**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

Students enrolled in the ACES James Scholar Honors Program need to complete four (4) courses with honors credit before they graduate. In order to retain their good standing within the Honors Program, it is necessary for James Scholars to earn honors credit in at least one course during each academic year until this “Milestone of Achievement” has been met. You are encouraged to complete your honors credit requirement as early as possible to free up time during your junior and senior years to conduct your ACES Undergraduate Research Project.

By far, the most popular way to earn honors credit among ACES James Scholars has been through the Honors Credit Learning Agreement (HCLA), a paper form that is used to describe a special assignment that can be used to earn honors credit in a regular course. Such a special creative assignment, when added to a regularly offered course, enables you to earn honors credit without enrolling in specially designated honors courses or honors sections. After being reviewed and approved by your instructor, the HCLA form becomes the blueprint for your HCLA assignment; successful completion of each HCLA is noted on your transcript with an “H” (denoting honors credit earned) appearing beside the letter grade for the course.

**HCLA GUIDELINES**

You may choose to complete an HCLA in any UIUC course taken for a standard letter grade at the 100, 200, 300, or 400 levels. You are responsible for initiating a discussion with your instructor about undertaking an HCLA assignment, which should be an additional creative exercise within the context of the course you have chosen. The approval and acceptance of HCLAs are at the discretion of your instructor; specific topics or areas of investigation may also be specified by the instructor.

Please follow these steps to ensure that your HCLA is approved and recorded in a timely manner.

1. On the HCLA form, **please print clearly** and describe your honors assignment in detail so that your instructor and the Honors Program staff receive an accurate impression of what you are proposing.

2. Submit the HCLA form to your instructor for approval and signature well in advance of the appropriate due date (please see below for a complete listing).

3. Before the end of the eighth week of a full-semester course (or the end of the fourth week of a half-semester course), deliver the signed, completed HCLA to the Honors Secretary in 128 Mumford Hall for processing.

**HCLA DUE DATES FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2013**

***Spring 2013***

- Submit an HCLA for a First Half-Semester Course: **Friday, February 8 @ 5:00 PM**
- Cancel or Modify an HCLA for a First Half-Semester Course: **Friday, March 1 @ 5:00 PM**
- Submit an HCLA for a Full-Semester Course: **Friday, March 8 @ 5:00 PM**
- Submit an HCLA for a Second Half-Semester Course: **Friday, April 5 @ 5:00 PM**
- Cancel or Modify an HCLA for a Full-Semester or Second Half-Semester Course: **Wednesday, April 24 @ 5:00 PM**

***Fall 2013***

- Submit an HCLA for a First Half-Semester Course: **Friday, September 20 @ 5:00 PM**
- Cancel or Modify an HCLA for a First Half-Semester Course: **Friday, October 11 @ 5:00 PM**
- Submit an HCLA for a Full-Semester Course: **Friday, October 18 @ 5:00 PM**
- Submit an HCLA for a Second Half-Semester Course: **Friday, November 15 @ 5:00 PM**
- Cancel or Modify an HCLA for a Full-Semester or Second Half-Semester Course: **Wednesday, December 4 @ 5:00 PM**

**THE HCLA ASSIGNMENT: SCOPE AND CONTENT**

The shape of your HCLA assignment is limited only by your imagination (subject to academic standards of professionalism) and the
approval of your instructor. Possible types of HCLA assignments may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Research papers (8-10 or more pages in length)
- Essays or literature reviews
- Research for preparing new course units or segments
- Special laboratory experiments
- Stratified opinion surveys
- Course or course unit evaluations
- Research for developing new courses or new teaching methods
- Service-learning or community engagement projects
- Preparation of videos, blogs, or photo essays
- Participation in the REACT Program, which is available through selected CHEM courses (http://www.scs.illinois.edu/~kidsnchem/index.php)
- Completing a special assignment (approved in advance by the Honors Dean) during an ACES Study Abroad experience

Your HCLA assignment needs to be completed before the end of the semester in which the course is being taken. You and your instructor should meet every so often to discuss your progress. You should expect to devote approximately fifteen (15) additional hours of work time to your HCLA assignment throughout the semester.

If you wish to modify or cancel an HCLA assignment already in progress, then you should notify your instructor and the Honors Secretary via email at least one week before the last meeting of the course.

**Grading Procedures**

At the end of the semester, your instructor will determine if honors credit is to be granted for the course and will inform you if your HCLA assignment has been completed successfully. (Your instructor is the sole judge of whether honors credit is to be granted.) Honors credit will be granted if:

1. An “H” grade is chosen by the instructor in Web for Faculty.
2. You have completed the HCLA assignment successfully and earned a grade of at least “B-” in the course. (For this reason, you are encouraged to undertake HCLA assignments in courses that genuinely interest you and in which you can reasonably expect to do well.)
3. You were enrolled in the ACES James Scholar Honors Program during the semester in which you took the course.

**Transfer Credit Policy**

ACES James Scholars who enter the Honors Program upon transferring from another accredited institution may use one (1) honors course from their previous institution to count toward the “four courses with honors credit” requirement. If you would like to explore this possibility, please contact the Honors Secretary to schedule an appointment with the Honors Dean and bring along any documentation of the honors coursework that you have on hand (such as graded assignments, course syllabi, etc.). After reviewing this information, along with researching your previous institution’s honors programming, the Honors Dean will determine whether the honors credit desired will be accepted as counting toward fulfillment of your “four courses with honors credit” requirement. You will receive a written response from the Honors Dean within seven to ten business days, which will then become a part of your permanent student record at the University of Illinois.

**Contact Information**

Questions or concerns about HCLA policies and procedures may be directed to:

- Dr. Bill Simmons, ACES Honors Dean → fsimmons@illinois.edu
- Rob Chappell, M.A., ACES Honors Secretary → rchappel@illinois.edu

**ACES James Scholar Honors Program**

128 Mumford Hall, Campus MC-710
Telephone: (217) 333-3380
Office Hours: Weekdays 8:30 AM-12:00 N & 1:00-5:00 PM

FWS/rhc
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