

# FOOTHILL COLLEGE HONORS INSTITUTE HONORS COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

## **Honors Courses: History and Processes**

Honors courses have been part of the Foothill curriculum since 1961, when the institution first offered courses designed for the exceptional students who wanted to broaden and deepen their knowledge. (*Foothill College Curriculum Handbook*, 2003) Historically, honors courses have been offered across disciplines. More than thirty years ago, the Honors Institute was established. Enrollment in the program is growing and currently tops 325 students. Program benefits include enhanced learning opportunities, specialized scholarships, and guaranteed or preferred admission to selective institutions. Universities report assessing a student's completion of one or more honors courses favorably during the admission process.

Offering honors courses in a seminar-style format has been the norm at Foothill. For many years, the institution offered both honors sections of existing courses and 1-unit honors seminars. In recent years, separate honors courses were developed in response to transfer articulation requirements; thus, the "H" suffix evolved. All new honors courses must be submitted separately for articulation with each university.

Faculty interest in developing honors courses is increasing, giving rise to more faculty requesting information on how to create an honors course. When creating an honors version of an existing course, the primary consideration is how the honors section would differ in its academic and intellectual demand from that of regular sections of the same course. Traditionally, honors sections should result in more advanced student outcomes, more in-depth understanding of course content and stress higher levels of thinking than non-honors versions of the course. The honors course generally explores content in depth and/or scope beyond that which is normally offered in the regular course. Some honors instructors report that the course is more academically challenging because of the highly motivated and well-prepared student population that form a stimulating classroom community.

When writing an honors course outline, it should be clear how the "normal" content of the course will be covered. Writing opportunities should be included in all honors courses. Honors courses should make use of assignments and grading practices that are more academically rigorous than those of regular versions of the course. Supplemental methods of evaluation are also frequently employed and should measure higher level thinking skills consistent with the honors instructional approach. In honors courses, the preference is to require assignments that encourage analysis, application, inquiry, comparison, synthesis and research over objective tests that foster rote memorization.

Honors courses must first be approved by the Department/division curriculum committee and submitted to the Honors Curriculum Committee for inclusion in the annual honors curriculum. Because of the unique, interdisciplinary nature of the honors program, course authors and division deans are encouraged to consult early with both the Honors Institute and the Articulation Officer to ensure that courses are both transferable and offered at times that will not conflict with other honors courses.

**FOOTHILL COLLEGE  
HONORS INSTITUTE  
HONORS COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

In addition to securing university transferability, faculty, in cooperation with their curriculum representative, should submit the course to the Foothill College Curriculum Committee, for AA/AS General Education approval (if appropriate). Additionally, honors versions of courses that are required for any Foothill AA/AS degree or certificate should be submitted to the division in which the degree/certificate resides for inclusion, as well.

Course Identifiers for Honors Versions of Existing Courses

*Required format for honors sections of existing “regular” courses:*

Prefix	MATH
Course Number	10
Suffix/Honors Designator	<i>H</i>
Course Title	<i>Honors Elementary Statistics (honors precedes subject)</i>
Prerequisite	<i>Honors Institute Participant</i>
Summary	<b>MATH 10H Honors Elementary Statistics</b>
Course Description	Same as existing course-- <i>with added distinction regarding how the honors course is enhanced.</i> Some current examples: HIST 4CH: “As an honors course, it is a full thematic seminar with advanced teaching methods focusing on major writing, reading, and research assignments, student class lectures, group discussions and interactions.”

ENGL 1AH: “Honors section offers rigorous preparation in analytic reading and writing skills for students intending to transfer to a four-year college or university. Course provides opportunity to engage contemporary social and ethical issues through small group discussion, a structured sequence of papers requiring higher-level thinking tasks, and collaborative projects. Emphasis placed on multiple drafts and substantive revision to produce articulate writing appropriate to academic disciplines. Research paper is required.”

Honors Course Outline

Some considerations when creating an honors course outline:

1. **CONTENT:** How will the course content be augmented to distinguish this class from the existing general education course?
2. **INSTRUCTION:** How will instructional methodologies be modified to distinguish this course from the existing general education course?
3. **ASSIGNMENTS:** How will the reading and writing assignments be enriched to distinguish this course from the existing general education course?
4. **PARTICIPATION:** How will class participation, group activities, individual presentations, etc. be enriched to distinguish this course from the existing general education course?
5. **INTEGRATION:** How are all of the above enrichment experiences be integrated to achieve course goals and student learning outcomes?

*(Honors Addendum Template. Long Beach Community College District, January, 2006.)*

# FOOTHILL COLLEGE HONORS INSTITUTE HONORS COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

## Honors Institute Seminars

Honors Institute Seminars (typically 1 unit) emphasize classroom discussion and frequent interaction with the instructor. Honors seminars challenge and broaden the intellectual horizons of honors students. These courses should be rigorous. They do not normally require any prerequisites beyond participation on the Honors Institute and provide a positive learning experience for students with plans for any major. Honors seminars are available in most departments. Generic honors seminars are not UC transferable; therefore, they should be identified with a course number above 49. (After matriculation to the university, students may present their course portfolio for review and credit determination.) Content-specific honors seminars may be developed if there are plans to offer the course on a somewhat regular basis (e.g. Honors Institute Seminar in Economics: U.S. Health Care Economics). Faculty developing such courses should consult with the Articulation Officer because courses must be submitted to the University of California for approval. The course number will be determined after an articulation analysis. When designing honors seminars, faculty are encouraged to consult with the Honors Institute to discuss course feasibility and assess anticipated student interest.

## Course identifiers for Honors Seminars

*Required format for honors seminars:*

Prefix	MATH
Course Number	34
Suffix/Honors Designator	<i>H</i>
Course Title	Honors Institute Seminar in Mathematics
Prerequisite	<i>Honors Institute Participant</i>
Summary	<b>MATH 34H Honors Institute Seminar in Mathematics</b>
Transferability	CSU transferable only.
Recommendation	<i>Increase course number to 50+ for generic seminars. Create new &lt;49 course numbers for content-specific seminars and pursue articulation as appropriate.</i>
Maximum seat count:	20

## “Designated” Honors Courses Eliminated Effective 2009

Many years ago, the Honors Institute approved some courses deemed as especially rigorous, but not offered as a separate honors course, to be identified as “designated” honors courses. Examples of these courses include CHEM 1C, MATH 1D and PHYS 4D. This practice permitted students majoring in the sciences and engineering fields, which require them to concentrate primarily on lower division major requirements rather than on general education, to participate in the Honors Institute. Over the years, additional courses have been added to the list. With the advent of separate honors courses, this is no longer necessary. Designating courses outside mathematics and the physical/biological sciences is discouraged. Effective fall, 2009, all designated honors courses will be eliminated from the list. Faculty from departments that offer courses they deem appropriate for identification as “designated” honors courses should submit their courses to the Honors Curriculum Committee for review by February 1, 2009. A “Designated” Honors Course Proposal Form will be available in June 2008. Once approved, courses will remain on the list until further notice. The Honors Curriculum Committee will periodically review courses. Faculty should

**FOOTHILL COLLEGE  
HONORS INSTITUTE  
HONORS COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

notify the Honors Institute when substantive changes are made to “designated” honors courses.

**Honors Course Development Checklist**

The following checklist is designed to help faculty when developing or revising an honors or “designated” honors course.

- Consult with Honors Institute regarding course feasibility.
- Consult with Articulation Officer regarding course transferability and articulation approval procedures/timelines.
- Consult division Curriculum Representative regarding Foothill GE approval.
- Together with division Curriculum Representative, research Foothill degrees and certificates that identify the “regular” version of the course as a required, recommended or supporting course and submit the honors version of the course to the division for inclusion.
- Secure course approval from division Curriculum Committee.
- Secure approval from Honors Institute Curriculum Committee.
- Submit course for Foothill GE approval as appropriate.
- Notify Honors Institute regarding terms and times course will be offered.

**Honors Seminar Checklist**

- Review existing Honors Seminars offered in division.
- Change course number for generic honors seminars to number above 34.
- Add H suffix to all honor seminars.
- If content-specific honors seminar will be offered on a regular-basis, develop content-specific outline and submit to division Curriculum Committee.
- Consult with Articulation officer regarding articulation options and procedures.
- Consult with Honors Curriculum Committee regarding course plans.
- Notify Articulation Officer when course is approved in order to secure articulation.
- Notify Honors Institute which quarter(s) the course will be offered.

**FOOTHILL COLLEGE  
HONORS INSTITUTE  
HONORS COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES  
SUMMARY  
HONORS CURRICULUM CHANGES  
February 5, 2008**

New curriculum guidelines effective fall 2009.

Honors Curriculum Guidelines

- A. Honors sections of regular courses not permitted. A separate course outline of record for honors courses is required.
- B. “Split” honors courses are inconsistent with honors pedagogy and are discouraged.
- C. All honors courses will have H suffix (e.g. ENGL 1AH).
- D. All honors course titles will denote **Honors** before course title (e.g. **Honors** English Composition and Reading).
- E. In addition to any content/skills prerequisite, the prerequisite will be changed from “Membership in the Honors Institute” to: “**Honors Institute Participant**”.
- F. Faculty should consult with Articulation Officer during course development.
- G. Faculty should consult with Honors Institute regarding course feasibility when developing the course. The Honors Curriculum Committee will review honors courses and publish the scheduled honors courses in its newsletter and on the Honors web site. The Honors Curriculum Committee will determine courses appropriate for inclusion on the Honors Scholar Course List.
- H. Faculty should consult with curriculum representative to ensure that honors courses are reviewed by appropriate committees and division for inclusion in general education, major and degree requirements.
- I. Specific to Honors Institute Seminars
  1. Course numbering should reflect transferability: generic courses will be numbered 49+; content-specific courses will be numbered under 49 if UC approval is obtained via articulation process.
  2. Honors Institute Seminars should add **H** suffix (e.g. MATH 34**H**)
- J. “Designated” Honors Courses
  1. Existing “Designated” honors courses will be phased out after spring 2009.
  2. In rare cases, non-honors courses may be approved for honors credit. This exception is intended only for those disciplines in which unique honors courses are impossible or not practical-typically in advanced math, the higher physical and biological sciences and engineering (e.g. BIOL 1C-D, MATH 2B, PHYS 4D).
  3. Faculty will submit such proposed courses to Honors Curriculum Committee by Feb. 1, 2009. The proposal form for such courses will be available in June 2008.

**FOOTHILL COLLEGE  
HONORS INSTITUTE  
HONORS COURSE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

**Honors Curriculum Timelines**

<b>Fall 2009</b>	Full implementation of new honors curriculum model, including: designated honors course approval procedures, elimination of both honors “sections” of “regular” courses and split honors/non-honors courses, appropriate honors course numbering.
-----	
<b>November 1, 2008</b>	Deadline to submit new courses to CCC for AA/AS General Education approval effective fall 2009.
<b>December 1, 2008</b>	Deadline to submit new honors courses to Articulation Office for proposal for inclusion on the CSU General Education and UC/CSU IGETC certification lists effective the next fall term.
<b>January 31, 2009</b>	Deadline to change honors course numbers to accurately reflect course transferability and to add H suffix to seminars.
<b>February 1, 2009</b>	Deadline to submit proposed “designated honors courses” to Honors Curriculum Committee for inclusion effective the following fall term.
<b>March 1, 2009</b>	Deadline for divisions to notify Honors Institute of honors course offerings for the 2009-2010 academic year.
<b>Ongoing</b>	Communicate with Honors Institute regarding new, revised and planned honors courses.

For more information

Foothill College Honors Institute website: <http://www.foothill.edu/hon>

Honors Institute Director: Bernie Day X7225 [daybernie@foothill.edu](mailto:daybernie@foothill.edu)

Honors Curriculum Chair: Scott Lankford [lankfordscott@foothill.edu](mailto:lankfordscott@foothill.edu)

Honors Institute Program Assistant: Teresa de la Cruz X7638 [delacruzteresa@foothill.edu](mailto:delacruzteresa@foothill.edu)