



**HONORS
COLLEGE**

**2023-2024
Handbook for
Legacy Instructors**

OVERVIEW

Legacy as an Introduction to Honors

All students in the Honors College must take a 1000-level Legacy course, preferably in their first year, in order to graduate from the college. Even though students beyond their first semester occasionally enroll in Legacy courses, these courses are designed as an introduction to the Honors College and thus are primarily for first-year students.

What “Legacy” Means

Legacy seminars are interdisciplinary in content and approach. These courses are expected to provide students with knowledge of works and ideas that play significant roles in understanding the contemporary culture in which they live. Typically, Legacies incorporate substantial content from earlier periods and from a range of cultures to provide context for ideas and readings; classes focusing exclusively on contemporary content, with little attention to historical context, are generally not taught as Legacies, though exceptions to that standard are sometimes made. In Legacy courses, students examine primary texts, explore secondary source materials, and tackle intensive discussion and writing assignments. The Legacy seminars count toward the UNM and state General Education requirements for Humanities (area 5), which means they must address certain skills.

Enhancing students’ ability to work interdisciplinarily is one of the primary goals in Honors, and therefore, all Legacy courses are expected to be interdisciplinary in content and approach. Because they provide students with three credits in the Humanities General Education area, Legacy courses should include a healthy dose of material from humanities-based disciplines. However, instructors may also choose to include material from disciplines outside the humanities, depending upon their expertise and their course’s specific focus.

Legacy courses are also our first opportunity to communicate clearly to students what is expected of them in the Honors College and in their other college courses. Consequently, it is important that students in Legacies learn the skills needed for college-level work—particularly the rigorous critical thinking, reading, and writing required in Honors. In some cases, Legacies may also offer students an opportunity to begin preparing for professional fields beyond college, including positions of leadership in the private and public sectors. Finally, Legacy courses offer students their first introduction to the state- and college-mandated skills in which they will be assessed periodically throughout their college careers. (See the discussion of assessment later in this document for more details on these skills.) Faculty should keep this network of goals and requirements in mind as they create or redesign their Legacy courses.

THE HONORS COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Because Honors College classes differ significantly from many others at UNM, a few general comments about Honors courses might be helpful to new instructors. Honors expects that students in Legacy courses will perform rigorous and thorough work to pass the course. However, Honors assignments typically emphasize quality over quantity. In general, we expect Honors students to accomplish better work than their non-Honors peers, but that does not mean we expect *more* work from them. Moreover, Honors College courses focus on active, rather than passive, learning strategies. The goal of these practices is to make

students more creative and thorough critical thinkers by helping them master material and encouraging them to analyze what happens when ideas and methods are actually put into practice.

Our focus on active learning has a number of ramifications for the Honors classroom. For example, Honors College courses are not lecture classes.¹ Instead, faculty are encouraged to develop a variety of active, open-ended assignments which allow students to apply and analyze material. Experiential and problem-based strategies are fundamental to many classes; Honors College students tend to thrive on such challenges and to appreciate the variety offered by these experiences. All the same, faculty should keep in mind that students in Legacy are most often in their first year of college, and thus, experiential exercises should be constructed carefully so that students have the support they need to make good-faith attempts at what they are being asked to do.

Many Honors College seminars make frequent use of class discussion. To be clear, seminar discussions are not casual free-for-alls; instead, such sessions generally focus on careful assessment of texts, problems, ideas, or experiences. Faculty help students develop a framework for analysis and assist them in applying those strategies to specific ideas and examples; students are encouraged to consider multiple sides of an argument, to ground their own positions in thoughtful evaluation of meaningful evidence, and to respond substantively to comments offered by others. As part of class discussion, Honors faculty make a concerted but compassionate effort to help timid students become more confident and fluent in speaking in class; this is particularly important in Legacies, as many students might not have had experience with seminar discussion in high school.

The Honors College's rejection of exams is another example of our focus on more active learning methods.² Faculty should design assignments that require students to analyze and apply material in ways that are active, complex, and creative; because testing tends to rely on rote methods and to allow little opportunity for more complex problem solving, it is not used in Honors College classrooms.

Legacy faculty should pay particular attention to helping students develop their analytic writing skills. Other methods for communicating arguments should also be taught, but in Legacy courses, students should receive the instruction needed to ensure they can write clear, correct essays which demonstrate careful critical thinking and logical argument.

Regarding assigned readings, most Legacy instructors require that students study five to eight main texts in their courses, but instructors are welcome to include as many authors or works as they feel students can manage comfortably during the semester. The Honors College also prefers that Legacy students focus on primary rather than secondary texts whenever possible. In addition, Honors faculty generally agree that our students gain a stronger educational experience in Legacy courses when they read complete texts, rather than excerpts. Although Legacy courses typically include at least some canonical texts, faculty are strongly encouraged to include works by under-represented groups as well; we consider it crucial that our students be exposed to a wide range of ideas, and that they begin to understand how political and social forces construct hierarchies of information. In addition, Legacy instructors are expected to help students develop standards for assessing the credibility and relevance of sources.

¹ Many faculty make use of “mini-lectures” as needed to introduce information and concepts, but such lectures should not be the primary way material is communicated to students.

² At their discretion, faculty may assign short quizzes—for example, to encourage student retention of the reading. However, these kinds of assignments should not be a primary means used in the class to assess student learning.

ASSESSMENT: STATE-MANDATED GENERAL EDUCATION SKILLS AND HONORS COLLEGE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In accordance with state and university requirements, the Honors College is involved in **two kinds of assessment: General Education and college-level assessment**. General Education Essential Skills are mandated by the state; college-level outcomes have been developed by Honors faculty. Both assessments are reported to the state annually through the Office of Assessment.

Legacy courses play a crucial role in the assessment process. Students should be introduced to important concepts and skills in lower-level classes; those outcomes and skills will then be reinforced as students progress through the Honors College. Ultimately, our goal is that students will achieve proficiency in Essential Skills upon their completion of 2000-level Honors courses and maturity in meeting college-mandated outcomes by the time they complete their advanced coursework in Honors.

Below are the General Education Essential Skills and the Honors College outcomes (PSLOs) relevant to Legacy courses; for more information on assessment, including a more detailed description of the PSLOs, a calendar, and an explanation of assessment processes, please see the web pages on [Assessment in the Honors College](#) and [General Education Assessment](#). Additional details, including Honors College rubrics, are available from the Honors College Assessment Coordinator, Dr. Renée Faubion (sanren@unm.edu). Please don't hesitate to contact her if you have any questions about this process.

Humanities General Education Essential Skills

The state of New Mexico requires that three specific Essential Skills be addressed in humanities courses.³ We will assess only one General Education Essential Skill per year for our institutional report; **for the 2023-2024 academic year, we will assess our students' development of critical thinking skills**. The rubric for that Essential Skill can be found [here](#).

While we assess only one General Education Essential Skill per academic year, in designing their Legacy courses, Honors faculty are encouraged to keep in mind each of the three Essential Skills mandated by the state for humanities courses. Those three Essential Skills are:

- 1. Information and Digital Literacy.** Faculty in Legacy courses are asked to incorporate any **two** of the following in their courses to develop students' informational and digital literacy:
 - Practice in assessing the authority and value of information.
 - Practice in using and designing digital environments.
 - Practice in selecting information using appropriate strategies and criteria.

³ Remember that all Legacy courses award students three credits in Area 5/Humanities.

- Practice in engaging in an iterative process of inquiry.

2. Critical Thinking. Faculty in Legacy courses are asked to incorporate any **two** of the following in their courses to develop students' critical thinking skills:

- Practice in delineating an appropriate question for investigation.
- Practice in acquiring appropriate evidence.
- Practice in evaluating the credibility and truthfulness of evidence.
- Practice in developing conclusions and outcomes that demonstrate informed reasoning.

3. Personal and Social Responsibility. Faculty in Legacy courses are asked to incorporate any **two** of the following in their courses to enhance students' development of personal and social responsibility:

- Practice in recognizing intersections between personal and social issues and culturally specific perspectives.
- Practice in articulating issues concerning the effects of human activity on the natural world.
- Practice in ethical reasoning.
- Practice in collaborating effectively with others in working toward a shared goal.
- Practice in recognizing a variety of perspectives in addressing global and personal issues.

General Education Assessment Process

By December 15, 2023,⁴ all Legacy faculty will be required to submit the following materials to UNM's Office of Assessment:

- Four randomly selected student samples of a relevant assignment. (The assignment chosen should allow the Office of Assessment to evaluate students' level of skill in the relevant area, but it does not have to be a written assignment.)
- The specifications you have distributed to students for the assignment assessed.
- You will also be asked to identify two of the dimensions on the [UNM rubric for Critical Thinking](#) against which the sample student work should be measured. (The actual evaluation of the samples will be done by the Office of Assessment.)
- If you are teaching multiple sections of Legacy, please submit the material specified in this list for each course.

The link for such submissions is currently not available but will be distributed to Legacy faculty as soon as it is reactivated.

Honors College Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

Six college-level outcomes have been identified by Honors faculty as the pillars of our college. While we will assess only two of these per year for our institutional report, faculty are encouraged to keep each of these outcomes in mind in designing their courses. *Faculty are asked to represent at least two PSLOs in their syllabi but may include any additional outcomes they choose, whether drawn from the Honors College list or of their own design.*

⁴ Faculty teaching Legacy during the spring 2024 semester should submit their materials to the Office of Assessment by May 15, 2024.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, college-level assessment in Honors will address students' skills in research and critical thinking.

While we focus on only two PSLOs per academic year for college-level assessment, Legacy faculty should keep in mind the entire range of Honors College PSLOs.

1. Interdisciplinarity: Upon completion of their work in the Honors College, students will integrate knowledge, perspectives and/or skills from two or more disciplines in a unified argument, strategy, or solution.

2. Critical Thinking: Upon completion of their work in the Honors College, students will illustrate sound, evidence-based evaluations of issues or problems, including sufficient support and appropriate reasoning.

3. Communication Skills: Upon completion of their work in the Honors College, students will produce written and/or oral presentations that demonstrate a thorough understanding of audience, context, purpose, and language.

4. Research: Upon completion of their work in the Honors College, students will generate original knowledge and/or meaning through the systematic study of a problem, topic, or prompt.

5. Community Engaged Learning: Upon completion of their work in the Honors College, students will demonstrate an ability to engage diverse communities and encourage mutually beneficial partnerships.⁵

6. Creative Thinking: Upon completion of their work in the Honors College, student will demonstrate their ability to craft a material, process, or text through deliberate manipulation of tools and methods.

The specific outcomes attached to each PSLO can be found [here](#). Please keep in mind, however, that no Honors course will fulfill each item on this list, nor should faculty try to create a course that does so; concentrating on fewer skills will lead to greater proficiency among students. As a minimum benchmark, faculty should try to include two PSLOs in each course and focus on one or two of the bulleted outcomes under those PSLOs. And again, faculty are invited to include additional outcomes as well, including those of their own design, as long as they are also addressing some of the material mandated on the [Honors College Assessment webpage](#).

College-Level Assessment Process

By February 1, 2024,⁶ faculty will be required to email the following materials to the Honors College Assessment Coordinator, Dr. Renée Faubion (sanren@unm.edu):

- Four randomly chosen student samples of a relevant assignment.

⁵ This PSLO is currently being redesigned.

⁶ Faculty teaching Legacy courses during the spring 2024 semester should submit their college-level assessment materials to Renée Faubion by June 1, 2024.

- The specifications given to students for the assignment assessed.
- A single copy of each of the two rubrics tallying how many students performed at each level for the chosen dimensions.
 - **Faculty may limit their assessments to two dimensions on each rubric; please be sure, however, to use the same dimensions to assess each student's work.**
- If it is more appropriate, you may use separate assignments to assess Research and Critical Thinking; moreover, the assignments assessed need not be essays, as long as they are relevant to the chosen dimensions.
- If you are teaching multiple sections of Legacy, please submit the above material for each section of the course.

If you have any questions or concerns about the process for General Education or college-level assessment, please do not hesitate to contact Renée Faubion (sanren@unm.edu).

LECTURES, WORKSHOPS, AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students in Honors are required to attend two university-sponsored academic lectures, workshops, or similar events during the semester they take a Legacy course. However, faculty should make adjustments to this policy as they see fit, depending upon issues such as surges in COVID rates.

The Honors Discovery Lecture Series should be of special interest, not only to Legacy students but to all students in the Honors College. Please encourage your students to attend these events, as they can also enhance students' sense of belonging in the Honors community. More details on this series will be provided as they become available. A variety of methods can be used to verify attendance at such events, including requiring brief response papers, brief in-class summaries, or even just asking students to submit a selfie taken at an event. Faculty may verify students' fulfillment of this requirement in whatever way they choose.

Students are also encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities, including those sponsored by Honors College groups such as the Honors Student Association and Honors Pathmakers. Many students will likely be eager for such opportunities, but other students who would benefit from such socializing might need enticement to participate. Faculty might consider incentivizing such participation, for example by awarding minor extra credit, to encourage students to engage in Honors (and other university communities) outside the classroom.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Over the last few years, many students have struggled with significant levels of anxiety and stress. It is probably wise to anticipate that stress levels will remain high among students in the coming academic year. Please check your email for the following items,⁷ which might be worth making available directly to students:

⁷ The email distributing this handbook should include these two items.

- A one-page document with links outlining where students might seek help for everything from academic issues and financial aid concerns to mental health struggles and problems with food security.
- A one-page infographic on UNM's IT department, including information on how to get help and which apps are available to students through their UNM accounts.

LEGACY FACULTY FORUMS

Forums for Legacy instructors are generally held two to four times in the fall semester. These forums allow Legacy instructors to share ideas and discuss issues pertinent to Legacy courses. The goal of these forums is to provide Legacy instructors with support, discussion, and information which may aid them in their Legacy teaching. These forums also allow us to discuss and determine any changes or revisions of the Honors Legacy curriculum. With these goals in mind, it is important that Legacy instructors plan on attending as many of these forums as possible during the semester in which they are teaching a Legacy course. (Incidentally, all faculty are welcome to attend, whether or not they are teaching a Legacy during the semester.) If there is any topic you would like to see addressed during a Legacy forum, please don't hesitate to offer suggestions to the Legacy Coordinator, Dr. Renée Faubion (sanren@unm.edu). The tentative fall 2023 schedule for these meetings is as follows:

- Friday, September 15, from noon to 1 p.m.
- Friday, November 17, from noon to 1 p.m.

LEGACY FACULTY COORDINATOR

Dr. Renée Faubion is the Legacy Faculty Coordinator. Instructors with questions or problems related to Legacy courses are encouraged to contact her for assistance. She may be reached at sanren@unm.edu.