

California Lutheran University Honors Program:  
**DISCIPLINES IN DIALOGUE**

Mission Statement

The University Honors Program at California Lutheran University challenges high-achieving, motivated students to think critically and reflectively about important ideas, questions, and problems. Courses invite dialogue across traditional disciplinary divides, encouraging students to develop as independent scholars who are aware of the larger context of their ideas and sensitive to disparate views. The program seeks to equip thoughtful, engaged individuals who can communicate and collaborate creatively with others and effect positive changes in their communities and the world.

Criteria for Selection of Courses to be included in the University Honors Program

Understanding that strong courses will vary in the particulars depending on their topics and disciplines, Honors Program courses should strive to meet the following general criteria. It is not expected that all courses will meet all criteria to the same degree.

CONTENT

- The course must have an **interdisciplinary focus**. Content should be selected to invite dialogue between and across disciplines regarding important questions and compelling human concerns.
- The course must go into its subject in **considerable depth**. Survey courses are not acceptable.
- The course should focus on **primary sources** where possible and appropriate. Course materials should be wide-ranging in perspective, type, and scope.
- The course is encouraged, though not required, to fulfill relevant **Core 21 content requirements**: Writing Intensive, Speaking Intensive, U.S. Diversity, or Global Perspectives.

PEDAGOGY

- The course must foster the ideal of **independent scholarship**. Courses should not be lecture-based; they should be designed to encourage students, with guidance and support, to control the direction of their learning, to initiate ideas for discussion, and to learn the skills of independent research.
- The course must foster **critical and reflective thinking**. Activities and assignments should challenge students to think conceptually as well as to apply their thinking to concrete concerns and examples, and to concentrate as much on their learning process as on what is learned.
- The course must foster **intellectual creativity**. Activities and assignments should engage students individually and with one another in ways that stretch them beyond habitual ideas and learning styles.
- The course should be designed to **make visible the intersections between fields of inquiry**. Students should gain a strong understanding of the value of thinking and working across disciplines while developing the skills to do so.
- Where appropriate, the course should **make visible relevant disciplinary, intellectual, and/or social controversies**, encouraging students not only to see but also understand multiple perspectives on a given topic or question, and to grapple honestly with what is at stake in these differences.

RIGOR

- The course must be **academically, intellectually, and personally challenging**. Course content and pedagogies should push students to interrogate their own ideas and assumptions, and demand of them a high level of intellectual engagement, a serious and sustained investment of effort and time, immersion in the conventions of scholarly discourse and writing, and substantive academic products.
- Because page numbers are not an equivalent measure across disciplines, faculty should think in terms of requiring **6.5+ hours of student work per week outside the classroom** (the Carnegie standard for a 4-credit course, and well above the university-wide average). Student work may take many forms, including, but not limited to: research, lab, and field work; reading, analyzing, and interpreting texts; group projects; formal and informal writing; and participation in experiential learning activities.

Procedure for proposing new Honors Program courses:

1. **Any time:** Interested faculty member(s) consult Department Chair(s) to establish availability to teach a course in the Honors program. Faculty should plan, but will not be required, to teach the course at least twice, in subsequent or alternating years. Chairs are encouraged to work with the Dean of the College to agree to terms if paying an overload or hiring an adjunct will be necessary in order to meet the home department's needs.
2. **Any time:** Faculty member(s) contact the Honors Director to discuss their ideas for a course and spell out availability to teach it (how soon? how often?). The Director will help faculty brainstorm regarding the topic, direction, and general viability of the course.
3. **October 1:** Course proposal due to the Honors Director for the following academic year. Proposal should include course description and goals, reading list, Core requirements to be met, and a detailed rationale addressing how the course design will fulfill each of the three categories of Honors Course Criteria. Course should target an enrollment of 16.
4. **November 1:** The Honors Faculty Committee will respond to faculty member(s) with a Yes, No (with explanation), or Maybe (contingent upon recommended revisions).
5. **If yes,** the Honors Director will confirm with faculty member(s) the semester, days, and time the course will run, and help prepare a Courseleaf proposal for the EPPC.  
**If maybe,** the faculty member(s) may choose to revise and resubmit the proposal to the Honors Committee by Nov. 15, or wait and consider resubmitting the following year.
6. **Early December:** The Honors Director submits the full schedule of Honors courses to be offered in the subsequent academic year.

One-time procedure for courses currently or previously taught:

- Honors courses to be taught in the academic year 2015-16 that have been offered previously may be offered again without review, as long as the faculty member submits the complete course syllabus and description of major assignments to the Honors Director **by Nov. 15**.
- After this coming academic year, any course previously taught in the Honors Program must submit to the Honors Faculty Committee a full proposal as if it were a new course, following the procedure outlined above.
- All Honors courses approved by the Honors Faculty Committee may be offered twice within three years without resubmitting paperwork. If faculty member(s) wish to offer a course a third time, it must be reapproved through the procedure outlined above.