

Understanding Honors Add-Ons

Of the various means by which students may earn honors credit at STCC, the one which is most adaptable to a student's major or specific fields of interest is the Honors Add-On. Through add-ons, students may extend and enhance their work in a conventional course and bring to it that extra level of rigor and independent inquiry that characterizes honors study. An honors add-on is not a special class; it is, however, a way of making a class special.

What classes are eligible for Honors Add -Ons?

A quick answer to that question is nearly all college-level (100 level or above) classes may become honors experiences. In recent years, students have done honors projects in every class from Accounting 2 to World Religions. That said, the STCC Catalog and the on-line descriptions of classes list some with the phrase, Honors Option Available. That notation means the faculty of the academic department offering the course have agreed to sponsor add-ons to the listed classes for all honors-eligible students. However, other classes whose descriptions do not carry the formal designation may be available for honors work at the instructor's discretion.

How do I sign up for an add-on?

The first steps in creating an honors add-on are to approach the professor to express your interest in doing an add-on in the class and to request her/ his sponsorship of an honors project. Most professors will be pleased to supervise your add-on if you approach them respectfully and with at least some idea of what you wish to do to earn the honors designation for the class. However, you should be aware that while some professors have lots of previous experience sponsoring honors work, others may be unfamiliar with the nature and requirements of add-ons or even with the existence of the Honors Program. In such cases you may need to explain the program and your participation in it in general as well as the specific nature of Honors Add-on work. Should a professor wish for more explanation than you can provide, please feel free to encourage her/him to communicate with me. Once a professor has indicated willingness to sponsor your add-on, the next step is to draft the contract.

What is an Honors Add-On Contract?

An Honors Add-on Contract is a formal document in which you and the sponsoring professor describe the purpose and nature of the proposed project, the process by which it will develop, the

anticipated end product, the standards by which the project will be evaluated, and the venue in which it will be presented. After you and your professor have drafted and signed this contract, you will forward it for review and approval by the STCC Honors Program. Consult the document *Annotated Honors Contract* for guidance in preparing a successful contract.

What's a good Honors Add-on Project?

Generally speaking, a good project can be anything which requires a student to pursue significant (guided) independent work beyond the customary objectives and requirements of a particular class. A figure of 20% of additional work is a commonly applied yardstick. The nature and product of an add-on is, however, variable. While many student projects have taken the form of traditional and contemporary academic investigation culminating in a research paper, others have been less traditional: students have created websites, undertaken community service, and even written and performed theme music for short stories! Whatever the project, note that the terms of the Contract require some sort of public presentation so factor that into your project planning.

How is an Honors Add-On credited?

Assuming that you have completed your project and satisfied the terms of your contract, your sponsoring professor will report that successful completion to the Honors Program Coordinator, then to the Registrar, usually at the time when final grades are submitted. The add-on class will then be listed on your official STCC transcript with an honors notation. Please note that a successfully completed add-on does not increase the credit value for a course nor does it raise your grade for a class (as an extra-credit assignment may). Rather it gives to your performance in that class a special public distinction and makes the class part of your sequence of work toward the Honors Program Certificate that you are pursuing.