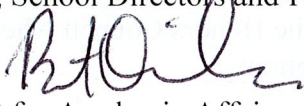


MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 12, 2019

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, School Directors and Faculty

FROM: Bret Danilowicz, Ph.D. 
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: **Increasing Lower Division Honors Courses at the Jupiter Campus**

In order to serve the students of the new Max Planck Academy, Wilkes Honors College, College of Science, and other high achieving students on the Jupiter campus and to build upon the branding of the campus, all lower division courses on the campus will be offered at the honors level effective Fall 2020 semester. 1000 and 2000 level course offerings should thus comply with the FAU Honors Curriculum Manual and faculty who teach these courses should meet the criteria outlined in Section 2 of the Honors Administrative Manual. This requirement can be met in a variety of ways, including honors in the major courses, honors program courses, honors compacts, or cross-listing with courses in the Wilkes Honors College. New honors courses must be approved via the University Honors Council. Below are the guidelines for courses receiving honors credit at Florida Atlantic University as outlined in section 2 of the curriculum manual.

Courses receiving “honors credit” at Florida Atlantic University are distinguished from other courses not simply by dealing with subject matter in a more challenging, detailed, and accelerated manner. Honors credit is assigned to courses that also encourage students to approach material from an advanced interdisciplinary perspective, emphasize critical and creative thinking, and develop highly improved skills of oral and written communication across the curriculum.

Courses receiving “honors credit” at Florida Atlantic University must:

1. have a significantly higher requirement for admission to the course than exists for other courses on similar topics at the University.
2. have lower student-to-faculty ratios than other courses dealing with similar topics. Close student-faculty interaction in honors courses helps promote more intense and reflective discussion, active learning by all students, and strong faculty-student mentoring.

3. offer students extensive access to original research and other primary sources of knowledge.
4. emphasize the process of discovery and interactive learning in addition to the mastery of information.

Courses receiving “honors credit” at Florida Atlantic University also differ qualitatively from other courses that may address similar topics. Honors courses should adhere to at least six of the distinctions outlined below. At Florida Atlantic University, honors courses should:

1. be taught by a faculty member with a terminal degree. While the vast majority of honors courses will be taught by faculty members holding a terminal degree, it is occasionally necessary for exceptions to be made. The administrator in charge of the course (usually a dean or director) should notify the Honors Council whenever an exception is made and provide a rationale for the exception.
2. emphasize written and oral communication skills. Written communication is developed through repeated and substantive writing in forms appropriate to the discipline; honors courses should thus adhere to the University’s Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) guidelines, where applicable. Oral communication skills are developed through formal presentations, debates, informed discussion, collaboration, poster presentations, and other types of oral communication suitable to the discipline and topic of the course.
3. emphasize critical and creative thinking through assignments, exercises, and examinations that require students to evaluate alternative perspectives critically, recognize the assumptions underlying a theory or approach, come to terms with their own preconceptions about a topic, and analyze or synthesize detailed information in ways that are appropriate to the topic of the course.
4. encourage students to approach topics from an interdisciplinary perspective by exploring the limitations of strictly disciplinary approaches and, whenever possible, developing new insights that may be possible only through connections between and across disciplines.
5. provide opportunities for independent research or help prepare students for independent research by fostering such skills as formulating, structuring, and developing arguments, conducting a thorough literature review, maintaining accurate records of data, thoroughly grasping the relationships among variables, understanding developments in their proper social and historical context, and appreciating the contributions to knowledge made by both quantitative and qualitative research.
6. apply theories and principles to “real-life” problems and situations whenever possible.
7. foster teamwork and collaboration both through assignments that students complete in groups and through the development of cohorts, clusters of student peers who learn to work together more effectively by taking several classes together.
8. promote learning outside the formal classroom setting through such approaches as service

learning, internships, extended and substantive educational experiences abroad, and the like.

9. provide opportunities for publication or the public presentation of student work in formats where it may be reviewed and evaluated by other scholars.

10. where appropriate, require students to demonstrate their advanced mastery of the subject matter through established national or international exams or other means of assessment.

It is specifically recognized that honors courses offered by individual disciplines (for example, courses that support an upper division honors program) may meet requirements different from or in addition to those outlined above. In such cases, the criteria and recommendations outlined above should be regarded as general guidelines.

cc: Michele Hawkins, Vice Provost, Academic Affairs
Russ Ivy, Senior Associate Provost, Planning and Budget
Kevin Wagner, President, University Faculty Senate
Mary Ann Gosser-Esquilín, University Honors Coordinator