

SAMPLE #1

Honors Option Contract Approval Plan of Study

The student will research topics related to gender, the status of women, and feminist politics in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. Pussy Riot, the recent homosexual propaganda ban, and general cultural attitudes in the post-Soviet period will be of particular interest. Combining study of scholarly sources available at the University of Maryland, original research in Russia accomplished during summer 2013, and development of new course on gender relations and politics in Soviet and post-Soviet, this independent study will enable the independent study student to better understand both historical and current experiences of the LGBTQ community in Russia.

During the semester, the student will continue to discover and read books and articles by scholars of Russian society and culture. The student plans on applying to the Honors Program of the Women's Studies Department, and hopes to be able to use the materials from this independent study towards his application, and, if accepted, as the foundation for his thesis.

The student will also examine, analyze, and attempt to draw conclusions from the original research he conducted in St. Petersburg and Moscow during his study abroad. This research consists of one-on-one interviews conducted by the independent study student with Russian university students and professors. The final product is a research paper that brings together the student's interviews, experiences in Russia, and the scholarly books and articles he will read during the fall semester. Finally, the independent study student will assist Dr. Catherine Schuler in the making of a new Honors seminar, "From Lenin to Pussy Riot: Gendering Post-Soviet Russia," to be offered by the University of Maryland Honors College Spring of 2014. Developing this course with the advising professor will prepare the student for his undergraduate TAship (with Dr. Schuler) in Spring 2014. As a future TA, the independent study student will help to create the course (both content and form). The advising professor and the student will do the course planning as part of independent study described (and requested) in this proposal.

Although the advising professor and the independent study student will meet regularly during the Fall semester, the student's work will be largely self-directed. The advising professor's role is to encourage thoughtful analysis of the readings and guide the process of course construction. The student and the advising professor will meet weekly to discuss the student's self-directed reading, as well as to construct their coming Honors seminar. The independent study student's analysis of independent, self-conducted research is in itself a laudable academic pursuit – using his newfound knowledge to help build a course to teach other students is truly above and beyond the scope of a typical independent study program, and is thus deserving of an Honors notation. We hope that the student's initiative and desire to undertake such a rigorous and novel course of study will be rewarded with an Honors designation.

SAMPLE #2

Plan of Study for Honors-Option ARTH345

Dr. Hargrove's "Arth345: Nineteenth-Century European Art to 1850" course focuses on the major artistic trends in the early half of the 19th century with emphasis on the historical context. The Industrial Revolution had an effect on artists' materials and subject matter. Through additional work in the course, I would be focusing on learning more about these changes, including a case study of J.M.W. Turner.

The course load for the normal Arth345 consists of one quiz, one mid-term examination, one 5 page research paper, a final examination, and class participation. To expand on this course work to benefit the Honors-Optioned level, my research paper would be longer (10 pages instead of 5) on Turner's subject matter and how it relates to the Industrial Revolution. Additionally, I will be giving a 20 minute presentation on Turner's use of materials and color theory, and how these elements changed during the time period. This will be accompanied by a short written reflection on the material covered and what I have learned through my presentation.

In addition to this course load, I will be assigned four additional readings over the semester and write critical responses on them. These responses will outline the material, summarize the overarching themes and points, and comment on the usefulness and clarity for the course. The class readings are predominantly from the textbook, *Nineteenth-Century European Art* by Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, but also consist of supplementary articles. Based on my additional readings, I would assist in leading class discussions.

As a result of this additional course work, I will be able to gain more insight into the topic of European Art in the early 19th century. As this time was a turning point for many artists, it will be interesting to focus on one artist to see the historical context directly affect him. If all these additional responsibilities can be met in an engaging intellectual manner, the course can be regarded as meeting Honors-Option requirements that challenge me and provide me with more knowledge on the subject matter than the normal class.

SAMPLE #3

Honors Option Proposal

Plan of Study

Requirements:

he requirement for this Honors Option will be an additional final paper assignment. The paper will be a history and analysis of forest pests in the United States and the methods used to control them. The first part will be a chronological historical account of the dominant pests of trees in US forests and the effects of these pests on tree health and forest communities. It will also include the methods used to control pests over time. The second part of the paper will be a critical analysis of all methods and their level of effectiveness, cost, and safety. The conclusion will be a discussion of best practices and recent global trends and initiatives in tree care and pest management. All parts of the paper will be based on peer-reviewed articles and will incorporate knowledge about tree health and requirements as well as forest dynamics from the course.

H-option Justification:

This project is qualitatively beyond the normal requirements of the course because it includes synthesis and analysis of research articles, which will require a deeper level of thought and greater review of the course material. It will require me to combine my knowledge of insects and pest management with the knowledge of tree care and forest health that I will be learning during the semester as I apply this information to real pest management decisions. Going through the process of assessing costs and benefits of different pest management strategies will give me insight into how these decisions are made in real situations. I will learn more about insects and the general process of assessing solutions for any kind of conservation or species protection issue, which will be very helpful in my future career in ecology. I will be making recommendations for best practices which will require me to review previous research and concisely explain it and as well as its implications. Practicing this skill will help me in the future both as a graduate students and as I finish my undergraduate thesis this semester.

Determination of Completion:

At the first meeting date, I will have completed the historical review of forest pests and pest management strategies. At the second meeting date, I will have completed the critical analysis and comparison on these methods and have ideas for the discussion of best practices. The final paper will be completed by the end of the semester.

Dr. Jessica Sanders will review my work at or before each meeting date to ensure that I am completing the paper and research to her standards and she will give me suggestions for changes at our meetings. She will review the final paper and provide me with edits, and after this review process, she will evaluate if I have completed the Honors contract. If the paper and my efforts during the semester are determined to be A-quality work, I will be granted the approval for an Honors notation.

Meeting Dates:

1st Meeting: Thursday, March 1

2nd Meeting: Thursday, April 5th

Final Due Date: Thursday, May 10th (last day of classes)

SAMPLE #4

Honors-Option Plan of Study

Dr. Sanders' "PLSC471: Forest Ecology" course is designed for students to gain a better understanding of forest ecosystems; students gain knowledge of forest structures, processes that regulate them, and factors that lead to change in them. The class also focuses on how forests respond to environmental and genetic changes within the context of sustainability. I will be completing additional work in this course by researching the impacts of factors that lead to changes within forests and how they may relate to my independent research: "The Dispersal of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid in Northeastern United States and The Invasive's Effect on Benthic Macroinvertebrate Populations."

The course load for the normal PLSC471 consists of 3 exams, each counting one-fourth of the final grade. The final fourth of the grade consists of either an issue paper of 3-4 pages **or** a short presentation that relates urban ecology to traditional forest ecology principles. I will expand the course work for the class to be consistent with an Honors class by completing an issue paper (6-8 pages instead of 3-4) on how the factors that lead to change in forests are associated with the spread of Hemlock woolly adelgid in the Northeastern United States. Additionally, I will be giving a 15-minute presentation on the effects of Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) on forest ecology and how some of the factors of change within forest ecosystems affect the spread of HWA. Therefore, rather than completing one of the assignments, I will do both. In addition to this coursework, I will be responsible for completing a supplemental reading assignment for each unit of the class (5 units) that relates to my thesis and guides me in developing my presentation for the class. Furthermore, I will be required to complete the "recommended" textbook readings prior to each class in order to be better prepared to comprehend the lecture material. Lastly, by the end of the semester I will have completed an annotated bibliography containing the additional readings and sources I used in my issue paper, presentation, and throughout the entirety of the class to make it evident to my professor that I completed the supplemental readings outside of class.

In result of completing this additional coursework, I will have a better knowledge of how the factors influencing forest health impact the invasive, exotic pest HWA. Finishing the additional coursework and making the commitment to a greater time spent researching outside of class time will challenge me to gain a deeper knowledge of forest processes and how they have a greater impact on society. Throughout the course of the semester, Dr. Sanders and I will meet on February 22 and April 19 to discuss the progress of my supplemental coursework in PLSC471.