

Pursuing Honors: Routes and Criteria

Honors Candidates typically undertake an Honors Project within a recognized major. Such majors include those in specific Departmental disciplines as well as those of the Interdisciplinary Programs and Individual Majors. Students with a double major may pursue a joint Honors Project that bridges Departments and/or Interdisciplinary Programs. Candidates must have one Honors Faculty Adviser, even if undertaking a joint Honors Project or completing majors in two related disciplines. This Adviser is normally on the faculty of the student's major Department, Interdisciplinary Program or approved by the Committee on Individual Majors.

Qualified juniors and seniors are eligible. Acceptance into the Honors Program depends more on an estimate of the student's motivation and ability to work well independently than on grades per se, though being on the Dean's List regularly or earning other markers of academic distinction can facilitate faculty interest in a student. Honors Candidates must identify a faculty member who is willing to serve as a faculty reference and is able to speak about the Candidate's potential for advanced coursework. This person should not be directly involved with the Honors Project (e.g. major adviser), but may ultimately serve as Field Examiner.

Planning: A student may begin this work in the first or second semester of their junior year, or in the first semester of their senior year. Careful planning is required for successful completion of an Honors Project. Students and faculty must consider the multitude of factors that can influence the long-term nature of the Honors work. (e.g. academic commitments for abroad study, faculty availability, internships, etc.). Most commonly, students begin the Honors Project in the first semester of their senior year. This allows for the completion of the maximum number of courses within the student's Honors Field (see **Honors Project in Relation to the Honors Field**). Students may also recognize the value of beginning an Honors Project in their junior year, using the summer for research or because they intend to be off campus for some portion of their senior year. Each student will have individual needs and the decision about when to begin Honors should be made carefully in close consultation with the Honors Faculty Adviser.

An option too often overlooked is the provision that courses creditable as Honors work need not be taken consecutively. This provision accommodates especially students who are in our fall semester courses abroad and students who engage in other off-campus programs (e.g., student teaching). Students with double majors might also find this option useful.

Pursuing an Honors Project may occur directly with enrollment in a 495 course or indirectly with enrollment in a 450 independent study course. The second semester of Honors coursework is designated 496.

The 495 course: This entry into Honors entails an immediate matching of student with Honors Faculty Adviser. Either the student or faculty member may take the initiative. Students considering Honors are encouraged to discuss plans and ideas with many faculty. Faculty may

also recommend Honors to their students and foster connections with other faculty. Only one 495 and one 496 (2nd semester) course can be credited.

The conversion of 450 to 495: Superior work in one 450 course may be converted into one semester of 495, provided that: the student has taken coursework that establishes a sufficient Honors field, the subject and faculty adviser remain the same, and the faculty is approved by the student's major Department. No special permission is needed for this shift into the Honors Program. The student then becomes an Honors Candidate; the faculty member, an Honors Faculty Adviser.

The 496 course: After passing the Written Honors Examination in the 1st semester (495), the completed exam is submitted to the Honors Secretary and the Candidate submits an online form for the approval of the Honors Adviser and Field Examiner. When the approvals are submitted, the Honors Secretary will notify the Registrar's Office to enroll the Honors Candidate for the 2nd semester (496).

All students enrolled in Honors may withdraw from the course at any time prior to the final due date of the Honors Project upon the request of the Candidate or the recommendation of the Faculty Adviser. In this circumstance, a 495 or 496 (2nd sem.) course may be converted to a 450 and the Faculty Adviser will assign a grade according to the guidelines of the 450.