

HONORS INSTITUTE Evergreen Valley College



Honors Course Criteria

According to the National Collegiate Honors Council, in comparison with non-honors courses, “The course objectives of honors sections generally reflect more emphasis on the higher levels of the cognitive domain as students spend more time on application and analysis. Students are expected to contribute more analytical discussion in class, and writing assignments are generally more demanding in composition and research methodology.” (Honors in the Two-Year College, 1985, pg. 9)

Within the national guidelines set forth by the National Collegiate Honors Council, EVC Honors Institute has determined that the following constitutes the basic principles and characteristics of an Honors course. In general EVC Honors courses will:

- Cover the usual course content but encompass greater depth and breadth of the subject matter.
- Introduce the methodology of the discipline.
- Expose the student to the current standards of excellence in the discipline.
- Encourage the application of different theories.
- Provide students with the opportunity to develop discipline appropriate research skills.
- Expose students to cutting edge research.
- Stress using primary source materials in research rather than relying solely on discipline textbooks.
- Stress rigor and challenge rather than creating more work. Quality over quantity.
- Encourage the development of independent, creative and critical thinking skills.
- Stress reasoning and synthesis of information.
- Take an interdisciplinary approach to learning.
- Emphasize written assignments.
- Emphasize discourse seminar method of instruction.
- Emphasize experiential and collaborative learning approaches to actively engage students in inquiry and analysis.
- Create a community of learners by encouraging greater class participation and discussion by the use of debates, interviews, classroom presentation and panel discussions.
- Encourage students to direct their own learning and take risks.
- Emphasize development of social and leadership skills.
- Provide more frequent and detailed teacher feedback.
- Provide assessment instruments that invite active and creative responses. Essay exams are the norm while multiple-choice, true/false, and short-answer questions will rarely, if ever, be used.
- Provide students with evaluations based on standards and methods that require demonstrated competency and mastery of the course objectives rather than an accumulation of points, percentages, and grades.