

Honors Project in Relation to the Honors Field

Honors work cannot ordinarily be done outside the Candidate's major. Requests for exceptions to this policy must be directed to the Chair of the Honors Program Committee. Pursuing Honors in a minor is highly unusual and not encouraged. The Honors Project is a focused and manageable activity (scholarly, experimental, or artistic) within the Honors Field. The field is the configuration of courses that the student has taken or will take, within or outside the major, which substantively or methodologically support the Honors Project to some degree. The Honors Candidate will list these courses (minimum of 4) on an online form called the **Record of Honors Field**. These courses are used by the Adviser and Field Examiner as the basis for the formulation of the Written Honors Examination.

For students in a disciplinary major, the Honors Field will likely coincide with intermediate and advanced coursework in the major. Even with a single major, however, a student may enter a multi-faceted Honors Field such as "Soviet Russia" or "Surrealism". It is critical that the facets of the field are clearly connected within the major discipline and that the Honors Faculty Adviser has teaching expertise within the Honors Field. Students pursuing Individual Majors are by definition interdisciplinary.

Because the Honors Field and the Honors Project are related reciprocally, it does not matter whether a student begins with an established and fairly broad interest, for example, "the Middle Ages" or "Post-structuralism," and then settles on a narrow topic within it, or whether a student has been motivated by a particular character, problem or phenomenon, say "the effects of learning on the selectivity of predation by the Bluegill Sunfish," and then broadens the investigation to take into account a somewhat wider background. The end of the Honors work recognizes both broader and narrower perspectives, though one or the other may continue to predominate. Honors Projects that aspire to originality are most successful when specific.

Honors Projects in fine and performing arts are also subject to the criteria of scope and specificity described above. They too must attain the clarity of expression expected of liberal arts students. The emphasis on the expository qualities of a given Honors Project, however, should bear a close relation to the emphasis on such qualities within the Honors Field in question. Thus, for example, the quality of an art, architecture, music or dance project should not be judged primarily by the quality of the Candidate's writing.

Given the variables in Honors Fields and Projects, the choice of projects can accommodate almost any student's proclivities and aspirations, except those that may require resources and/or faculty expertise not readily available at HWS. Before final selection of a project, Honors Candidates must work with the Honors Faculty Advisers to determine its feasibility at the Colleges.