

NIU University Honors Program Guidelines for Honors Mini-Sections

Honors mini-sections constitute a select number of seats for University Honors students within a larger regular section of a course. Listed in the Schedule of Classes as a separate section, these courses assume that University Honors students will be asked to complete course requirements that are qualitatively different than what is required of students who are regularly enrolled.

Honors mini-sections should enrich the course experience through a variety of assignments that are thoughtfully integrated into the course throughout the semester. An end-of-semester paper or project, or assignments that simply require additional work without deepening or extending upon course content do not meet this objective. In addition to the standard requirements for the course, **an Honors mini-section must include multiple value-added activities.** Examples include:

- Regularly scheduled meetings with the faculty member throughout the semester to discuss Honors work assigned in the course. *Faculty interaction with students is a key element of the University Honors experience. Survey results indicate students are most interested in extra contact with the professor.*
- Two to three short writing assignments in addition to a final paper. Short assignments can lead up to a final writing assignment or can explore more specific course topics.
- Additional readings, oral presentations, or performances. Having students do extra reading followed by an oral presentation to the class enables the entire class to benefit from the additional readings.
- Additional lab work or an enhanced project with accompanying readings and discussion.
- Analysis of related media or documentary topics with accompanying readings and discussion.
- Attendance at outside of the classroom enrichment activities. For example, students might be required to attend a lecture, theater production, conference, workshop, exhibit, or special event and write a short response or report back to the professor or class about the experience.
- A journal leading up to a final project or paper, combined with regular meetings with the faculty member to discuss the journal and evaluate progress toward the final paper or project.

Grading:

The Honors component should not be treated as extra credit, and sufficient weight should be allocated to the Honors assignments so that poor performance on this work impacts the final course grade.

- A portion of the Honors assignments should be due before the semester withdrawal deadline so that students receive early feedback on the nature of the Honors work and performance expectations.
- Once enrolled in an Honors mini-section, it is the University Honors Program's policy that a student should only change his or her course registration from an Honors mini-section to a regular section in extraordinary circumstances. Before requesting such a section change, a student is expected to seek advising at the University Honors Program offices (located in the University Honors Center in Campus Life Building 110). To make a section change, the student must go to the academic department or school *offering the course* to complete a "Current Term Schedule Change Request Form." This form will convert the student's registration from the Honors mini-section to the regular section.
- Honors component assignment should comprise a minimum of 10%, but no more than 33% of a student's grade in the course.