

## Honors Enhancement Examples

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**Overview of enhancements:** Honors enhancements involve a written agreement between the student and the faculty for the course. The enhancement consists of an additional learning component that is not currently part of the class syllabus. Examples include, but are not limited to, additional reading/reviews, literature reviews, research proposals, completed research projects, conference presentations, community-based projects, and performance or creative projects.

*Important note:* The purpose of the enhancement is provide students with robust learning opportunities that offer greater depth, more creativity and questioning, and/or an opportunity for independent thought and analysis, all without adding an overwhelming degree of work to either faculty or students. As such, faculty and students should talk not just about the content of the enhancement, but also the labor associated with it.

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### Lower-Level, CORE Course Examples

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#### **RS 117 (World Religions, a 100 level GS course)**

***Proposed Enhancement 1:*** In conversation with the professor, students will choose one specific example of a religious event or belief (with specificity regarding location, time, and subgroup) drawn from any of the world religions we cover in the class. They will further investigate this example using a functional approach to religion (which examines the social role, or function, of a particular religious idea or practice). They will analyze the political, cultural, psychological, historical, and any other critical dynamics that would help an audience understand why that event or belief emerged and the dynamics of its role in that particular cultural moment. They will present this research either to the class in-person or via a recorded presentation (5-10 minute presentation).

***Proposed Enhancement 2:*** Students will do additional readings (as provided by the professor) on other world religions that we do not address in the main class time. Options include Native American religions, African Indigenous traditions, Shinto, Sikhism, Confucianism, Daoism, etc. Students will create a 5-10 minute presentation that mirrors the format of Dr. Smith's lectures (ie, that emphasizes a functionalist perspective).

## **PL 111 (Introduction to Philosophy)**

**Example One:** Write a 5-8 page critical, argumentative essay on a topic relevant to our course and develop your argument in ways we do not explore in our studies together as a class. That is, write your essay in one of the following ways:

1. Present a metaphysical or epistemological problem we deal with in the course and critically consider it from an ethical perspective
2. Extensively draw out the implications of one of the major arguments in the course and develop your own philosophical position on the argument within a relevant context to today or some imagined future position.

**Example Two:** Construct a two-week “Philosophy of…” course by providing the following:

1. Course Materials – a small set of diverse materials that will engage us in the issue(s) at hand
2. Course Description – four critical questions that will spark curiosity and invite further lines of inquiry
3. Assignments – three distinct ways you would evaluate the learning of those who take your course
4. Activities – plans for one to three class periods (i.e. how you would engage people around the materials together)
5. Present this course online in the forum to students and request feedback through two to three prompts.

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## **Interdisciplinary, CORE Course**

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### **IS 302 – Religion and Economics (an IS course)**

**Example 1:** In concert with faculty, students will select a specific religious group or figure that employs economic rhetoric in some way (as defined in the class) This can be a current group/figure or one from the past; the only condition should be that there is enough rhetoric produced by the group/figure in question to constitute a solid research project. Using the critical lessons from the class, the student will analyze the role that economic rhetoric plays in this group’s social status and power. The student will write a 2000-2500 essay answering the following questions:

- How does this group use economic rhetoric? What does it look/sound like?

- What are the social, political, and cultural conditions under which this group exists?
- What are the practical effects of the economic rhetoric used by the group?
- Why do you believe has chosen to use economic rhetoric?

**Example Two:** Write a short, creative, and open-ended piece of fiction that personifies the critical perspective(s) of essays or articles we read and analyze in class. In your piece, you are not required, but may do, one of the following: show the interworkings and relations of a particular economic organization as if they are in fact a cult, constructing characters and situations that frame economic activity as religious practice; take key concepts we have developed and deploy them in unfamiliar and creative modes as a way to challenge the reader into fresh perspectives on familiar topics (e.g. consuming worship, the spirit of commodities, rituals as transactions, etc.)

**Example Three:** Interview two distinct religious organizations on the proper role of money within their own community, culture, and religious tradition. Your interview questions should be prepared in collaboration with both of the professors, utilizing a variety of questions. Conduct and record two electronic interviews, recording the session and writing up your interpretations and results. Additionally, present your takeaways to the class in whatever fashion we agree to (e.g. recorded synthesis, in-class presentation, written paper, etc.)

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### Lower-Level, Minor/Major Course

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#### **CR 264 – Introduction to Criminology**

**Example 1:** The student will read two books and multiple academic articles chosen by the professor. Based on these readings, the student will complete two reflection papers and have bi-weekly meetings to discuss the assigned readings. Through two short (4-6 page papers) students will critically reflect on the book read and comments made during the bi-weekly meetings. Upon finishing the book, students will read the assigned academic articles and incorporate these into their overall reflection and analysis of the topic covered. These papers will count for 50 points each. The papers will be added to the student's overall course grade and factor into their final grade for the course. A rubric will be provided.

**Example 2:** As part of the general course requirements, students are expected to research a crime-ridden city and apply a theory. For an honors component, students will expand on this paper by suggesting programming and policy that their assigned city should implement, in alignment with the theory they feel best applies to their city. They will produce a presentation AND an infographic attempting to convince local agencies to adopt their proposed strategies and why they are expected to assist with the city's crime problem. Academic resources and research are required.

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### Upper-Level Minor/Major Specific Course

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#### **PL 326 (Feminist Theory and Practice, a CE course)**

**Proposed Enhancement 1:** Students will provide around 6 hours of volunteer work, or three sessions (TBD by faculty and JTNL staff) with JTNL house (which is our community organization for the CE component of the course). Staff at JTNL will direct the students as far as volunteer needs. The students, JTNL staff, and faculty will all communicate before the start of the volunteer experience to ensure that expectations on the type of work that needs to be performed is clear. The student will then produce a 5-10 minute presentation after the work is done to explain to the public what JTNL house is, why the work that they performed there was important, and providing some overall connections back to information provided in the class on incarcerated women.

**Proposed Enhancement 2:** In concert with Dr. Smith, students will select a social problem pertaining to women and incarceration that they wish to further research. They will explicitly take a position on the nature of the problem and how to ethically resolve it. (These resolutions should be very general, since the student is not presumed to be a policy expert). Since the issues discussed in class are only very briefly addressed, it is fine to choose one from the syllabus if the student so wishes. Students will also reach out to pertinent faculty in other fields (Criminal Justice Studies, Social Work, Psychology, etc.) to inform their research, where pertinent. The research will culminate in either a 2000-2500 word essay describing this issue, or in a 5-10 minute presentation that does the same.