**HONR 499: Honors Thesis (**Syllabus Template)

**Student Name:**

**Student TU ID Number: Student Email**

**Instructor Name and Dept:**

**Semester: Spring 2017**

**Number of credit hours (max 3):\***

**Instructions**: Please fill in all areas of this syllabus colored in yellow for your particular internship. **If** you would like to earn honors credit for a departmental course, **be sure to demonstrate clearly how your Honors Thesis differs from the typical departmental offering**. Also, in that case, please replace the title “HONR 379: Honors Independent Study” with the course number and “Honors” (i.e. SPPA 487-Honors).

Any student undertaking an Honors Thesis for Honors College credit must be registered in either HONR 499 or a departmental Thesis course, and the syllabus must be approved by the Honors College Faculty Director prior to the start of the course. Students are encouraged to contact faculty about their interest in HONR 499 well in advance. **Final** **thesis syllabi, a 10-item annotated bibliography, and a thesis proposal are due to the Honors College Office by 5:00 pm on the last day of the Change of Schedule Period for the semester in which you plan to enroll.** Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

*INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION*

Name, Title, Dept

Office:

Contact (office ph; email)

NOTE: A brief form on the Honors College website **must be completed when you drop off this signed, completed syllabus at the Honors College:**

<https://fs4.formsite.com/honors1/form29/index.html>

OR – go to towson.edu/honors →Academics →Research→ Forms

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Number of credit hours:** *HONR 499 may be completed for 3 credits. The course may not be repeated.*

**Catalog Description**

Supervised research and writing of a thesis directed by a faculty member in a

chosen area of specialization. Honors College course.

**Course Rationale**

Junior and senior members of the student body who are exceptionally qualified to complete a thesis with a faculty member at a high level of investigation may do so in HONR 4999 and receive Honors Advanced Learning course credit for the completed work. This course does not act as a substitute for enrolling in existing Honors College courses.

This objectives for this course are designed to provide you with the skills necessary to: 1) read and understand current literature; 2) critically analyze current readings, both in terms of methodology and theoretical perspective; 3) construct and defend evidence-based conclusions from the results of a study; 4) communicate effectively about research both in written and oral form; 5) consider new research directions and future analyses appropriate to the topic under study.

**Statement on Repeating the Course: “**May be repeated if a different topic is covered.” It cannot be repeated more than once without prior permission of the Academic Standards Committee.”

**Course Outcomes and Learning Objectives: Honors College**

The goal of the Honors College is to provide students with an understanding of advanced research in their majors which will prepare them for further study in graduate or professional education or that will prepare them to enter a career. To meet this goal, the Honors College seeks to accomplish the following four general student learning objectives:

1. *Substantive Knowledge about XXXX* - Describe the structure and nature of XXXX.

2. *Critical Thinking Skill*s – **Identify** historical, cultural, and socio-economic (add/subtract here as relevant to the topic) assumptions that underlie understandings about XXXX and **explain** how they affect one’s perspective and actions. (Below, 2a refers to the passage that starts here with “Identify…” and 2b refers to the part that starts with “and explain…”)

3. *Affective Meanings of XXXX* – Explain the importance of XXXX in the attitudes and beliefs about current issues that affect XXXX.

4. *Skills for Learning and Life* – Present articulate and persuasive arguments about XXXX in written and oral communications.

**Course Outcomes II: This Class**

**Point 1** above is fulfilled through assigned readings, discussions with instructor, essays, and research project/presentation. Following successful completion of the class, students should be able to:

– explore and evaluate advanced academic research

* produce a thesis proposal, thesis completion timeline, and preliminary draft

**Point 2** above is fulfilled through exploring counter viewpoints in academic and policymaking literature, discussions with instructor, essays, and research project/presentation. Following successful completion of the class, students should be able to:

– Identify key points and/or authors in XXXX

– Explain how and why XXXX and what their current activities are

**Point 3** above is fulfilled through assigned readings, discussions with instructor, essays, and research project/presentation. Following successful completion of the class, students should be able to:

– Explain how and why XXXX

– Explain how current XXXX issues and certain organs/offices of XXXX affect lives of Americans and Maryland residents

**Point 4** above is fulfilled through discussions with instructor, essays, and research project/presentation. Following successful completion of the class, students should be able to:

– Present evidence-based arguments about XXXX in written and oral communications

– Demonstrate practical skills in preparing, evaluating, and executing advanced research

**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

Instructors, please insert relevant info – or put “see attached annotated bibliography”

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

Students must complete the following requirements, whether graded or not, as verified by the instructor, and/or the Honors College per the instructions below. *Students must find a faculty supervisor.* The Honors College does not place students with instructors. Instructors or home departments may have information on appropriate instructors.

*Note: The Honors College can request to review any work submitted for Honors College credit, though the faculty supervisor is responsible for determining all grades.*

Annotated Bibliography: xx%

Drafts/Work/Lab Reports: xx%

Reflection Essay: xx%

Final Thesis Project: xx%

Oral presentation and poster: xx%

Meetings with instructor: xx%

***Annotated Bibliography***: Each student must compose an annotated bibliography of *at least ten academic* sources and submit it to the instructor with the course syllabus for approval by the Honors College before the last day of the change of schedule period for that semester. For information on creating an annotated bibliography, search for “annotated bibliography” on the Cook Library webpage at <http://cooklibrary.towson.edu/helpguides>. This assignment is worth xx% of your final grade and is due on XXX.

***Journals/Work Report*s:** Written reports or drafts are due XX; XX, etc…/weekly/bimonthly?. If you choose the drafts option, parameters are XXXX . If you choose work reports, these reports should not be a mere laundry list of duties, assignments, and meetings; rather, they should reflect upon what you are learning from your research or explain lab results. Brookfield (1995, p. 97-98) suggests some questions to consider in writing high-quality journals and work reports (note: you can’t answer all of these questions in each journal entry or report, but you should strive to cover most of them throughout your research period):

* What did I learn this week/period about myself as a learner?
* What did I learn this week/period about my emotional responses to learning and the demands of independent research? What do I feel I handled well and why? Where can I improve, and how might those improvements help me as a student, a worker, and a citizen?
* What were the highest emotional moments in my research this week/period, and why?
* What were the lowest emotional moments in my research experience this week/period, and why?
* Which tasks were easiest for me this week/period, and why?
* Which tasks were most difficult for me this week/period, and why? Do I anticipate that these tasks will become easier over time, or do they suggest that I should pursue additional classroom learning and skill development?
* What was the most surprising discovery during this week/period, and why/ What did I learn from it?
* What am I most proud about regarding my work or activities during this week/period, and why? How do I plan to build upon that experience?
* What work or activities during this week/period showed me where I still have significant skill or knowledge gaps, and why? How do I plan to build upon that experience?

Minimum page length per report: five pages. This assignment is worth XX% of your final grade and is due on the XX of each week/month.

***Meetings with Instructor:*** Schedule of meetings – Please review and insert dates below. The meetings after each work report are expected to be longer and more extensive discussions of content.

Week XXX

Week XXX

Week XXX

Week XXX

Week XXX, etc….

***Reflection Essay:***  A good reflection essay ties together and considers the entire research experience and its relationship to academic learning goals, career planning, and personal development. It also takes some time and deep thinking. To quote J.A. Moon (2005, p.2), “Reflection is not just an ‘add-on extra’ to academic learning, but it is an essential component of good quality learning and the representation of that learning.” (see bibliography) It is NOT unstructured emotional spewing or unloading. To that end, questions to consider in constructing a high-quality reflection essay include:

* What skills and knowledge did I gain or advance as part of my research experience?
* What evidence or examples do I have that shows how my research experiences generated or fostered certain types of learning and/or certain skills?
* How did the theories I learned about in my classes compare to what I found in my research?
* Did I develop new ideas or reevaluate existing ideas and perceptions as a result of my research? Which ones, and why?
* How and why has my perception of which areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes are most important for this career path evolved or changed as a result of my research experience?
* What were the most important learning experiences that I had as part of this research, and why? How do I intend to build upon these in my future coursework, academic or co-curricular projects, and career planning?
* How does this research experience fit into my undergraduate learning goals?
* How did this research project help me to develop as a member of the workforce and as a citizen?

Minimum required length: 5 complete, double-spaced pages (or 1250 words). This assignment is worth XX% of your final grade and is due on XXX.

***Thesis:*** Please adapt by adding the thesis working title and a paragraph or two about the thesis. The thesis must exceed 30 pages in length, which should build upon the annotated bibliography and may include a literature review section. Projects based in disciplines who thesis results in lab results, scientific and mathematical experiments, art performances, or computer programming should include a minimum of 15 pages (5 pages per credit) of writing [generally literature review and analysis, an explanation of methodology, an explanation of results, and a discussion of application of results or avenues exposed for future research] and presentation of data (all forms of charts, graphs, equations, reviews of work, etc are acceptable) or videos or pictures of art work or art performances.

The ultimate goal of this thesis is to deeply explore an area of inquiry or creativity and develop a student’s intellect and skills in a way which cannot be pursued in regular Honors or departmental course offerings.

This assignment is worth XX % of your final grade and is due on XXX.

***Oral Presentation and Poster:*** There are two components to this requirement. The first component is a public presentation and defense with the faculty thesis director, second reader, and third reader, plus a representative of the Honors College (usually the Honors College Faculty Director or Coordinator) when the thesis is finished. When a date is selected, the student or faculty thesis director must inform the Honors College ([honors@towson.edu](mailto:honors@towson.edu)) so that arrangements can be made to attend.

The second component is the Honors College (HC) public presentation and creation of a presentation poster at an HC event. The HC will schedule at least one presentation event in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. If a student is writing a thesis and graduating in the fall semester, the student must present at the Celebration of Scholarship and Learning on the morning of October 8, 2016. If the student is not graduating until the spring or summer 2017 semester, the student may choose to present work in October or at the HC co-sponsored TU-BCPS Model United Nations conference held at TU on March 4, 2017. If the student is graduating in the Fall 2017 semester, the student should present in the Fall 2017 Family event. Given this information, I will present with the Honors College on XXX. Students should contact the Honors College ([honors@towson.edu](mailto:honors@towson.edu)) at the HC at least one month before the presentation date to arrange a space and consult information on the HC webpage under “Celebration of Scholarship and Learning” for poster guidelines <http://www.towson.edu/honors/academics/celebration.html>. If you have an additional job, it is your responsibility to ensure that your schedule does not interfere with this presentation date, as with any other class. Instructors should advise students on the content of presentations and posters. Oral presentations at HC events should include:

* A 3 minute summary of the project
* Prepared answers for questions regarding: how the research project was created; what was gained from the research experience (see guiding questions under Journals/Work Reports and Reflection Essay above); specific activities or projects that were part of the research experience; and how this experience may guide and help with career plans.
* A handout summarizing the main goals, methodology and findings
* A copy of the required Research Paper and/or Project (if completed)

Posters (go to the HC for free poster board) should include information and visual materials regarding:

* Research topic
* Which class(es) and/or co-curricular activities upon which the research project has been built
* How the project is part of your learning goals at TU and the HC
* How the project has impacted your career goals and/or personal growth

\*\*\*NOTE: Do NOT use any logos or materials that belong to and are the intellectual property of your research institution or other institutions studied without explicit permission. Be sure to provide proper attribution for any ideas or materials used that were created by others according to the Student Academic Integrity Policy (see below under Course Policies: Plagiarism)

**The course will NOT count for HC Elective credit until the oral presentation and poster are satisfactorily completed.** A block will be placed on your record and graduation clearance until this component is fulfilled. If you are completing this requirement in your final semester and thus cannot present at the next scheduled HC event, please contact the HC Faculty Director, Dr. Alison McCartney ([amccartney@towson.edu](mailto:amccartney@towson.edu)) for an alternative date. This alternative option is ONLY available to those who are scheduled to graduate within the same semester as their research course.

**GRADING SCALE AND RUBRIC**

Ranges that associate point scores with letter grades:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Range** | **Score Recorded when only a**  **Letter Grade is Assigned** | **Letter Grade** | **Range** | **Score Recorded when only a**  **Letter Grade is Assigned** |
| A | 92-100 | 95 | C+ | 78-79 | 78 |
| A- | 90-91 | 90 | C | 70-77 | 75 |
| B+ | 88-89 | 88 | D+ | 68-69 | 65 |
| B | 82-87 | 85 | D | 60-67 | 65 |
| B- | 80-81 | 80 | F | Below 60 | Varies |

\*\*\*NOTE: a grade of C- may still be given on individual assignments, which equals 71-70 points, though a C- will not be given as a final grade.

**Grade A**: The student thinks critically. The work is without major weaknesses and flawlessly executed. The student performs consistently at a level of intellectual excellence compared against the criteria outlined above.

**Grade B:** The student is less consistent in thinking critically than is a student who performs at an A level. Work reflects more strengths than it does weaknesses. It demonstrates a good grasp of thinking critically, is on the whole precise, measured against the criteria outlined above, but lapses occasionally into common sense and unreflective thinking.

**Grade C:** The student inconsistently thinks critically. The work reflects as many weaknesses as it does strengths (see F and D for specific criteria).

**Grade D:** The student thinks critically at a minimal level. This kind of work is often poorly executed, shows only occasional critical thinking, but generally lacks discipline and clarity. The student "goes through the motions" of the assignment but does not engage it in earnest. The work mirrors F work.

**Grade F:** The student does not think critically and/or has failed to do all of the required work. The work of this kind of student will be based only on "common sense" thinking. This category includes basing conclusions on opinions unsupported with verifiable evidence and on irrelevant information. There is no awareness of underlying assumptions, identifying key concepts, nor competing points of view. The student does not trace implications and consequences. Student's work lacks evidence of consistent reflection and of problem solving skills.

**COURSE POLICIES (Instructors, please add to any of the information below as suits your policies)**

***Plagiarism* : It is your responsibility to PROVE that your work is your own**. Since the burden of proof is on YOU, it is crucial that you make proper notes/documentation in all drafts of your work and save notes/documentation as you work on the paper. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form in any work or piece of work submitted for a grade and will be handled according to University rules as stipulated in the Student Academic Integrity Policy, which is detailed in the Student handbook and available online at http://www.towson.edu/provost/resources/studentacademic.asp. As with all research papers, sources must be fully documented. A bibliography is required, but is not part of a page length count for any assignments.

***Late assignments***: Late assignments will be penalized one full letter grade.

***Student Disability Policy***: This course is in compliance with Towson University’s policies for students with disabilities. Accommodations can be made on exams and assignments for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Disability Support Services (DSS), 7720 York Road, Suite 232, 410-704-2638 (Voice or TDD). Students who expect that they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to contact DSS for advice on how to obtain appropriate evaluation. A memo from DSS authorizing your accommodation is needed before any accommodation can be made.

***Office Hours***:

***Non-English Speakers:*** If English is not your first language, it is recommended that you have all writtenassignments reviewed at the Writing Center (LA 5th floor) before submitting them for a grade. Appointments must be made in advance.

***Withdrawal Deadline***: The deadline to withdraw from the course is XXX.

***University Emergency Policy*** In the event of a University-wide emergency, course requirements deadlines and grading schemes are subject to changes that may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, a revised attendance policy, and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme. Class will continue, albeit in an online format, so you MUST check your email. In the case of a University-wide emergency, please refer to the class webpage and email for instructions. Information about emergencies can be obtained at the TU main webpage: www.towson.edu, or sign up for TU Text alert system. http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/

***Course Evaluation***: This course will be evaluated electronically per the University’s course evaluation system.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (see sample below and adapt)**

Week one – meeting; creating annotated bibliography; creating syllabus

Week two – planning and organizing research

Week three – research; write and submit work report

Week four – meeting; review of first work report; research

Week five – research; plan and execute oral/poster presentation

Week six – discussion of oral presentation; progress check-in meeting

Week seven – research; submit second work report

Spring break

Week eight – review of second work report; review of presentation

Week nine – research and revising documents

Week ten – research and revising documents

Week eleven – submit and review second work report

Week twelve – research; begin thesis proposal

Week thirteen – meeting on thesis proposal

Week fourteen – continue writing thesis proposal

Week fifteen – final discussion and submission of thesis proposal, bibliography, and draft work

**COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

please add sources or state “see annotated bibliography”

Brookfield, Stephen D. 1995. *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. San Francisco: Jossey-

Bass.

Moon, Jennifer A. 2005. “Learning Through Reflection,” *Guide For Busy Aca*demics 4, Higher

Education Academy. accessed at [www.york.ac.uk/learningthroughreflection.p](http://www.york.ac.uk/learningthroughreflection.p)df on 18

August 2014.

Zubizarreta, John. 2009. *The Learning Portfolio: Reflective Practice for Improving Student*

*Learning*, second edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**COURSE APPROVAL**

*All signatures are required for enrollment.*

**Student Approval \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**(print name):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Faculty Thesis Director Approval \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**(print name):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Honors College Approval \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**(print name): Alison McCartney, Faculty Director**

**\*\*\*\*DELIVER THIS SIGNED DOCUMENT TO THE HONOSR COLLEGE OFFICE \_ ST 302 OR SEND AS A PDF WITH THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY** **by 5:00 pm on the last day of the Change of Schedule Period for the semester in which you plan to enroll TO Dr. Alison McCartney at amccartney@towson.edu**