

DoDEA High School Honors Courses

Questions and Answers

What honors courses will be available to DoDEA high school students in the future?

One new honors course will be available for ninth grade students in SY 2005-2006: Honors World History and Literature. This is a two-credit course, with one credit offered in Social Studies and one in English. Schools currently offering Honors English 9 may continue to do so for SY 2004-2005. Once the new honors courses are implemented, the current Honors English 9 will no longer be available.

The 9th grade English and Social Studies Honors courses are the only ones planned for the future. AP offerings in mathematics, science and other areas already provide multiple offerings for students seeking advanced courses.

Why are changes being made in DoDEA honors course offerings?

The changes in honors courses are being made to expand advanced course offerings for ninth and tenth grade. The changes will also provide a standard DoDEA course syllabus and selected materials for these courses. Students in eleventh and twelfth grades will be guided to take AP courses in lieu of previous Honors English.

Why start with 10th grade instead of 9th grade?

As part of the High School Initiative, the decision to offer integrated Social Studies and Literature honors courses for grades 9 and 10 was made. Since text materials are available for 10th grade and not for 9th, the decision was made to begin with 10th grade.

How do honors courses fit into the DoDEA high school curriculum?

As a result of the High School Initiative, all DoDEA high schools have begun seeking additional courses to challenge and support students and to prepare for new graduation requirements that lead all students toward higher achievement. The new honors courses are part of this initiative, helping to add to the list of more challenging course offerings.

How should the Honors World History and Literature course be staffed and scheduled?

The course may be taught by one or two teachers. How to arrange for the English component and the Social Studies component within the schedule is a local school decision. The components must be scheduled to ensure students are taught for the required amount of time for one credit in each content area.

How are honors courses different from other high school courses?

Honors courses provide students with stronger emphases on interdisciplinary connections, advanced content, applied critical thinking, and extensive classroom dialogue focused on the literature and social studies themes. Many of the learning strategies used will prepare students for future AP courses. All honors students will be required to complete extensive readings and writings as well as an original research project.

Will honors courses have end-of-course exams?

In lieu of end-of-course exams, a required research project integrating learning from history and literature will be used as assessments for the courses.

Who can enroll in honors courses?

Honors courses are available to all DoDEA students who are at the appropriate grade level. All students, including incoming students, should be made aware of the honors offerings and encouraged to consider the challenge.

Should AVID students be encouraged to take honors courses?

Yes, AVID students' participation in the Honors World History and Literature course and in the future 9th grade course would be most appropriate. AVID students are expected to take the most rigorous course offerings that may include honors and AP courses.

Will honors courses have weighted grades?

No weight will be applied to the honors course grades. Student transcripts will indicate by course title that the student received credit in a rigorous honors course. A decision was made to weight only AP courses since these courses have a standardized, internationally recognized course syllabus and examination set.

What training will be available to teachers of honors courses?

All teachers assigned honors courses will be provided with professional development prior to teaching the course. The training sessions will guide them through the expectations for honors courses, the course syllabus, appropriate teaching and learning strategies, the resource materials selected for the courses, and assessment components of the courses.

A syllabus for the Honors 9 World History and Literature course and a list of selected texts and resource materials will be developed by a work group of instructional specialists and teachers. All course work will be aligned with the DoDEA Language Arts and Social Studies Standards.

Can schools offer the new honors course if teachers are not trained?

Teachers must participate in the DoDEA honors course training prior to teaching the course. Teacher training opportunity will be provided in the summer of 2005.

Will honors courses be available through distance learning?

The initial offerings of honors courses will be at the local schools. In the future the feasibility of online offerings will be explored.

What will be emphasized in the curriculum for honors courses?

Honors courses will be based on current DoDEA standards in Language Arts and Social Studies. What differentiates the courses is the interdisciplinary emphasis, the advanced content, as well as the strong emphasis on critical thinking and reasoning. Students will be expected to apply their learning in class discussions and through original writing and research.

How will grades be determined and recorded for the Honors World History and Literature course?

Students in the course are assessed based on the interdisciplinary goals of the combined course. Students may prepare and receive feedback from the teacher/s on some separate assignments in each discipline. The purpose of this feedback would be to ensure specific knowledge and skills in the separate disciplines. However, grading for the course will be determined by the work students do on the integrated nature of the course. That is, there will be one grade for the course, which is reflective of progress toward the integration of World History and Literature as outlined in the course syllabus. This grade will be shown on the transcript under each separate listing of the course.

Where can I get more information about DoDEA honors courses?

The point of contact at DoDEA Headquarters for information on honors courses is Dr. Yvonne Bolling, YBolling@hq.dodea.edu and Susan M. Karlesses, SKarlesses@hq.dodea.edu.