

## SCAHS Honors Course Information

### **Definition:**

An honors course is an academic course (usually in the core areas of English, math, science, or social studies) which is more demanding than a college prep course. Advanced course work and a greater time commitment are required of the student and course materials must be differentiated and more rigorous than those used in a college prep course. Honors courses are designed to place emphasis on critical and analytical thinking, rational decision-making, and inductive and deductive reasoning, and are, therefore, intended for students with superior abilities in the course content area.

### **Criteria:**

- Additional reading and/or research on a particular concept or aspect of the course should be included (*For example, in an Honors English course, a student might read 5 additional books, depending on the rigor/length of each book; in an Honors science course, a student might read articles from scientific journals or books, and complete internet research on the topic chosen for a project.*)
- Additional writing – should include critical analysis of some kind
- Project(s) – (see guidelines below) and/or Research Paper(s)
- Presentation (of either a Project or a Research Paper)

### **Guidelines:**

- All textbooks/coursework must be completed in their entirety in the academic year in which the course begins
- An Honors Addendum listing the additional honors work that will be required of the student (see criteria above), should be attached to the course description of a college prep course and submitted *before the course begins*.
- Honors coursework should be documented on the Progress Report(s) and the Course Credit Record
- Per State Department of Education policy, Honors credit cannot be earned for Special Topics courses, electives, and foreign language courses unless the student is earning a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> unit of credit in that content area.
- **Writing:**
  - ✎ Writing requirements can vary depending upon the course and emphasis of the course, but it must be **more** than is required in a college prep (CP) course.  
*[For example, in a Track I(CP) English course, a student would complete a minimum of 3-4 finished written assignments (essays, compositions, short research papers, etc.) per quarter; In Track I(CP) History and Science courses, a student would complete a minimum of 2 finished written assignments (about 2 pages each) per quarter, and be given essay questions on tests.]*
  - ✎ Writing assignments should demonstrate critical and analytical thinking skills.
  - ✎ Writing assignments may not be used in two different courses when one is Honors level.  
*(For example, a research paper written for a college prep history course cannot also count as the research paper/project for an Honors level English course. Additionally, one research paper/project can not be used for two different Honors level courses.)*
- **Projects:** The Honors project(s) chosen and completed by the student should 1) have a direct correlation to the subject matter of the course, 2) include analysis of some aspect of the course, and 3) demonstrate a deeper understanding of some concept(s) specifically related to the course.

The recommended time to be spent on Honors projects is determined by the number of projects a student plans to complete in the course. Projects may be approached in one of the following three ways:

- 1) **If the student wants to complete 4 smaller projects, he should plan to:**
  - Complete 1 per quarter (7-9 weeks average for each) and
  - Spend approximately 4-6 hours per project (including presentation time for one of the projects)
- 2) **If the student wants to complete 2 larger projects, he should plan to:**
  - Complete 1 per semester (10-15 weeks average) and
  - Spend approximately 8-12 hours per project (including presentation time for one of the projects)
- 3) **If the student wants to complete 1 long and involved project, he should plan to:**
  - Complete a year-long project (18-30 weeks average) and
  - Spend approximately 15-25 hours on the project chosen (including presentation time)