**HONR 379: Honors Independent Study** (Syllabus Template)

(change course number and title if registering under dept code ex: MATH 495, BIOL 491)

**Student Name:**

**Student TU ID Number: Student email:**

**Instructor Name and Dept:**

**Semester: Fall/Spring 202XX**

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

**Instructions**: Please fill in all areas of this syllabus colored in yellow for your particular independent study. Ifyou would like to earn Honors credit for a departmental course, **be sure to demonstrate clearly how your Honors Independent Study 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 Independent Study for Honors College credit must be registered in either HONR 379 or a departmental Independent Study 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 379 well in advance. **Final** **HONR 379 or its departmental equivalent proposals are due to the Honors College VIA the ONLINE PORTAL by the last day of the change of schedule period for fall or spring enrollment; and June 1 for summer enrollment.** Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. Syllabi are no longer submitted in person.

**Online Portal and Course Application Form**: A brief form on the Honors College website **must be completed, and you must attach the completed syllabus and annotated bibliography to it.** After the student submits the form with the attachments, it will proceed to the instructor for online signature via DocuSign. After the instructor has signed, it will proceed to the Honors College for completion. If an HONR-coded course, the Honors College can create the course after all forms have been received and approved. If a dept-coded course, see your professor about enrollment, though it can only count for Honors credit with this Honors College paperwork in advance.

**Link to Online Portal**:

<https://powerforms.docusign.net/6ad237c2-0eb0-4a38-8877-5df7c689e61d?env=na3&acct=6c86146e-eb74-4715-93d9-b5f39e4db265&accountId=6c86146e-eb74-4715-93d9-b5f39e4db265>

**For more information about doing research as an Honors College student, go to:**

**towson.edu/honors 🡪 Academics 🡪 Experiential and Advanced Learning 🡪 Research**

**Instructors, please work with your student to fill in the yellow highlighted areas (and then you can eliminate the highlighting). Requirements may not be deleted or diminished, though instructors may add to this syllabus as needed.**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Name, Title, Dept

Office:

Contact (office ph; email)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**Number of credit hours:** *HONR 379 may be completed for a minimum of 1 credit and a maximum of 3 credits\*. The course may be repeated for a maximum of 3 additional credits for a different project (total credits possible: 3 per semester; 6 total)*

**Catalog Description**

This course provides junior and senior students with an advanced experience in research/scholarly activity in any academic discipline in the University. May be repeated for a maximum of six credits.

**Course Rationale**

Junior and senior members of the student body who are exceptionally qualified to do independent study with a faculty member at a high level of investigation may do so in HONR 379 and receive Honors course credit for the completed work. This course does not act as a substitute for enrolling in existing Honors College courses.

The objectives for this course are designed to provide you with the skills necessary to: 1) read and understand current literature and research; 2) critically analyze current research, both in terms of methodology and theoretical perspective; 3) draw 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 for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered.” If the same topic**, “**students may not repeat this course for credit. It may be repeated once to replace the grade. It cannot be repeated more than once without prior permission of the Academic Standards Committee.”

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

**(instructors may cut and paste from department syllabi or guidelines in this section only)**

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

– or 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%

Journals/Work/Lab Reports: xx%

Reflection Essay: xx%

Research paper or Project: xx%

 (minimum 35%)

Oral presentation and poster: xx%

 (also HC milestone; may just be prepared materials for later poster, such as a PowerPoint)

Meetings with instructor: xx%

 (can be zero)

***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, see the following link:

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html>

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

***Journals/Work Report*s:** Written reports are due XX; XX, etc…/weekly/bimonthly?. 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.

***Research Paper or Project:*** Replace this description and adapt by adding the project title and a paragraph or two about the project. Most projects will be a paper of 30 pages in length (10 pages per credit), which should build upon the annotated bibliography and may include a literature review section. Projects based in disciplines where research culminates in lab results, scientific and mathematical experiments, art performances or artifacts, films, creative writing, or computer programming should include a minimum of 15 pages (5 pages per credit) of writing, which includes: literature review and analysis, explanation of methodology, explanation of results, explanation of significance or place within the field, and 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 films, pictures of art work or performances.

The ultimate goal of this research project 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:*** Regardless of whether the instructor grades the oral presentation and poster component, the Honors College (HC) requires a public presentation and creation of a presentation poster at an HC event to receive HC Elective credit. The HC will schedule at least one presentation event in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. Students doing Independent Study in the Fall 2025 semester are required to present at the HC Celebration of Scholarship and Learning, which coincides with the co-sponsored TU-BCPS Model United Nations conference held at TU in Spring 2026; students doing Independent Study in the Spring 2026 or Summer 2026 semesters are required to present at the HC Celebration of Scholarship and Learning in Fall 2026 (the morning of Family Weekend, date TBA). Check with the Faculty Director for the appropriate date. If you are graduating in the same semester as your course, you must present at the HC event in that semester, even though your work at that point may be just preliminary. Students should contact the Honors College (honors@towson.edu) at least one month before the presentation date to arrange a space. *If you have an additional job, it is your responsibility to ensure in advance that your schedule does not interfere with this presentation date, as with any other class*.

PLEASE INDICATE HERE PLANNED POSTER PRESENTATION DATE:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For information on poster guidelines, consult information on the HC webpage under “Celebration of Scholarship and Learning” for poster guidelines <http://www.towson.edu/honors/academics/celebration.html>. Instructors should advise students on the content of presentations and posters. Oral presentations at HC events should include:

* A 3 minute oral summary of the research 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 (optional)
* 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, title, supervising professor
* Research question(s) or hypotheses, methodology, project goals, project outline, project significance
* Data/maps/charts – visuals to help others understand your project
* Other bullet points that present research findings or processes
* Select bibliography of 3-5 sources
* Notations of any grants received to support the work and/or conference presentations
* Which class(es) and/or co-curricular activities upon which the research project has been built (if applicable)
* How the project is part of your learning goals at TU and the HC
* How the project has impacted your career/professional 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.** You will not be cleared for graduation 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 for a verified, excused reason (such as a required TU athletic or band event), please contact the HC Faculty Director (honors@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 and with verification of the excuse.

**GRADING SCALE AND RUBRIC**

Ranges that associate point scores with letter grades:

(PROFESSORS MAY CHANGE BASED ON THEIR OWN FORMULAS)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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, and 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 assumption or identification of key concepts or 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 [https://w](http://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/03-01-00-student-)ww.tow[son.](http://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/03-01-00-student-)e[du/about/adm](http://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/03-01-00-student-)i[nistration/policies/03-01-00-student-](http://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/03-01-00-student-)academic-integrity-policy.html. 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.

***Generative AI*:** The Provost’s Office strongly recommends that every syllabus have a statement about the use of generative AI. How you decide to use AI (or not use AI) is up to you. For resources see: <https://www.towson.edu/provost/initiatives/faculty-center/emerging-technology/generative-ai.html>

***Late assignments***: Late assignments will be penalized XXX 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 Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS), University Union Suite 146, 410-704-2638 (Voice or TDD). Students who expect that they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to contact ADS for advice on how to obtain appropriate evaluation. A memo from ADS 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 at <https://towson.mywconline.net/>

***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 may be evaluated electronically per the University’s course evaluation system.

***Title IX policy:*** “Towson University (TU) is committed to ensuring a safe, productive learning environment on our campus that does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or intimate partner violence [Policy 06.01.60]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff, but keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. It is a goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions and in one-on-one meetings. However, it is required to share information with the Title IX Coordinator regarding disclosures but know that the information will be kept private to the greatest extent possible. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the TU Counseling Center 410-704-2512 to schedule an appointment, and locally within the community at TurnAround, Inc., 443-279-0379 (24-hour hotline) or 410-377-8111 to schedule an appointment.” (<http://towson.edu/titleix>).

***Counseling Resources***: Students who are experiencing personal difficulties or mental health challenges are encouraged to seek free and confidential assistance at the Towson University Counseling Center (TUCC). Same-day appointments are available, and you can reach a crisis counselor by phone after hours. For more information about TUCC, please visit their website at <https://www.towson.edu/counseling/>. To make an appointment or for after-hours crisis assistance, please call 410-704-2512.

***Reporting Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents*:** Towson University prohibits all students, staff, and faculty from committing or engaging in any hate crimes as defined under state and federal law, or any acts of bias, hate, or prejudice exhibited in conduct that is in violation of another University policy on campus, on University property, at University-sponsored events, or when engaged in University activities and business on or off campus. The University must receive notice to respond effectively to alleged Hate Crimes or Bias Incidents in the University Community. Please report or file a complaint of a Hate Crime or Bias Incident in the following ways:(1)Report to University Police: Towson University's Police Department (“TUPD”) will determine if incidents are criminal in nature. In cases of hate crimes, individuals can be punished with fines and/or imprisonment. Felony offenses demonstrated to be motivated by bias are subject to enhanced penalties. (2) Contact the Office of Inclusion & Institutional Equity: Online at: https://towson.edu/notattu, email at: OIIE@towson.edu, telephone, In- person or via regular mail.

<https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/06-01-20-policy-procedures-reporting-hate-crimes-bias-incidents.html>

**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.

**\*\*Please submit all forms and attachments to the Online Portal:**

<https://powerforms.docusign.net/6ad237c2-0eb0-4a38-8877-5df7c689e61d?env=na3&acct=6c86146e-eb74-4715-93d9-b5f39e4db265&accountId=6c86146e-eb74-4715-93d9-b5f39e4db265>

Last Updated: 1 August 2025