Types of University Honors Courses

**Standalone Courses:** These honors-only courses are open to all University Honors students and are typically limited to 20-25 students per section. Standalone courses are frequently 100- or 200-level courses, sometimes fulfilling general education requirements.

**Honors Seminars:** These honors-only courses are scheduled at the 300- and 400-level and are typically limited to 15-20 students. Seminars involve subject matter with a broad appeal to students that coincides with the intellectual and research/artistry interests of the faculty member. Seminars are intended to lend breadth to the student’s program of study; in fact, as a requirement for University Honors, students must take one such seminar during their undergraduate career. Given University Honors students are drawn from six undergraduate colleges, Honors Seminars normally do not carry prerequisites.

**Honors Mini-Sections:** These courses consist of a select number of seats that are reserved by academic departments for University Honors students within a larger regular section of a course. Listed in MyNIU as a separate section, these courses assume students will be asked to complete course requirements that go beyond the expectations of the regular section and ensure a *value-added* honors experience rather than simply more work. Ideally, students in Honors mini-sections will have greater access to and interaction with the faculty member teaching the course.

**In-Course Contracts (ICC):** Students can take a University Honors course by working directly with the professor of a regular section of a course to create a valued-added Honors experience in that course. An actual contract is negotiated between the professor and student and then approved by the department chair or program/school director and the University Honors Program. (Students in the Honors Classic Program can enroll in an ICC at the 300- or 400-level, while students in the Honors PLUS program are allowed one ICC at any course level.)

**Capstone:** The Honors Capstone is the “senior thesis” or significant research or artistry project required for graduation with Full University Honors, Upper-Division Honors, and optional for Associate University Honors. Capstones are usually completed within the student’s major field. The Honors Capstone is an in-depth, independent study experience with a true expert (the faculty advisor). The faculty advisor works closely with the student to ensure a high-quality learning experience. The University Honors Program has a general set of requirements for the Capstone, which are designed to ensure honors education goals are met; however, faculty advisors oversee the nature, method, and details of the project based on standards and practices within their respective academic disciplines. The process that guides the development of the Honors Capstone is analogous to that of a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, with the substantive complexity and sophistication of the project set at a level appropriate for an undergraduate student pursuing graduation with honors recognition.