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University Honors Program Faculty Handbook 2019-2020

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University Honors Program

Faculty Handbook



2018-2019

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Staff and Contact Information

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About the Program

Mission Statement

The University Honors Program provides a small college atmosphere in the context of a large comprehensive university. The program is designed to foster the development of a critical sense of inquiry, a spirit of creativity, a global perspective and an ethic of civic responsibility. A hallmark of the program is the emphasis on bringing ideas to life through undergraduate research, experiential learning and service-learning opportunities.

Four Foundations

Critical Sense of Inquiry

Honors students will explore a variety of approaches to research designed to foster the pursuit of knowledge. Students will develop the ability to question with a healthy skepticism toward accepted opinion. The culmination of the undergraduate experience is an independent research or creative project designed to exemplify a critical approach to inquiry.

Spirit of Creativity

Honors students will embrace the idea that creativity is a virtue that should be experienced by all students, regardless of discipline. This spirit involves a respect for different ways of knowing and an openness to intellectual discussion and challenge.

Civic Responsibility

Honors students will demonstrate an ethic of civic responsibility and exemplify the motto of the program, "Humility before Honor." Students will be challenged to use their abilities and talents for the advancement of humanity and the pursuit of a greater good. The primary vehicle for the expression of civic responsibility is through service both to the university and the community.

Global Perspective

Honors students will develop a perspective which allows them to approach their chosen discipline from an international point of view. This outlook involves the critical exploration of global concerns and generation of proposed solutions to international problems. Honors education provides this worldwide perspective through academic courses, study abroad opportunities and co-curricular experiences.

Our Students

The University Honors Program seeks scholars interested in research, change agents interested in engaging local and global communities, and individuals seeking to explore their curiosity and express their creativity. Participation in the University Honors Program is not a reward for past achievement; rather, we examine past achievement to better understand the potential in the individual applicant.

All of our students must maintain a 3.3 Institutional (Georgia Southern) GPA while enrolled full time and each student must complete one [Experiential Learning Project](#) each year they are in the program. Students who enter the program as freshmen must take one Honors section of a core course in each of their first four semesters. Honors students in their junior and senior years must complete their departmental/college honors requirements and complete their Honors Thesis/Capstone Project. Graduating seniors also present their work at the Honors Research Symposium.

Students may be removed from the program for the following reasons:

- Below a 3.3 Institutional (Georgia Southern) GPA
- Failing an honors course
- Not completing experiential learning projects
- Not progressing with College/Departmental Honors requirements

Please note: Students can appeal removal decisions

In addition to the challenging classes and opportunity for an intensive research project in an Honors Thesis, honors students enjoy many other benefits:

- Dedicated Honors Advisor to complement advising in major college
- Some students receive scholarships from the UHP
- Other Scholarships – Continuing in Honors and Study Abroad
- Honors Undergraduate Research Fund
- Additional advising for nationally competitive scholarships
- Honors Living Learning Community for First-Year Students (optional LLC)
- Priority Registration
- Honors Book Loan
- Library Borrowing Privileges
- Quiet meeting space in Eidson House Common Areas and the COBA Honors Lounge

Working with Honors Students

Faculty who wish to work with honors students have multiple opportunities to do so:

- Honors section of FYE 1220
- Honors sections of core courses
- Departmental Honors Seminars
- Providing a course as an Honors Option
- Honors Enrichment Seminars
- Advising honors students in research and professional development
- Faculty mentor for an Honors Thesis/Capstone Project
- Honors Study Abroad and Alternative Break Trips

Teaching in Honors

Differently designed. That is the way to best describe an honors course. All students at the university know their courses will be both challenging and provocative. And all students expect those courses to prepare them for graduate school, professional school, and careers as well as prepare them for a lifetime of learning. Honors students, however, expect more and know they will be challenged in new and innovative ways.

Many faculty at Georgia Southern encounter honors students in honors sections of core curriculum courses. Students know that these faculty are not simply increasing the workload or adding another test to make the course worthy of honors, rather they know that faculty have redesigned the course to incorporate more information, include new challenges, and encourage application, critical thinking, and discussion as well. The small size of honors courses often results in seminar-style classroom experiences where students can engage each other in robust discussion.

A number of faculty also oversee the progress of junior- and senior-level honors students in Departmental/College Honors courses. These courses are designed within each department to guide the honors student in Thesis/Capstone Project process. Students learn about the methods and approaches of research within their particular discipline as well as the discipline's norms for presentation both written and orally. Seminars for juniors focus on topic selection, beginning research, and research proposal development. Senior seminars focus on writing and developing the thesis as well as public presentation of the research.

Faculty members interested in getting involved in honors should read the brief descriptions of options available in the text below. Any faculty interested in teaching an honors course should contact Dr. Steven Engel, Director, University Honors Program at sengel@georgiasouthern.edu.

Advising Honors Students in Research and Professional Development

We know that our program's focus on research attracts students eager to engage their discipline and ready to work with faculty. Likewise, there is plenty of need for faculty mentors of these students, especially for the Honors Thesis/Capstone Project. Part of the process of educating students about the discipline is also encouraging students to attend and present at regional and national conferences in the discipline.

Faculty Mentor for Honors Thesis/Capstone Project

The culmination of the honors experience for each student is the completion of an Honors Thesis or Capstone Project. This is typically an in-depth research project or creative endeavor completed with the guidance of a faculty mentor. See the [Honors Thesis/Capstone Handbook](#) for more details.

Honors Thesis/Capstone Proposal

The first step in the completion of the Honors Thesis or Capstone Project is the submission of a proposal using the [Thesis/Capstone Project Proposal Form](#). The format of the proposal should suit the student's major disciplinary norm for research or creative activity proposals. These proposals are usually in the range of 3 to 20 pages. The project is subject to the approval of the Director of the University Honors Program.

Honors Thesis or Capstone Project Proposal Deadline:

For Fall graduation: December 1 of previous year

For Spring or Summer graduation: May 1 of previous year

Honors Thesis/Capstone Completion

Completion of the Honors Thesis/Capstone Project is the culmination of the honors experience. The following items must be completed in order for a student to fully complete the Thesis/Capstone process:

- Submission of the Honors Thesis/Capstone Proposal by the required deadline
- Submission of both written and electronic copies of the completed Thesis/Project following the formatting requirements and submitted by the required deadline
- Public presentation of the findings/results of the completed project at the Fall or Spring Honors Symposium

Final Draft of Honors Thesis or Capstone Project Deadline:

For Fall graduation: November 1 prior to graduation date

For Spring or Summer graduation: April 1 prior to graduation date

Assessment of Honors Thesis/Capstone Project

As part of our ongoing efforts to assess the effectiveness of the University Honors Program, we ask that faculty assist us in the evaluation of their students' Honors Thesis/Capstone Projects. All faculty mentors of Honors Thesis/Capstone Projects should complete an Honors Thesis/Capstone Project Rubric to evaluate Overall Scholarly Quality and Writing Style and Quality. The University Honors Program will also solicit faculty to assess student presentations of Honors Thesis/Capstone Projects at the Honors Research Symposia in fall and spring. That rubric is focused on both Content and Delivery.

- To view the Honors Thesis/Capstone Rubric please click here: [Honors Thesis/Capstone Rubric](#) and scroll to page 10
- To view the Presentation Rubric please click here: [Presentation Rubric](#) and scroll to page 11

Teaching Departmental/College Honors Seminars

Departmental/College Honors courses are one-credit-hour seminars for junior and senior honors students. These courses are designed within each department to guide the honors student in Thesis/Capstone Project process. Students learn about the methods and approaches of research within their particular discipline as well as the discipline's norms for presentation both written and orally. Seminars for juniors focus on topic selection, beginning research, and research proposal development. Senior seminars focus on writing and developing the thesis as well as public presentation of the research.

Honors Options (formerly contracts)

For certain majors, college/departmental honors requirements are satisfied by taking a select number of courses as "honors options." Students and professors can submit an [application](#) to allow an existing course to count as an honors option.

Students may only apply for an Honors Option to satisfy college/departmental honors in select majors. An honors option cannot be used to substitute for other honors requirements.

Guidelines

Workload: Honors students should possess better intellectual skills than other students. They do not, however, have more time than other students. While an honors option may add to the workload of a course for an honors student, it should not simply add voluminous amounts of work to a student's requirements. Instead, professors and students should seek to identify ways in which the honors option could allow for the possibility of deeper exploration of course material than is otherwise possible in the class.

Assignment(s): An honors option should involve additional or alternative assignments for the honors students. For example, a class with an existing term paper for all students might require a deeper and more-thoroughly researched paper than that required of other students. Or, a student might be expected to do a research project requiring a higher level of analysis than the typical student. Ideally, an honors option should provide an opportunity for students to develop their knowledge and expertise in the major field. It is ideal (but not always possible) for the work designed for the honors contract to assist a student in completion of the Honors Thesis or Capstone Project.

Evaluation: From the perspective of the University Honors Program, a student must earn an A or B grade for the course to count toward satisfying honors course requirements. As such, professors should build the course requirements in such a way to ensure that students are properly evaluated according to the high standards of honors coursework.

Process

1. The honors student and the professor discuss the possibilities and specifics of an honors contract prior to or during the first week of the semester.
2. Once the students and professor come to an agreement about the honors dimension that will be added to the course, the professor and student complete the [Application Form](#) and submit to the University Honors

Program office (no later than the deadlines listed on the form). **Faculty and students are encouraged to submit honors option applications prior to the start of the semester in which the course will be taken.**

3. The Director of the University Honors Program will notify the professor and the student upon approval of the application.
4. The student will complete the terms of the honors option by the deadline(s) stated in the contract.
5. The professor will evaluate the students based on the honors-level criteria outlined in the honors contract and respond to the Honors Program's request for confirmation of completion of the terms of the honors option application.
6. The Honors Program will track the student's completion of the honors option for the purposes of completing departmental honors requirements

Teaching Honors FYE

The University Honors Program requires all first-year students to enroll in honors sections of the First-Year Experience Seminar (Honors FYE 1220) in the fall. Faculty interested in teaching an honors section of FYE should contact Dr. Francis Desiderio at francisdesiderio@georgiasouthern.edu.

Honors Enrichment Seminars

These courses offer an in-depth exploration of a special topic in an honors seminar setting. Any faculty member can propose a course to be listed as an Honors Enrichment Seminar (UHON 3090), and many of those upper level disciplinary courses can be cross-listed as UHON 3090 for non-majors seeking a challenging and interesting elective.

Honors Study Abroad and Alternative Break Trips

Like the Honors classroom experience, Honors Study Abroad and Alternative Break Trips are differently designed. These trips provide students with the opportunity for an intense focus on the issues facing groups of people across the country and around the world. In recent years, an overwhelming majority of honors students have expressed an interest in participating in a University Honors Program-sponsored Study Abroad and/or Alternative Break Trip. Furthermore, they have indicated that they would like to have these trips count for course credit.

Honors Study Abroad Trips give students the opportunity to learn about another country and culture from a professor whose expertise and research is based in the area. Ideally, the trip will take students off the beaten path as faculty show students an in-depth look at sites important to the course theme. Faculty are expected to create a course within their major for the trip, and that course may be cross-listed as an Honors Enrichment Seminar as well for non-majors.

Honors Alternative Break Trips are like traditional alternative break trips in that a service project is the focus. However, students expect to engage the faculty leading these trips on background, context, and academic analysis of the trip's project and focus making it a service-learning experience.

2019-2020 Honors Calendar

Fall 2019

August 19	Classes Begin
September 1	Deadline for Experiential Learning Reflection Survey for summer 2019 Projects
September 3	Honors Option application deadline for fall courses
September 30	Deadline for Experiential Learning Project Registration Survey for 2019-2020 projects
October 1	Priority deadline for Current Student Applicants to begin spring 2020
November 1	Deadline for incoming freshmen to apply for the 1906 Scholarship
November 1	Fall 2018 graduates deadline for submission of final formatted copy of Thesis/Capstone
November 4	Early registration for Spring and Summer 2020 begins
December 1	Deadline for transfer applicants to begin spring 2020
December 1	Deadline for fall 2020 graduates to submit Thesis/Capstone Proposal
December 4	Fall 2019 Honors Research Symposium
December 13-14	Commencement (TBD)

Spring 2020

January 13	Classes Begin
January 21	Honors Option application deadline for spring courses
February 1	Deadline for incoming freshmen to apply to the University Honors Program
February 1	Deadline for incoming transfer students to apply for scholarships from the University Honors Program
February 15	Deadline for Honors Study Abroad Scholarship applications
March 1	Priority deadline for Current Student Applicants to begin fall 2020
April 1	Spring and summer 2020 graduates deadline for submission of final formatted copy of Thesis/Capstone
April 13	Early registration for fall 2020 begins
April 16	Deadline for Experiential Learning Project Reflection Survey for 2019-2020 Projects
April 24	Spring 2020 Honors Research Symposium
May 1	Deadline for spring and summer 2021 graduates to submit Thesis/Capstone Proposal
May 8	Honors Graduation Reception - Statesboro Campus (TBD)
May 8-9	Commencement Ceremonies (TBD)