

## HONORS COLLEGE Course Criteria

Honors College students don't want more work. They want **different** work. When you plan an honors course consider how the course will be different. Honors components and features should be highlighted in the syllabus so that they are readily apparent to the students. Honors Courses differ from other courses in some, but not necessarily all, of the following:

- **Critical Thinking**
  - Honors courses should emphasize critical thinking skills by offering insight on how theories were developed, stress reasoning and the synthesis of knowledge. Critical thinking is encouraged at an appropriate level of objectivity, fostering students' ability to ask relevant questions and develop hypotheses, and encouraging the integration of concepts and theories with applied learning experiences. Honors courses should expose students to cutting edge knowledge, present views and theories not available in non-honors courses, and encourage applications of different theories.
- **Interdisciplinary and Comparative Perspective**
  - An interdisciplinary perspective is encouraged throughout honors seminars, with special attention given to points of similarity between disciplines. Honors courses are also characterized by a comparative perspective with comparisons of cultures, disciplines, theories, societies, historical periods, or methodologies.
- **Difference and Diversity**
  - Honors courses should include issues of diversity, whether the focus is economic, ethnic, cultural, social, racial, religious, geographic, biological, historical, regional, etc. Honors courses should also encourage sensitivity to differences in values, cultures, societies, historical periods, disciplines, religions, etc.
- **Multiple Pedagogies**
  - Honors courses should creatively employ approaches to teaching that respond to the varied learning styles and needs of students. Developing creative ways to teach and measure learning outside traditional requirements help make honors courses unique.
  - Honors assignments should offer a variety of experiences that encourage collaborative and experiential learning outside the classroom such as field trips, lab experiences, films, the Internet, lectures, guest speakers, active-learning exercises, and cooperative-learning experiences to help students connect what they are learning with real world experiences, in a context they can relate to.
- **Evaluation**
  - Honors courses should explicitly and clearly relate evaluation methods to course objectives and outcomes stated in syllabi. All levels of students' understanding of course objectives and competency in receptive and expressive communication skills should be evaluated in honors courses.