Guidelines for Honors Courses

Three Main Areas of Study in Honors
Honors courses must fall into at least one of the following areas of study:
1. Human Sciences
2. Natural Sciences
3. Social Sciences

Honors Teaching
1. Instructors decide into which of these categories their course belongs; they may place it in more than one category.
2. If an instructor chooses to place a course in more than one category, then it will be up to each student to decide for which category they want the course to count. A course can count as satisfying the requirement for only one category.
3. Faculty who wish to propose an Honors course should submit syllabi to the Honors Advisory Board for review.

Honor Courses
1. Honors courses are seminars (discussion based) and not lectures and are capped at 15 students. If a course does not fill with Honors students, instructors can add non-Honors students as space permits.
2. It is important to set high standards for Honors students at the beginning of the semester. However, the amount of work required in an Honors course, and the difficulty of that work, should serve legitimate pedagogical purposes.
3. An Honors course should focus on its subject thematically and theoretically and should approach its subject from disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.
4. Where applicable, students study primary sources (literary, visual, musical, scientific, etc.) and complete substantive readings.
5. In the classroom, students critically study sources of knowledge and the methods of inquiry applicable to those sources. Such study should enable students to appreciate the fact that disciplinary boundaries are human constructs and that cultural and scientific productions do not in reality obey these boundaries.

Learning Outcomes
Honors courses will have the following outcomes, or some variation:
1. To provide a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
2. To help students develop the ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and the encouragement of active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
3. To help students intentionally apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding as they engage advances in knowledge and deal with dramatic challenges shaping the world;
4. To help students develop effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.