



Honors Option Contracts: A Guide

What is an Honors Option Contract?

The OCC Honors Program curriculum requires scholars to pass two honors courses, HON 101 and HON 201, and complete 3 Honors Option Contracts. An Honors Option Contract (HOC) is a project created in a for-credit bearing course that goes above and beyond the regular curriculum in a given course (and meets honors criteria, included below). Completing this extra project will transform the course into an honors course.

In an Honors Option Contract, a recognized Honors Scholar and the instructor agree on the terms of an Honors Option Contract. Within the first weeks of class, a student may ask a professor or a professor may ask a student about creating a project, which the professor will serve as mentor throughout the semester. With the professor's oversight, the scholar then completes an Honors Option Contract Form and Description that details the scope of the project. The Honors Option Contract must be submitted by the fifth week of the semester (Flexible date). Faculty will receive additional compensation for students participating in Honors Options in their classes (the stipend is \$173 per contract).

Who can create an HOC and in which classes?

Students who have been accepted into the OCC Honors Program can create HOCs. Most courses can be transformed into honors courses with the creation of an HOC, but only with instructor approval.

What is the Process for Creating an Honors Option Contract?

Step One: The Scholar considers which courses are most intriguing this semester. What professor might you want to work with more directly? What subjects would you like to study more intensely? Those professors and courses that come to mind first are a good place to begin when considering completing an HOC.

Step Two: Choose the course or courses you wish to complete contracts in and approach your professor. Mention you are an Honors Scholar and ask if they would be willing to work with you in creating a project description for the course. Professors might also approach you.

Step Three: Meet with your professor and create a description of the project. Scholars should write the project description that details the project. Professors should add description of how the honors criteria (included below) will be met and add a section on how the project will be graded.

Step Four: Make any recommended revisions to the description page and complete the Honors Option Project form. The scholar and professor sign the form. This signifies that the project is approved by the professor.

Step Five: Turn the HOC form and description in to the Honors Office by the due date (usually the end of week 5). The due date is flexible. Contract forms and descriptions can be handed in at the main office in Founders Hall), sent to Russ Bodi or Cory Hoover on the Toledo Campus, or Timothy Rice on the Findlay Campus.

Step Six: Begin great work on your project!

Through the Semester: Scholars should regularly meet with faculty mentors to discuss their progress on the project.

End of Semester: Submit the completed project to the professor for grading and upload it to the Honors Blackboard site under the “Submit Portfolio” button.

What kind of projects can be created for HOCs?

While many of us think of research papers first when considering an extra project in a course, and HOC can take many forms, including a research paper, but they do not have to! Scholars have worked with nonprofit organizations, taught classmates and others, worked in theater productions, and some have even created art for their projects and even internships.

So, basically, there is no limit to the creativity involved in an HOC!

An HOC should be a good mix of what professors consider honors worthy and what scholars hope to study or accomplish with the project.

Basic HOC Requirements:

- The project must be measurable and submitted for grading (by the professor) and submitted to the Honors Blackboard site (the scholar is responsible for submitting the project to their professor and for uploading the project to the Honors Blackboard site).
- The project should include at least six to eight pages of text or the equivalent representation of work (e.g. artistic work, video, service learning summary, etc.).
- It must also include an oral component, which can be presented at the Honors Symposium (held each academic year in April), in-class, or at some other venue.

Honors Option Project Required Criteria:

The HOC should present in-depth exploration and/or thoughtful view of course-related elements and provide tangible evidence of at least three of the following outcomes:

1. **Critical thinking:** Analyze texts, identify argument and cultural content, apply knowledge creatively.
2. **Articulate communication:** communicate effectively, express ideas in multiple formats, and to appropriate audiences.
3. **Ethical reasoning:** reflect on values and choices, demonstrate respect for diversity, identify personal influences
4. **Civic engagement and leadership:** contribute to learning community, effective team membership, enhance classroom through service learning.

See the attached rubric for more descriptive details.

What needs to be submitted to Professors?

- The form and description must be approved and signed by professors first, then submitted to the Honors Office.
- At the end of the semester, following the professor's due date requirements, the project must be submitted for grading.

How do I and my instructor know if the project has been approved by the Honors Program?

- Professors and scholars will receive e-mailed confirmation of contract acceptance during the second month of the semester. Professors and scholars will also receive a copy of the contract, signed by an advisor or the program director.
- If the contract is not accepted, the professor will be notified, and asked to revise and resubmit the contract description.

How will the HOC be graded and how do scholars receive honors credit for the course?

- The Honors Option Project will be assessed by the professor and calculated into the overall grade.
- The HOC *MUST* equal 20% of the final grade.
- To count for honors credit, the overall course grade must be an A or a B.

Can an HOC be created in an online course? Yes, with the same requirements.

Submission: For online classes, e-mail approval will suffice. For Toledo, send signed contracts to russell_bodi@owens.edu or send via interoffice mail. Findlay professors send contracts to timothy_rice@owens.edu. Send hard copies *or* scanned copies.

Questions?

timothy_rice@owens.edu in Findlay, cory_hoover@owens.edu in Toledo
Or director, russell_bodi@owens.edu

Sample Honors Contract #1

Variables Causing Differences Between Weather Forecasts vs. Actual Weather

This project explores the accuracy of various popular sources of weather forecasting over a seven-day period through a qualitative content analysis on the predictive success of each source. After studying the forecasts versus the actual weather recorded for that date, the study will analyze what might have caused any variance between the two.

The analysis will cover weather forecasts from March 17 through March 23. (Dates are dependent on final review of this Honors Contract.) The study includes data from three local news stations (13abc/NBC24/WTOL11), the National Weather Service, and the AccuWeather application available on smart phones. The accuracy of predicted high and low temperatures versus recorded temperatures will be plotted from each source. Precipitation predictions versus rate/occurrences will be tracked as well. Data from the content analysis will be studied and the accuracy of the individual sources will be compared using a series of weather variables.

Critical Thinking: Preparation for this study will include directed readings on how to create and execute a qualitative content analysis, coaching on presentation skills, and research on effectively presenting complex data to an audience. Evidence of **civic engagement and leadership** will be found in the analysis of various weather information outlets since people generally obtain this information via television, website, or phone app.

Articulate communication will be a part of effectively presenting the study's findings to others in the community, through the oral presentation at the Honors Symposium, the accompanying PowerPoint, and the written paper submitted to the faculty mentor supervising the project.

Sample Honors Contract #2

Scholar: Scholar Name

Scholar ID #:

Course Instructor: Cory Hoover (cory_hoover@owens.edu)

Course Name: Composition 2

Course and Section Number: ENG 112-022

Semester and year: Spring 2018

Working Title: “Dispelling Islamophobia: An Interactive Approach”

Project Description:

Scholars in Composition II are required to compose an 8-10 page argument research paper. Scholar’s argument will present a thesis related to combatting Islamophobia in America. Related to the topic, her honors project in the course will be to create an educational program to reduce Islamophobia within colleges and in the community. Scholar will conduct research concerning existing organizations that combat hate and examine their strategies for educating the public. She will then develop a short, 30 to 45 minute educational and interactive program about Islamophobia. In addition to informing participants about Islam as part of her program, Scholar will develop an interactive participant exercise meant to dispel myths about other groups including Muslims, and foster connection amongst diverse groups of participants.

Honor’s Criteria:

Scholar’s project will meet all honors criteria of ethical reasoning, articulate communication, critical thinking, and leadership via her use of research to support the program she creates, the program itself, the implementation of the program on campus, and sharing the program at the Symposium in April.

Assessment:

Scholar’s project will count for 20% of her course grade in Composition II.

Calendar:

February:

- Conduct research on Islamophobia
- Identify organizations that combat hate
- Examine educational programs that currently exist

March:

- Begin the writing of the paper
- create the program
- set a date and advertise the program

April:

- First week in April: Perform the program at the college
- April 20th: Present the entire project at the Honors Symposium
- April 26th: Submit the Long Synthesis paper and the program materials for grading

HONORS PROGRAM RUBRIC

This form can help identify qualitative terms to use in writing the contract. Faculty will fill this out at the end of the semester.

Please indicate, for each student, which of the outcomes below were met

Measured Y/N	Student Learning Outcome	Measure (specify, see footnote) ¹	Does not meet expectations ²	Meets Expectations ²
	1. Critical Thinking			
	1.a. Analyzes spoken, written, or graphic texts			
	1.b. Identifies argument and articulates the disciplinary, historical, or cultural assumptions behind it			
	1.c. Applies knowledge creatively (and effectively) to solve problems and explain issues.			
	2. Articulate Communication			
	2.a. Communicates ideas, facts, theories, and arguments effectively.			
	2.b. Expresses ideas and concepts precisely and persuasively in multiple formats			
	2.c. Presents ideas orally, in writing, and through appropriate technologies to a variety of audiences			
	3. Ethical Thinking			
	3.a. Reflects on personal values and their influence on choices			
	3.b. Demonstrates respect for human diversity and critical awareness of his/her own assumptions, stereotypes, and biases when confronting difference			
	3.c. Articulates issues that he/she considers important			
	3.d. Identifies and assesses the personal, social, scientific, and/or historical influences that contribute to perspectives on the above issues			
	4. Community Service and Leadership			
	Contributes to the development and vitality of the community of scholars established by the Honors Program			
	Demonstrates the ability to lead teams and to be an effective team member			
	Enhances classroom learning through community service			



Honors Option Contract

To allow Honors Option coursework in your class, faculty must complete and submit the following Contract to the Honors Program Office **by end of the week four (flexible)**.

Honors Scholar full name (Please Print.) _____

Faculty full name (Please Print.) _____

Honors Scholar email _____ Honors Scholar OCID _____

Course title or internship¹ location _____

Course and section number _____ Semester and year _____

On a separate page, to be initialed by instructor and student, please describe the Honors Option Project requirements. (See the above criteria.) You will need to indicate at least **three** of these:

1. How the scholar will apply Critical Thinking.
2. That Articulate Communication will be assessed (e.g. how many pages, etc.)
3. How scholar will employ Ethical Reasoning.
4. How Scholar will demonstrate Service Learning or Leadership.

This project equals 20% of the final course grade.

In witness whereof, the parties have agreed to this Contract.

Honors Scholar signature Date

Faculty signature Date

Honors Program Director or Advisor signature Date

¹ Internships must be arranged with Denise Grupp-Verbon during semester previous to actual internship.