

This completed form must be submitted to the Carolyn M. Small Honors Program Director by the 20th day of the semester in which the course will take place.

Honors Option Course Contract

Name: _____ Major: _____

Course Number: _____ Course Title: _____

Your Honors Option Course Proposal should focus on one of the areas foundational to the development of one or more of the research skills listed below. Please mark the focus that will be explored through this Honors Option Course. In the proposal include each of the following components: the goal of the project, description of the project, how the project will work to develop research skills, and the method of evaluating the project.

Best practices that develop effective research skills

- **Problem-Based Instruction** – Students, working in cooperative groups, are given a problem or case study to address that reflects complex, real-world situations. Students learn to analyze the problem, find appropriate resources and locate needed information, share their findings, and formulate and evaluate possible solutions. Research-focused variations for problem-based instruction include using classic published research papers as sources for problems.
- **Project-Oriented Laboratory** – Students, working in cooperative lab groups, are given an open-ended problem to solve. Over the course of the semester, students review literature, design experiments within material and equipment constraints provided by the instructor, perform the experiments, collect the data, analyze the results, and write a research laboratory report formatted as a scientific paper. An extension of this concept is an interdisciplinary investigative laboratory course that allows students from different majors to collaborate on projects.
- **Writing-Intensive Instruction** – Students learn to write according to the stylistic conventions and contexts of a particular subject area in order to communicate effectively in a manner appropriate to the discipline. Research-related writing assignments usually require at least 3,000 words. Students at the junior and senior level may also be involved in grant proposal development for research projects.
- **Research Methods** – Students learn about research methods used in a particular field or discipline. Research methods courses in the sciences may include computational data analysis, statistics and experimental design. In the social sciences, a research methods course might involve students developing their own research projects - selecting a research topic and writing a research proposal. Once the proposal is approved by the institutional review board, students will then collect and analyze the data, write a paper, and present the results.

The above was summarized from two Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) publications, *Reinvigorating the Undergraduate Experience: Successful Models Supported by NSF's AIRE/RAIRE Program* (2004) and *Developing & Sustaining a Research-Supportive Curriculum: A Compendium of Successful Practices* (2007).

Honors Option Course Proposal (please attach additional sheets if necessary):

Project Description:

Project Goals:

Description of how the project will develop one or more of the research skills listed above:

Method of project evaluation:

Faculty Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____