



Honors Handbook
Jane Stephens Honors Program

Approved 2024



HONORS HANDBOOK

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Honors Curriculum

Honors Sections. Honors sections may be designated for any course in the University curriculum. This arrangement permits the creation of Honors sections in any lower-division course, whether or not it directly serves General Education requirements, and in advance upper-division courses, should sufficient demand arise. However, sections of courses in the General Education curriculum should predominate. Honors sections will be designated and taught so as to contribute to the goals and objectives of the Honors Program; at the same time, they will meet the content requirements of their non-Honors counterparts.

General Characteristics of the Honors Course. While meeting the defined objectives of their non-Honors counterparts, Honors courses are expected to emphasize creative and active learning, analysis and synthesis, and application of background knowledge. Particular attention is paid to student initiative, methodological awareness, depth of investigation, and diversity of learning resources. Student initiative is encouraged. There is less reliance upon drill, lecture, and textbook review, and greater reliance upon independent readings, class discussion, question and answer sessions, collective problem solving, and student conduct research. Methodological awareness is the nature of professional activity in the discipline, historical development of the discipline, and current issues.

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Depth of investigation is found when material is covered in greater detail, where greater emphasis is placed on implications and underlying principles, and where intellectually more demanding issues and problems are discussed. Diversity of learning resources implies less reliance upon traditional textbook presentation of material, and greater reliance upon a variety of sources, including professional articles and books, books of current and historical interest, elected readings from periodicals, library resources, visiting faculty, and team teaching. Methods of student evaluation are expected to be consistent with the nature and intent of an Honors course as here defined.

Evaluation Criteria. The criteria used to evaluate students in Honors sections should be equivalent to the criteria used to evaluate students in non-Honors sections. Honors sections should be distinguished by the qualities described above rather than by the amount of work required or by the difficulty of attaining a given grade.

Course Approval. It is not necessary to seek special course approval for Honors sections, since they are, indeed, sections of already approved courses. However, it is the responsibility of the department and college within the Honors section it is offered, and the Director of Honors, to ensure that the course design satisfies the requirements of an Honors course.

How to Become an Honors Faculty Member

Requirements

1. A doctorate or the appropriate terminal degree. Any exceptions must be approved by the department chairperson, college dean, and the Faculty Honors Council.
2. At least two years university-level teaching experience and a demonstrable record of excellence in teaching.
3. An ongoing record of scholarship and/or professional development.
4. Recommendations from the appropriate chairperson and dean.

The application consists of:

1. A current curriculum vitae
2. Student evaluations of teaching for all courses taught during the past two academic years, at least. Please include a list of all courses taught over the two-year period (designated by semester).
3. Letter of recommendation from your college dean.
4. Letter of recommendation from your department chairperson.
5. Provide a brief paragraph addressing how you would be a good asset to the students enrolled in the honors program.
6. **Optional:** Personal statement addressing the following questions:
 - a. Provide an explanation for any course evaluations not included in your application packet.
 - b. Address how you have reached “excellence in teaching”.

Please email honors@semo.edu about your interest in applying to become honors faculty.

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How to Maintain Honors Faculty Status

The Jane Stephens Honors Program has a process of regular review of honors faculty status. The goal of this review is to ensure that those with honors faculty status are active in the program. To retain honors faculty status, faculty will be asked to complete at least one of the items listed below. This list has been approved by the Faculty Honors Council.

Any one of these items will grant continuing honors faculty status:

- Teach an honors class
- Supervise an HN499 senior honors project
- Supervise an honors contract
- *Attend an honors program Honors Faculty training meeting
- *Attend an honors activity or event
- *Attend an honors open house at the honors program (these are held in association with First Step and Show Me Days)
- *Attend a first step presentation for the honors program
- *Attend a transfer orientation presentation for the honors program
- *Attend the Show Me Days Student Life Fair for the honors program
- *Attend the Show Me Days Academic Fair for the honors program
- *Meet with a prospective student for the honors program (high school or eligible Southeast student not already in the program)
- Take a tour of the honors office (the office is open M-F 8-5)
- Include honors faculty status in your syllabus and make a first day of class announcement (send a copy of the syllabus page with your statement of honors faculty status to honors@semo.edu to receive credit for your retention requirement)
- Include a written announcement regarding your honors faculty status on your Canvas class website or send your class an e-mail with this information (send a copy of the announcement or e-mail to honors@semo.edu to receive credit for your retention requirement)

* These items can be set up by contacting the honors program (honors@semo.edu, 573-651-2513).

Several of these items are relatively quick to complete and should be accomplishable by any faculty member with honors faculty status. Of course, we hope that honors faculty will continue to be involved in much more than this minimum standard.

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How to Help Students Earn Honors Credit

Honors Courses

Honors courses should not be any more difficult than non-honors course sections. Honors sections are different because they have fewer students enrolled, the students on average are more engaged in the learning process, and the course is designed to increase interaction between the students and with the instructor.

The Online Contract System and Creating a Contract

If a student in your non-honors course wants to receive honors credit for that course, you may complete a contract with them.

Honors contracts can be originated by either faculty or honors students. We encourage you to have the student login with their Southeast Key and password at <https://appaca.semo.edu/honors>. With this system you or your student can create, edit, and approve an honors contract. Once a contract has been approved by you and the honors student, the director can then approve the contract. You can view the status of the contract at any time in this system. Once complete, you can mark the contract as complete in the system.

Contracts should be a variety of different projects. Meet with honors students requesting contracts to develop contracts meeting the students' needs. Research papers may be the easiest to set up, but we discourage the regular use of this option unless most appropriate for the learning goals of the contract. Consider alternative projects such as interviews with professionals in the field, creation of material to teach in class, photo essays, annotated bibliographies, additional reading and discussion with you about what they learned, presentations, job shadowing, etc. This list is not meant to be all inclusive, but to start you thinking about the types of assignments that contracts might involve. This will vary based on your discipline. A contract does not have to have a written component.

Think of a contract as a way to give honors students an experience that will enrich their education and perhaps that they might discuss with a future employer as a highlight of their undergraduate experience. Most important of all is that honors contracts focus on something students are interested in and something that they would enjoy working on.

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How to Introduce Honors Faculty Status

It is important that students in your non-honors courses know that you are a member of the Honors Faculty. We have created a syllabus statement that lets your students know that you are a member and they can complete contracts with you. You may use the statement that we created or you may create a new statement.

The syllabus statement is a great way to inform students of your status as Honors Faculty but we also suggest that you make an announcement the first day of class and let students know you are willing to create honors contracts.

Syllabus statement:

Are you in the Jane Stephens Honors Program and interested in creating an honors contract? I am an Honors Faculty member and would be more than happy to work with you this semester. Please contact me the first two weeks of class through email, office hours, or set up an appointment.

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How to be an HN499 Faculty Mentor

HN499

During the senior year, students may approach you and ask you to be their faculty mentor for their HN499 projects. This is your opportunity to work one on one with the student to create a memorable project and experience for both of you. The HN499 project should be of the same size and scope as a project in a senior-level class in the major. These will vary widely by major.

The senior honors research (HN499) project is the student's opportunity to study and research a topic that is of interest to them under your direction as the faculty mentor(s). The student may choose to research a topic in their major field of study, or they may choose to broaden their perspective and research a topic that is outside their major. The essential consideration is that it be a topic in which they are interested and about which they want to learn more.

The only requirement for the honors project is that the final product that is submitted must be at the senior level in terms of quality. Considerations such as format, length, etc. are determined by the appropriate discipline(s) and the faculty mentor(s). The project will be evaluated as Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory by the faculty mentor(s), where Satisfactory is interpreted as A or B work in a 400-level course. We suggest that students identify a faculty mentor(s) with whom they would like to work and contact the mentor(s) to exchange ideas about possible projects approximately two semesters before their anticipated graduation.

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How to Get Involved

Events and Activities

You are encouraged to attend events hosted by the Honors Program. These events give you the opportunity to meet students and other Honors Faculty members. Examples of events:

- First STEP
- Show Me Day
- Transfer Orientation
- Faculty and Student Meet and Greet
- Murder Mystery Dinner
- Honors Banquet
- Honors Welcome Back Picnic
- Academic Fairs
- Other events planned by the Honors Student Council

For more information on events and activities, including current dates and times, please visit: <http://semo.edu/honors/life/index.html>.

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How to Become an Honors Student

Requirements to Join the Honors Program

New Freshman Admission to the Stephens Honors Program

Students enrolling for their first semester as a full-time university student must have:

- A cumulative high school GPA of at least 3.75 on a 4.0 scale (or the equivalent) OR
- A cumulative high school GPA of at least a 3.5 AND an ACT composite score of at least 27 (or the equivalent)

Transfer or Continuing Student Admission to the Stephens Honors Program

Transfer or continuing students with at least 15 hours from another university or college must have at least a 3.5 cumulative GPA for their university or college work

- Transfer students receive credit for up to six credits of honors classes from another university or college

Note: Students who do not meet the standards given above may be admitted to the Jane Stephens Honors Program by petition if at the end of at least 15 semester hours of college work, they have earned a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or above.

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How to Complete the Honors Program

To complete the Jane Stephens Honors Program, students must:

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5
- Complete at least 24 hours of honors credit with at least 6 hours of honors credit at the upper-division (junior or senior) level
- Satisfactorily complete a senior honors project

Students who complete the Jane Stephens Honors Program requirements will be recognized as follows:

- They will be designated Honors Scholars.
- They will be identified at both the Honors Ceremony and the Commencement ceremony.
- They will receive a medallion to be worn at the Commencement exercises.
- Completion of the Stephens Honors Program requirements will be noted on their academic transcript.

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How to Retain Honors Student Status

To remain in good standing in the Jane Stephens Honors Program after admission, a student must:

- Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of at least 3.50 and
- Remain actively involved in the Jane Stephens Honors Program.

Falling below the required minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5 in any semester will cause the student to be placed on honors status review. If, at the end of the status review semester, the student's cumulative GPA is 3.5 or higher, he or she will be returned to regular honors status. If the cumulative GPA is still lower than 3.5, but the semester GPA is 3.5 or higher, the student will remain on honors status review. If the semester GPA for a status review semester is lower than 3.5, honors status may be discontinued. A student may apply for readmission to the Jane Stephens Honors Program if the cumulative GPA is raised to 3.5 or higher.

To maintain active involvement in the Stephens Honors Program, a student must meet the following rate of progress toward accumulating the 24 hours of honors credit needed to complete the program.

Honors Hours Completed at Southeast	Total Hours Completed at Southeast
3	30
9	60
18	75
21	90

Falling below the required rate of progress in any semester will cause the student to be placed on honors status review. If, at the end of the status review semester, the student's rate of progress is satisfactory, he or she will be returned to regular honors status. If the rate of progress is not satisfactory, but the student is working towards satisfactory rate of progress, the student will remain on honors status review. If the rate of progress is not met, honors status may be discontinued.

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Jane Stephens Honors Program

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