

## WHAT IS AN HONORS COURSE?

An honors course should be a learning experience distinguished from traditional coursework by *qualitatively* different academic expectations, impacting both the faculty member(s) and the students. We characterize an Honors course with three elements broadly defined as: *structure, content, and process/responsibility*. Ideally these elements will be combined with inspired instruction and a collection of superior students to create a dynamic, interactive environment

### STRUCTURE

Honors courses should be small enough (generally <20) to provide a richly interactive environment among the members of the class. The course enrollment should be composed of a majority of Honors students.

### CONTENT

- Honors courses should provide students with a robust, engaging and enriching experience where students synthesize, apply, and evaluate material.
- Course should add complexity, not simply difficulty.
- Quality rather than quantity separate Honors from non-honors.
- Honors students should learn the scholarship behind the disciplines core.
- Contemporary primary sources, seminal papers, or discipline-related methods and examples should be introduced and emphasized.
- While the work requirements may involve some larger and harder assignments, the goal is to encourage students to extract more intellectual value.

### PROCESS/RESPONSIBILITY

- Honors courses should use an active and collaborative learning process with considerable exchange among students and the instructor(s).
- Assignments should stress theory, analysis and synthesis.
- Every Honors course should take advantage of the small numbers of students to use individualized examination techniques, such as open-ended examination questions, oral exams, and/or creative portfolios.
- Honors faculty should seek to include students in an intellectual community beyond the classroom.
- Honors faculty should disclose their pedagogy to Honors students.
- Honors students are expected to take a greater responsibility for the process of learning than in a traditional course.
- Honors students should be open to innovation.
- Honors students and faculty should share a commitment to learning over simple consideration of grades.