HNRS 200 Syllabus

Special Problems for Undergraduates (CR/NC, 1 or 2 units)
Winter 2008 Honors Research Groups

Instructor (Director of Honors Program)

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Prerequisite

Good standing in the Honors Program, and consent of the Director of the Honors Program.

Course Description

The Honors Program initiated cross-disciplinary research projects in the Winter 2008 quarter. These projects were under the supervision of Cal Poly professors from various fields and incorporated hands-on research experience for Honors students. Select student projects will continue in future quarters.

Course Requirements

- Contact lead research professor by the end of the first week to discuss initial or continuing involvement in specific research projects.
- Spend at least three hours per week on project.
- Turn in proposal, progress report, and final report at dates specified.
- At the end of the quarter, students will be asked to provide feedback on all research projects, and contributions made by members of your team. These assessments will be considered in forming new research teams in the future.

Timeline

Week	HNRS 200 Events
1	Informational Meeting & Contact Lead Professor
2	
3	Proposal Due Wednesday, January 23rd
4	
5	
6	
7	Progress Report Due Wednesday, February 20th
8	
9	
10	Final Report Due Friday, March 14th

Assignments

Guidelines

- All reports should be submitted to the Digital Dropbox on Blackboard by the specified due date. They will be recorded in the "My Grades" section of Blackboard as soon as they are received.
- Please submit reports as PDFs or Microsoft Word files. If you submit a Word file, please make sure it is your final version, free from editing marks.
- All reports should be worked on as a team if there is more than one member in your group.
- Please keep a log of all time spent on research and proposals. You can use the time log located on Blackboard.
- To make sure you receive credit for your work on time, please make sure your files include your last name or group name, such as Robots_finalreport.pdf, so that I don't receive 24 files called finalreport.pdf.

Project Proposal Due Wednesday, January 23, 2008

An example is posted on Blackboard to use as a reference. This proposal should be about two pages long. A project proposal contains the following information:

- Problem to be studied, significance of the proposed project
- Background information
- Method to be used
- Plan of work
- Each team member's role in the proposed project

Progress Report Due Wednesday, February 20, 2008

The purpose of the progress report is to demonstrate that the team has achieved a substantial level of understanding of the theoretical and/or experimental background of the project, is making appropriate progress in obtaining results, and can discuss their ongoing work in a clear and professional manner. The report should be about two pages long. The report should provide a summary of your progress, including:

- Research Title
- Names and majors of the team members
- Introduction
- Overview of the relevant theoretical and/or experimental literature
- Methods, results and discussion of work to date
- A brief discussion of possible future directions for the research
- Each team member's role in the ongoing project (if changed since the submission of the research proposal)

Final Report Due Friday, March 14, 2008

The final report should be about five pages long and should be worked on as a team. If you are continuing an existing project, you can edit and modify your final report from the previous quarter, but if doing so, perfection is expected. Please include the following sections in your final report:

- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Background
- Design (or Theory)
- Methods (or Experimentation)
- Conclusions
- Acknowledgements (if appropriate)
- Bibliography
- Appendices (if appropriate)

See the Honors Research website for examples of past student final reports:
http://honors.calpoly.edu/research_showcasespring2007.htm

Final Presentation Due Monday, March 10 or Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Your final presentation will be given at one of two sessions during Dead Week. You will be presenting with your group members to other HNRS 200 students and faculty. The content of your presentation will be similar to your final report, but in PowerPoint format, and simplified for an audience who probably knows nothing (or almost nothing) about your topic. This means leaving out all that "jargon" and technical details. Instead, focus on the following:

- Who was on your team, including students, faculty, and any participating community members? Include everyone, even if they are not enrolled in HNRS 200.
- What was your original research question? What were you trying to find out, and why is it important?
- Was this a new project, or ongoing? If ongoing, were you continuing other people's research or have you been working on it all along?
- How did you conduct your research? Briefly describe your research procedures. Remember to keep this simple, such as "We took pieces of sea sponge our professor had gathered in the Caribbean, and performed a series of chemical tests on them to see what kinds of effects they had on tissue samples."
- What did you find? Briefly describe your results, again keeping it as un-technical as possible.
- What is the significance of your results? What will your findings be used for?
- Will this research continue in the future, either with you or with other students?
- Finally, be prepared for questions from the audience.
- You should take photos of your research throughout the quarter, and include these photos in your final report and your final presentation. Photos add visual interest, and help your audience to understand your research. Graphs, diagrams and charts can also be helpful.

Student Responsibilities

- You are expected to communicate with your lead professor and team members throughout the quarter. A Blackboard group will be set up for your convenience.
- You are expected to submit your reports to Blackboard by 9:00 PM on the listed due date. I will check Blackboard daily, and will record your report submission in your gradebook page on Blackboard as soon as I receive it. If you submit a report and don't see confirmation on your gradebook page, it is your responsibility to contact me by phone or email as soon as possible.
- You are expected to be reachable. The best option is to provide an alternate email or phone number so I can contact you in case of a problem. You have the right to privacy, so you are not required to provide an alternate contact, but if you choose to use only your myname@calpoly.edu email, you are required to make sure it has enough room that incoming messages will not bounce. If there is a technical problem with your report submission and I cannot reach you, it will be considered late, so please make sure you are reachable.

Other Opportunities

- Depending on the quality of your report, it might be included in the Cal Poly Honors Research Journal.
- There may be opportunities for you to present your research at conferences throughout the year. Information on these conferences can be found on Blackboard under "External Links."
- Some projects may be continued in future quarters, so talk to your lead professor or drop by the Honors Office to voice your interest.
- Feel free to count this research for credit in your major as well, if your major allows it.

Above all, enjoy your quarter!

Peace,
Jennifer Merriam
HNRS 200 Student Assistant