, including conversations, documents, and social media posts)
- Collaboration (equitably contribute to projects; work with peers and teacher by contributing and offering ideas in a respectful manner)
- Self-reflection (focus on learning from varied experiences)
- Openness (contribute to the classroom and community environments with passion and curiosity for learning)

Think of the types of end products/artifacts you can produce that showcase or exemplify such learning. Here are some examples from previous honorization projects:

- Design a series of three training seminars for a specific learning topic and then implement them in a community setting.
- Collaborate with a specific campus program to identify needs and help them with organizing two events.
- Work with a community partner (if relevant to the content of a course) and solve a problem or assist them with producing materials they can post on their website.

- Research and find specific songs that represent a minority group. Collaborate with others to learn and perform those songs for an event open to the campus community.

Connection to Honors Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

The proposed contract will be tailored to the needs of the course. At least two of the honors learning outcomes, however, named above need to also be addressed. You will need complete a table to show the connection of your Honorization Project to each of the two PLOs you are targeting.

For example, Jen Awesome is taking a psychology class. She wants to understand the perspective of parents who are raising a child on the Autism Spectrum. She plans on interviewing two parents who have a child on the Autism Spectrum. She will also research the type of resources available in the greater Charlotte area, for parents who have children on the spectrum. For her honorization contract, she can complete the table below as follows:

<i>Program PLO</i>	<i>Associated learning outcome</i>	<i>Honorization Artifacts</i>
PLO1. Students integrate diverse learning experiences through reflection.	By the end of the semester, I will learn more about the perspective of parents who raise a child on the Autism Spectrum and draw parallels to what I am learning in class.	Reflection paper combining information from the interviews and class material.
PLO2. Students demonstrate communication fluency using multiple modes of expression.	By the end of the semester, I will learn how to write what I learned from conducting interviews and how to translate that information into a class presentation.	Class presentation synthesizing the information from the two interviews.

Please complete the table below to show the connection of your Honorization Project to each of the two PLOs you are targeting with your project.

Program PLO	Associated learning outcome	Honorization Artifacts
Copy-paste the PLO you will be targeting.	By the end of the semester, I will (describe)...	Describe...
Copy-paste the PLO you will be targeting.	By the end of the semester, I will (describe)...	Describe...

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I receive feedback or ask questions about the Honorization Contract?

Faculty can email Dr. Pasiali directly to ask questions. Students can submit drafts at any time in Canvas to receive feedback. Canvas maintains a record of comments, so it is easy to go back and refer to those at any time. Post your draft contract in Canvas and use the comments to add questions or additional information.

What is the deadline for submitting the finalized Honorization Contract?

The deadline is typically at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. The deadline will be posted in Canvas and shared through announcements with students.

What if I need additional time/cannot meet the deadline?

Extensions might be allowed for extenuating circumstances. Please email Dr. Pasiali directly.

What if I have a general question about honorization?

Students can pose any general questions in the Canvas Community Site for Honors Program, using the Q&A discussion. That way other students may benefit by seeing the question and the answer. Faculty can email Dr. Pasiali directly.

Can an honorization be a group project?

It can, if the course instructor approves that group work, and each group member has a clear plan for equitable contributions to the project. If your honorization is a group project, please email Dr. Pasiali to give her heads up. It is easier to do a group project honorization if all students are in the same class. Group projects that involve students taking different classes can be complex and require approval and mentorship from all instructors of those classes.

I finished honorizing a class but forgot to submit my contract, now what?

No contract, no pre-approval, no honorization. Try next semester.