Dear Honors Student,

Welcome! So, you’re interested in contracting a non-Honors course to receive Honors credit? You’ve come to the right place! In this letter, we will give a basic introduction to contracting. On the following pages, you will find a detailed checklist of requirements for contracting a course. To make sure your contract is accepted, follow these guidelines! First, though, let’s learn the basics.

Contracting a course can be a little confusing. Contracts were created to allow upper-class Honors students to delve deeply into specific subject matter. (This isn’t to say that freshmen can’t contract; they just have to meet the expectations outlined in these guidelines.) Contracted classes are meant to be 200+ level classes, as the subject matter in 100-level courses is typically too broad and simple to allow for the extended learning acquired through contracting upper-division courses.

The fundamental concept is for a student to add extra requirements to a course to bring it to the same level as an Honors course. You could say that the contract “converts” the regular course into an Honors course, allowing the student to receive Honors credit hours for their work. Typically, the extra requirements include intense reading assignments, special papers, final projects, volunteer work, or something along those lines. We like to encourage creativity, so bring us all of your “crazy” ideas!

Despite our love for creative contracts, we do have a number of guidelines. Do we just like making tons of rules for you to follow? No- but we are very interested in maintaining a consistent level of quality, Honors-level, academic work. To do this, we’ve compiled the following list of guidelines for contracted courses and formed a committee. Each contract moves through this committee of Honors faculty and students who determine if the contract meets the standards expected of an Honors student. Your contract will not be rejected unless you’ve chosen an inappropriate class; contracts that are not immediately accepted can be edited by the student to comply with guidelines- or cancelled, if you feel you don’t have the time to complete the extra work.

I hope we haven’t scared you off! Contracting a course is enriching and invigorating. You choose the pace and the subject- you help build your own education! Isn’t that exciting!? Good luck!

Sincerely,
Honors Staff
Choose a 200, 300, or 400 level class

Exceptional circumstances only warrant the contracting of a 100-level course, and there are typically provisions made to accommodate these exceptions. See the FAQ to read about these.

You may not contract an upper level course for which you can already receive Honors credit by getting an A. See the list of these classes here: http://honors.wvu.edu/current/upperdivisionprime.php

Decide how many credit hours you want to contract

Typically, a student will receive Honors hours equal to the credit hours of the class. You may elect to contract for fewer hours, but not more. Note: The guidelines regarding page length, etc, are based on 3 credit hours, so adjust accordingly.

A maximum of 9 hours can be contracted in any one discipline.

Determine parameters for your contract:

- The work should be a creative idea outside of class. If the work is not sufficiently beyond the scope of the class and beyond normal instructional parameters, your contract will not be accepted.
- The contract must include a hands-on experience element. This could include library research, volunteering, logging items, creating a PR campaign, creating/conducting/analyzing a survey or lab work; be creative!
- The contract must include an active reflective element. This could include a research paper, online blog, or journal, among other things.
- The length of the reflective element is adjustable based on what else you are doing. The basic idea behind how the committee judges contracts is that work should be equivalent to a 20 page research paper and at least equal to one full letter grade in the course.
  - For a research paper only, for 3 credit hours, you must write a minimum of 20 pages. References are not included in this length.
  - For a research paper plus a spoken element (like a presentation or class lecture) expect to be required to write ~15 pages, based on the length of the presentation. References are not included in this length.
  - If your hands-on element is more involved than simple library research, your reflective element may be adjusted down somewhat, but always plan on 20 pages.
☐ Consult with your professor
   ☐ Talk about the work you want to do; your professor may suggest changes. They will expect you to learn the subject in greater depth, and discuss the subject with greater precision than expected of other students.
   ☐ Discuss grading of the project
      • Contract work should have no effect on your regular course grade, but you must receive an A or B on the contract work to get contract credit.
   ☐ Discuss a timeline for your project, including turning in the final results and any milestones leading up to that point.
A letter to instructors can be found here:
   http://honors.wvu.edu/current/contract.php

☐ Type your contract
   You, not your professor, should type the contract. If the contract is not typed, it will be sent back. The contract form can be found here:
   http://honors.wvu.edu/current/contract.php

☐ Collect signatures
   You are required to sign the front page agreeing to the statement on that page. You are required to collect signatures from your adviser and the instructor to affirm that they’ve read the contract and approve your work.

☐ Turn in the contract to the Honors office
   The contract must be turned in by the third Friday from the start of the semester. The office is located in Honors Hall, next to Summit Hall; call 304.293.2100 if you have trouble locating the building.

☐ Look for an email to your mix account
   Within a couple weeks, you will receive an email saying your contract is accepted or rejected. If rejected, you must reply. You can accept the changes suggested, suggest your own changes, ask questions, or cancel your contract.
☐ Complete the contract work
Complete the work as outlined in your contract. All work should be turned in to the instructor, not the Honors office. The instructor does the grading.

☐ Turn in the grade sheet
The instructor should provide the contract work grade and his/her signature to the grade sheet. It can be turned in to the Honors office by either the student or instructor.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I contract such-and-such 100-level course?
Typically, no. The core purpose of Honors contracting is to provide upperclassmen an opportunity to delve more deeply into interesting subject matter and extend their learning in a way that can’t be done in a regular classroom. The subject matter of 100-level classes is often too broad and simple to allow high-level contracting opportunities. We offer tons of opportunities to get Honors credit, so try one of those instead! Here are some exceptions:

- ENGR 199 students who don’t make it into an Honors section will “contract” through Dr. Byrd. This is not through the Honors office.
- ENGR 101 and ENGR 102 should approach their individual faculty members; there is a specific project.

I can’t fit into an Honors section of a class. Can I contract the work instead?
You can contract the class, as long as it meets other requirements (including being a 200+ level class) and you complete the minimum guidelines of contracting a course. The requirements of the add-on may differ from contract guidelines, but it doesn’t matter. You need to meet contract requirements in order to contract.

How do I get credit for internships, study abroad, independent study, or graduate level classes?
Stop by the office! The secretary will help set up a meeting with the appropriate staff member.

Can I contract a course that I’m not taking?
No, but you could try an independent study; just set up an appointment.

What if I don’t want to do my contract anymore?
Send an email to uhpmail@wvu.edu so we don’t bug you asking for your grade sheet at the end of the semester. That’s it!