OUTLINE OF HONORS COURSE CONTRACTING

I. What are contract courses?

The RIT Honors Program currently requires all Honors students to complete Honors points before graduation. Contract courses present an opportunity for students to obtain their Honors points through completing additional work in regular courses.

When a student contracts with a professor to take a regular course for Honors points, the student agrees to complete additional coursework that the professor assigns to the contract student. This additional coursework must be completed in order for the student to earn Honors points for the course. Some universities, including RIT, require that the student earn between an A and a B- in the course in order for it to be accepted for Honors points.

In the contract, both the student and professor will agree on the additional coursework before the course commences. If the student does not meet all of the terms listed in the contract, then that student receives course credit only (no Honors points). However, if the student does meet all of the terms in the contract and earns at least a B- in the course, the student is awarded Honors points.

II. Advantages of Contract Courses

The advantages of course contracting include the following:

- Course contracting offers all RIT colleges a way to challenge their Honors students in their own programs.
- Contract courses address the issue of AP and transfer credits.
- Students have the opportunity to expand their knowledge of subjects in their own programs or in areas outside of liberal arts and science.
- Students in contract courses encourage more faculty involvement in and recognition of the Honors Program.
- Students benefit from one-on-one direct contact with faculty members in their own fields of study or areas in which they are interested.
- Faculty can request modest funding to support their contract course.

III. Procedures for Contract Courses

The following guidelines have been established for course contracting:

- The contract course proposal is required to be submitted to the Honors Program office for approval within the first week of the semester.
- A student may contract a course with any faculty member who is willing to work with the student.
- Not all classes are eligible for contracts. Courses to be contracted should generally be upper-level and cannot be offered as Honors courses during that academic year.
- The additional contract work should serve to substantially increase the knowledge level of a discipline for a particular student. Contract work should take the academic rigor of the course a step (or several steps) beyond what other students are doing for the course. A contract MUST NOT consist of only an extra written paper for Honors points.
- The Honors Program Director and Department Head will determine the appropriateness of a contract and pre-approve all contracts for Honors points.
- The course professor will determine whether the student has met the terms of the contract and assign the grade.
- Students are required to present their extra work in a way determined by the professor; this can be a presentation to the class, at a meeting with faculty/staff, in a paper that will be published, or at a relevant conference.
- If a student fails to meet all of the requirements in the contract or does not obtain a grade of at least a B-, the student may earn credit for the course, but will not earn Honors points.
- The contract course completion form must be signed by the instructor and submitted to the Honors Program office by the last day of finals week.
IV. Examples of Contract Courses

Foundations of 3D Graphics Programming with Chris Cascioli
The student developed a solution for real-time global illumination in the setting of a game. The student then integrated his solution into the final group-based project and presented his work to the class during finals week.

History and Aesthetics of Photography with Ken White
The student researched Hannah Hoch and the Dada movement, and then created collages based on similar issues in his/her own style. The project was presented at the CIAS Honors Showcase.

Special Topics: Theater Arts with David Munnell
The student explored the artistic processes a deaf actor uses in creating character and the challenges facing deaf actors in performing for both hearing and deaf audiences. The student sat in on NTID acting classes and rehearsals, and also interviewed student actors and faculty directors. A public presentation, including participation of deaf actors, was given to present his/her findings, answer questions, and illuminate areas that might lead to further study.

Wines of the World I with Lorraine Hems
The student completed an extra project on quantitative and qualitative analysis of homemade wines by taking scientific measurements of his/her own wines, then analyzed and presented the comparison of chemical analysis to students’ taste preferences.

Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability with Gretchen Wainwright
The student expanded on an assigned group project by contacting and visiting a manufacturer of the product studied in the project. The student then determined the steps taken by the manufacturer to minimize environmental impacts of production and compare these to steps identified through research. At the end, the student presented his/her findings to the class and faculty.

Tropical Ecology with John M. Waud
The student researched impacts of global climate change on tropical systems based on the work of the IPCC and the course literature. The student presented his findings in a one-hour class.

Modified to the unique needs of the RIT Honors Program, course contracting adds another dimension to the stated mission and goals of enhancing the intellectual experience of highly motivated and qualified RIT students.

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APPLICATION FOR HONORS CONTRACT COURSE

honors program at RIT

Student’s Name: _______________________________ Student UID: _______________________________

Course College: _______________________________ Four-Digit Term: _______________________________

Phone: _______________________________ E-mail: _______________________________

Instructor (please print): ________________________________________________________________

Instructor Phone: _______________________________ E-mail: _______________________________

Course Title: _______________________________ Course Number: _______________________________

Honors Contract Study Outline

☐ Student and instructor have included an outline of the Honors Contract Requirements (e.g., exams, research papers, conferences, readings, etc.) beyond standard course requirements on the back of this form or an attached sheet.

Faculty-student (one-on-one) conference time commitment per week: __________ hours.

Mode of presentation and audience: ______________________________________________________

Date of presentation: ____/____/_______

Note: The student must earn a grade of at least a ‘B-’ in this course to earn Honors credit. Students are required to present their extra work as determined by the professor; this can be a presentation to the class, at a meeting with faculty/staff, in a paper that will be published, or at a relevant conference. The student must complete a Contract Completion Form with the instructor at the end of the course, allowing him/her to check off whether the student successfully completed the agreement in the Honors Contract.

_________________________________________ Date

Signature of Student

_________________________________________ Date

Signature of Course Instructor

_________________________________________ Date

Signature of Department Head

_________________________________________ Date

Signature of Honors Program Director

This contract must be submitted for approval within the drop/add period of the semester in which the contract will be completed.