

## **Faculty Guide to the Honors Program** **Effective Fall 2019**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Honors Program is to help students become inquisitive thinkers who possess the skills necessary to ask profound questions, to recognize and respect diverse perspectives, to solve complex problems, and to express their vision creatively and persuasively to others. Honors courses, therefore, emphasize inquiry, interdisciplinary problem solving, and the effective expression of ideas. The program culminates in the honors thesis, a year-long research, service, or creative project on a question or problem chosen by the student. Every graduate of the Honors Program will have thus demonstrated the ability to work independently in their chosen field.

### **Faculty roles**

The faculty at the university will primarily interact with the Honors Program in one of four ways – as advisors, instructors of honors courses, honors thesis advisors, or committee members.

- **Advisors:** As an academic advisor, please check with your students to see if they are honors students and, if so, help them to navigate the honors course requirements. Most students qualify for the core, so in degree programs without many electives, it is important to reserve core curriculum spaces in Degree Audit for honors courses. A description of the honors course requirements is below. If you have promising first-year advisees who are not in the Honors Program, please encourage them to apply to the Program in the Spring semester of their first year (applicants must have achieved a minimum GPA of 3.3 in the Fall).
- **Honors course instructors:** Each September, the Honors Program Director will put out a call for honors course proposals for the following academic year. The course proposal form can be found [here](#). Proposals are typically due in late November. The program has a need for sections of regular courses, special topics courses, and 1-credit honors thesis support courses. The demand for honors sections of upper-level courses in the major is also growing in some programs. Faculty may propose team-taught courses along with a faculty member in a different discipline; in such cases each faculty member will receive 2 teaching credits for a three-credit course. The benefits of teaching honors courses include:
  - Smaller class size. Honors courses are capped at 20 students (sometimes 19).
  - Motivated students.
  - Course development budget of \$650.
  - Course activity budget of \$500.

What makes a course 'honors' defies precise definition, but in general they differ from regular courses in a number of ways. Honors courses will regularly cover material in

greater depth, include more reading and writing, adopt a novel pedagogical approach, ask students to approach problems from multiple perspectives, and/or include more work on independent or collaborative projects. By the end of upper-level honors seminars, each student should have produced something tangible to take with them – a research paper, creative work, business plan, model, design, etc. Honors seminars ask students to do more than complete exams.

- Honors thesis advisors: Faculty serve as mentors for honors thesis projects. Honors students must choose their advisor by the end of their Junior year. Faculty will then mentor the project over the course of the senior year. Honors thesis advisors receive \$450 in compensation per thesis project. More information about the honors thesis process and the role of faculty mentors can be found [here](#).
- Honors Program Faculty Committee. The HPFC consists of 8 members drawn from all 5 colleges. Faculty are appointed to the committee by the Provost in consultation with the Honors Program Director for 2-year terms. The HPFC is responsible for setting program policies as well as reviewing proposals for honors courses and applications for admission to the program.

## **Honors Program Requirements**

Students must complete a minimum of 19 credit hours in honors-level coursework.

### Required courses

- HNRS 1112 (3 credits) “Seminar in Academic Inquiry and Writing”  
This honors version of ENGL 1112 will introduce students to the concept of academic inquiry and the practice of academic writing. Students will also receive their first introduction to the thesis process. Students who receive AP credit for ENGL 1112 do not need to take HNRS 1112, although they are strongly encouraged to do so.
- HNRS 4459 (1 credit) “Developing an Honors Thesis Proposal”  
In this course students will receive further instruction about the thesis process and produce a formal thesis proposal. This course is intended for juniors, but sophomores may enroll as well.
- XXXX 4593/HNRS 4593 (3 credits) “Honors Thesis”  
This is the course in which students will complete their thesis. Most students will register for this course in their final semester at the university, but some departments ask students to register for it earlier than that. Note that students must begin work on the thesis long before they register for this course, which functions like an Independent Study. Thesis projects that are disciplinary in nature will be listed in the major using the course number 4593; interdisciplinary thesis projects will use the course number HNRS 4593.

### Elective courses

In addition to the above, students must complete at least four honors courses of their choice, at least two of which must be 3000-level or higher. Students who complete HNRS 4457 and HNRS 4458 (along with the required HNRS 4459) may count the three-course sequence as 1 upper-level honors course. Students may take more than the required number of four courses if they wish.

### Upper-Level Seminars

Each semester a variety of honors seminars will be offered. Honors seminars may appear from any discipline and will sometimes be interdisciplinary in nature. Honors seminars are designed to help students develop the skills necessary to complete the honors thesis by:

- reinforcing writing and presentation skills;
- asking students to approach problems from multiple disciplinary perspectives;
- applying liberal arts perspectives to professional contexts or problems; and/or
- giving students the opportunity to work independently or collaboratively on projects. By the end of the course, each student should have produced something tangible to take with them – a research paper, creative work, business plan, model, design, etc. Honors seminars ask students to do more than complete exams.

### Thesis support courses

In addition to the required HNRS 4459, two optional courses are designed to help students build the skills necessary for the successful completion of the thesis.

- HNRS 4457 (1 credit) “Honors Thesis Presentation Skills”
- HNRS 4458 (1 credit) “Honors Thesis Writing Workshop”

Any student who completes HNRS 4457, 4458, and 4459 will receive credit for 1 upper-level honors course.

### Honors sections of core courses or major requirements

Some departments offer honors sections of core curriculum courses or, in a very few cases, courses in the major. These courses fulfill the same core requirement as the regular version of the course.

Honors sections of regular courses will typically

- cover material in greater depth;
- require more reading;
- include more writing;
- use a novel pedagogical approach; and/or
- include more work on independent projects.

After honors registration is complete, non-honors students with a GPA of 3.3 or higher may petition the Honors Program Director to be added to an honors section.

### Honors Contract Courses

Some students may find themselves unable to fulfill the honors course requirements due to late change in major, decision to graduate early, or other unforeseen circumstances. Students in such a situation may complete an honors contract to fulfill one (and only one) of their 4 elective honors courses. Students interested in this procedure should consult the *Honors Contract Guidelines* available on the Honors Program website.

## **Other requirements**

To remain in good standing in the Honors Program students must:

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.3.
- Attend a minimum of one honors thesis presentation each academic year.

## **Graduation requirements**

To graduate as an honors scholar a student must:

- Complete at least 19 credit hours of honors-level coursework as described above;
- Complete an honors thesis;
- Graduate with a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher;
- Maintain good standing in the program.

## **Benefits**

Students in the Honors Program enjoy several opportunities and privileges.

- Honors students are eligible to enroll in honors courses and to receive faculty guidance and supervision in the researching and writing of an honors thesis.
- Students completing the Honors Program and graduating from the University of New Haven receive acknowledgement of this status on their transcript.
- Honors students may participate in all honors co-curricular activities.
- Honors students may participate in the Honors Student Council and be elected to offices within it. The HSC organizes events throughout the year for both the honors and campus-wide communities. Students interested in getting involved should email [honorsstudentcouncil@newhaven.edu](mailto:honorsstudentcouncil@newhaven.edu).
- First-year honors students are eligible to live in the Honors Living Learning Community. It provides campus housing that includes additional opportunities for students to interact with fellow honors students and with faculty members within the Honors Program. Applications to live in the Honors LLC are coordinated by the office of the Dean of Students.
- Honors students in good standing register for courses after seniors but before juniors, sophomores, and first-year students. Honors students who are seniors will register with their class.
- Students accepted into the Honors Program are eligible for a \$1000 annual scholarship provided they are in good standing in the Honors Program.
- Hatfield Scholar Program. The John Hatfield Scholar Program was established in 2004 by an anonymous donor in honor of former Executive Vice President and Provost John D. Hatfield. Sophomores and Juniors who have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above are invited

to apply for the award. After reviewing the applications, the Honors Program names up to three current sophomore honors students and three current junior honors students to hold the designation as John Hatfield Scholars during their junior and senior years respectively. Hatfield scholars receive a \$2000 scholarship (adjusted for inflation) and a bronze medal at Commencement. While this is a one-year scholarship, an awardee who receives the award as a junior may reapply for the award for the senior year.

### **Admission**

A student may apply to join the Honors Program as an incoming first year-student or as a current student. Any current student with fewer than 60 credits and a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher may apply. The requirements for a student entering the Honors Program as a current student are the same except that a student who has already completed ENGL 1112 is not required to take HNRS 1112. Before applying, current students should consult with their academic advisor to discuss how the honors course requirements could be met.

### **Contact**

There are lots of ways to get more information about the program. Check out our internal [website](#) and our [Facebook](#) page. Send questions to [honors@newhaven.edu](mailto:honors@newhaven.edu).

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