

# HNRS 485 Honors Independent Research or Creative Activity

**Credit Hours:** 3 credit hours

**Semester:** Fall

**Meeting Days/Times:** To be arranged between faculty and student

**Faculty Instructor: TBD**

**Office Address:** Shocker Hall RA A118

**Telephone:** 316-978-3375

**Email Address:** honors@wichita.edu

**Office Hours:** By appointment

## How to use this syllabus

This syllabus provides you with information specific to this course, and it also provides information about important university policies. This document should be viewed as a course overview; it is not a contract and is subject to change as the semester evolves.

## Catalog Description

# Students work independently with a faculty mentor to complete research or creative activity. Faculty mentors guide students to develop advanced skills in creative inquiry and/or research conceptualization in their field, including asking compelling questions, strategizing an appropriate methodology/approach, formulating independent research or creative project proposals, drafting abstracts and/or personal statements appropriate for grant or fellowship applications. Students also learn about human subject research and research ethics, develop presentation materials and skills, develop peer evaluation skills (if relevant), conduct preliminary research or develop a creative project. Students are expected to disseminate their work to a broader audience by, for example, submitting a paper for publication, making a conference presentation, or writing a grant proposal. Sophomore standing recommended. Students must identify a faculty mentor in order to enroll in this course.

## Course Materials

Student will generate course content through research. The instructor will provide supplementary readings and materials when relevant to learning. These readings and materials will be available on the course Blackboard.

## Expected Outcomes

* Identify current research questions, arguments and practices in a discipline or disciplines
* Understand basic principles of human subject research and research ethics
* Understand background research or related creative projects
* Formulate a compelling research question or research-based creative project in a field or profession of the student’s choice
* Develop relevant research or creative methodology
* Make a compelling argument for the significance of the research or creative activity
* Present research or creative interests to a faculty mentor
* Present a research question or creative project, research materials, and preliminary research conclusions or creative activity to a diverse audience
* Discuss inconsistencies, uncertainties or limitations to the research or creative activity
* Evaluate peer research questions, research plans and presentations (if relevant to field)

## Syllabus Policies and Student Resources

All students should familiarize themselves with the course-related policies and student resources that can be found at: [**www.wichita.edu/syllabuspolicies**](http://www.wichita.edu/syllabuspolicies). These include but may not be limited to:

* COVID-19 Conditions
* Important Academic Dates
* Academic Integrity
* Definition of a credit hour
* Video and Audio recording
* Shocker Alert System
* Intellectual Property
* CARE Team
* Counseling and Prevention Services
* Student Health Services
* Heskett Center and Campus Recreation
* Inclusive Excellence and Respect for Diversity
* First Generation Students
* Names and Pronouns
* Disability Services
* Title IX
* Concealed Carry Policy

## Definition and Assignment of Credit Hour

# 3 credit hour class: Success in this 3 hour credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for in-class activities) for instruction and preparation/studying or course related activities for a total of 135 hours.

## Contact Policy

Although you may attempt to reach me by phone, email communication is preferred. Feel free to email me any questions or concerns following these guidelines:

* Use the course name in the subject line of the email
* Remember to sign your name.
* **Always** email me from your WSU email address. Email sent from personal email servers like Gmail, Yahoo, etc., have a tendency to end up in my spam folder, and I never see them. You may also email me through Blackboard via the Email My Instructor tab.

## Technical Assistance

* + You should NOT contact me for tech support.
	+ Any technical problems involving your computer, or issues regarding file uploading or sharing, should go through the Blackboard Support. You can contact them at 316-978-3909. You can also fill out a request for help form at their website: <https://wichita.edu/BbSupport>
	+ However, if you have a problem with access or uploading assignments, you *should* let me know before your assignment is due. You will also have to accompany this notification with the file in question, so I can verify that it is completed by the due date/time.

## Students with Disabilities

A disability is something that affects a major life activity. These life activities include, but are not limited to, learning, walking, breathing, hearing, and seeing, in addition to many other physical, sensory functions, and psychological disabilities.

If you are a student with a disability, or believe you might have a disability, which requires accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) [www.wichita.edu/ods](http://www.wichita.edu/ods) to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations and eligibility requirements. It is the University’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability ODS will review your concerns and determine, with you, what academic accommodations are necessary and appropriate for you. For example, adaptions of teaching methods, class materials or testing may be made on a case-by-case basis if warranted, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All information and documentation of your disability is confidential and will not be released by ODS without your written permission.

## Respect for Diversity

Wichita State University is committed to being an inclusive campus that reflects the evolving diversity of society.  To further that goal, Wichita State University does not discriminate in its employment practices, educational programs or activities on the basis of age (40 years or older), ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a veteran. Retaliation against an individual filing or cooperating in a complaint process is also prohibited.

Students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives are welcome in this Course and the diversity that students bring to this course should be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. All materials and activities are presented with the intent to be respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. If any of our class meetings conflict with your religious observances, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

## Academic Integrity

Students at Wichita State University are expected to uphold high academic standards. WSU will not tolerate a lack of academic integrity. Students are responsible for knowing and following the Student Code of Conduct Policy 2.17: <https://www.wichita.edu/about/policy/ch_02/ch2_17.php>. When the faculty member determines sanctions are warranted for violations of academic integrity, regardless of severity, the faculty member must report the infraction to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. If you need more information about the process or wish to appeal a decision, please visit <https://www.wichita.edu/about/student_conduct/ai.php>

## Grading Scale

WSU uses a +/- grading scale for final grades and to calculate grade point averages. In this class, grades are assigned according to the following chart. (Other classes might assign grades differently: Be sure to understand the different grading scales in all your classes.)

| **Points/Percentage** | **Letter Grade** | **Grade Points** | **Interpretation** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 370-400 | A | 4.00 | A range denotes excellent performance |
| 360-369 | A- | 3.70 |  |
| 352-359 | B+ | 3.30 |  |
| 330-351 | B | 3.00 | B range denotes good performance |
| 320-329 | B- | 2.70 |  |
| 312-319 | C+ | 2.30 |  |
| 288-320 | C | 2.00 | C range denotes satisfactory performance |
| 280-287 | C- | 1.70 |  |
| 272-279 | D+ | 1.30 |  |
| 248-271 | D | 1.00 | D range denotes unsatisfactory performance |
| 240-247 | D- | 0.70 |  |
| 239 and below | F | 0.00 |  |

## Description of Course Assignments

Assignments and assigned grades for participation and research or creative activity will necessarily reflect the priorities and expectations of the supervising faculty member and standards in the field of study. Some suggested guidelines for assigning grades are provided below:

A total of 400 points can be earned during the semester. Half of the grade is determined by participation, including meeting regularly with the faculty mentor, completing written assignments, making presentations and other work relevant to the research or creative process (200 points). The remainder of the grade is based on the research project completed (200 points).

### Participation (200 possible points)

* Meet weekly with faculty mentor September through November (100 points)
* Prepare annotated bibliography or digital log (25 points)
* Develop initial research questions (25 points)
* Develop initial research or creative methodology (25 points)
* Revise research question and methodology (25 points)

A (180-200 points): Student assumes responsibility for directing project. Demonstrates clear understanding of hypothesis tested and of experimental or creative approaches used in the field. Student keeps an accurate record of experiments neatly written in a notebook or in a digital log. Student attends regularly and arrives on time for lab or research work and meetings.

B (160-180 points): Student has modest understanding of hypothesis tested and of experimental or creative approaches used in the field. Student keeps an accurate record of experiments neatly written in a notebook or in a digital log. Student attends regularly and arrives on time for lab or research work and meetings.

C (140-160 points): Student has modest understanding of hypothesis tested and of experimental or creative approaches used in the field. Student is not reliable regarding hours in lab or is not reliable in maintaining an accurate record of lab work or research/creative activity.

D (120-140 points): Student has poor understanding of research project or creative activity. Student is not reliable regarding hours in lab or is not reliable in maintaining an accurate record of research/creative activity.

F (120 points or below): Student fails to grasp basic concepts driving research project or creative activity. Student has substantial issues regarding hours in lab or in maintaining an accurate record of lab work or research/creative activity.

### Research or Creative Activity (200 possible points)

Given variances across disciplines, determinations of the scope, breadth, and intellectual parameters of what constitutes substantive research or creative activity remain the judgment of the faculty mentor, but the following general guidelines should be taken into consideration:

#### Visual Arts, Performing Arts, or Creative Writing.

A body of work that displays some of the student’s best creative work or methods. An introductory essay contextualizes creative work within the field and offers critical insights into creative process. Works of fiction may run 30-50 pages, while poetry typically has somewhat fewer pages. Page requirements will vary greatly depending on the project.

#### Humanities and Social Sciences.

Research in these fields is typically envisioned and executed entirely as a written piece of work. This might resemble a long research paper in form, but it is different than a class paper. It tackles a problem that others have not yet addressed adequately, or it approaches the problem from a new angle. Student may create a research-based proposal for community change. Research into what others have said and done is the essential first step, but student should go beyond prior work to include insights and critical thinking. Student should have an acquaintance with the relevant scholarship and display originality in the formulation of arguments. Typically, such research will be at least 15 pages (double-spaced, 12 point Times or equivalent font).

#### Experimental Sciences and Engineering.

In an experimentation-based discipline, research typically arises from close collaboration with a faculty member on an existing research project. Ideally, student will identify a significant aspect of that research and craft a smaller project representing their own work. The product may be a written paper, poster presentation, or prototype. Student should be able to explain the relevance of their work to the broader field of study and explain methodology or experimental design including technical innovations and processes and sources used.

#### Sample Research Project Evaluation Rubric

Adapted from the Biological Thesis Assessment Protocol (*BioScience* 59: 896–903) rubric to assess higher-order writing issues (questions 1–5), mid- and lower-order writing issues (questions 6–9), and the accuracy and appropriateness of students’ research projects (questions 10–13). For each question, a “no” answer indicates that the project or thesis does not meet the minimum acceptable standards; a “somewhat” rating indicates that the thesis meets the minimum standards but not the standards of excellence; a “yes” response reflects standards of excellence. A holistic rubric outlines the qualifications for the awards of honors and high honors.

##### Content (higher-order writing)

1. Is the writing appropriate for the target audience?
2. Does the paper/poster/thesis make a compelling argument for the significance of the student’s research within the context of the current literature?
3. Does the paper/poster/thesis clearly articulate the student’s research goals?
4. Interpretation
	1. [For research with conclusive and complete results] Does the paper/poster/thesis skillfully interpret the results?
	2. [For research with inconclusive or incomplete results] Does the paper/poster/thesis provide an insightful explanation of the reasons underlying the lack of clear results?
5. Implications
	1. [For research with conclusive and complete results] Is there a compelling discussion of the implications of findings?
	2. [For research with inconclusive or incomplete results] Does the paper/poster/thesis provide a thoughtful and thorough discussion of possible future studies or alternative approaches?

##### Organization and Style (mid- and lower-order writing)

1. Is the paper/poster/thesis clearly organized?
2. Is the paper/poster/thesis free of grammatical and stylistic errors?
3. Are the citations presented consistently and professionally throughout the text and in the list of works cited?
4. Are the tables and figures clear, effective, and informative?

##### Quality of Research

1. Is the literature review accurate and complete?
2. Are the methods appropriate, given the student’s research question?
3. Is the data analysis appropriate, accurate, and unbiased?

##### Criteria for honors

To be considered for the award of honors, students must show proficiency in scientific research, as demonstrated by an original, independent, and substantive research question, as well as care in data collection and analysis. The student must also produce a written paper or poster presentation that achieves the following:

* It is written for a broad audience educated in the general field, not just experts in the field of research.
* It makes a compelling argument for the significance of the student’s research within the context of current scientific literature.
* It explicitly interprets results in relation to a hypothesis.
* It discusses inconsistencies, uncertainties, or limitations of the results.
* It is coherent, reasonably free of errors, and professionally presented.