
Faculty Brochure

College of Liberal Arts Honors Program

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I. OVERVIEW

1. What are the goals of the Honors Program?

Honors work in the College of Liberal Arts is designed to foster intellectual curiosity and to provide rich, diverse, and challenging experiences. It brings talented students together with professors in a variety of ways: by offering a broad range of Honors courses on a regular basis (including some Honors courses with limited enrollments), by offering extensive opportunities for Honors students to participate in individual projects with professors, and by providing a broad range of supplementary activities through the “Honors Experience.” The program is also devoted to preparing honors students for post-graduate educational opportunities and to improving their readiness for competition for national and international awards and fellowships. A vigorous Honors program is an asset to the university’s recruitment of outstanding students.

2. How are Honors faculty selected?

Honors faculty are chosen in a variety of ways. If you would like to teach an Honors course, please consult with your Department Head and/or Scheduling Deputy.

3. How are Honors courses funded and selected?

All Honors courses are funded and selected by the individual departments. If you wish to teach an Honors course, perhaps a special topics course, propose doing so through the appropriate channels in your department. **The Liberal Arts Honors office will assist with “marketing” the course to qualified students once the faculty member provides the office with a brief written course description of about one hundred words in time for registration (generally about October 1 and March 1).**

4. What are GPA and other requirements for entrance into the Honors Program?

The College of Liberal Arts Honors Program is a voluntary program. No special application is required. Students with no established university grade point average are expected to have SAT scores (verbal and math) of 1200 or higher, an ACT score of 26 or higher, or to be in the upper ten percent of their graduating classes. Other students must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0/4.0 to take an Honors course. Students register for Honors courses through their academic advisors.

5. What are the major benefits of the Honors Program for Honors students?

The Honors Program provides a host of benefits. Foremost, through Honors courses, it offers students a greater range of possibilities for enriched and independent work than is often available in regular courses. Through Honors-Only courses, students are provided, even during their first year, with opportunities to establish close relationships with professors and with challenging opportunities to engage with other talented students in small classes. Because of the special relationships established in these courses, Honors professors are frequently those to whom students later turn for recommendations for awards, internships, scholarships, and fellowships. Honors courses are specially designated on student transcripts, so that anyone reviewing the student’s record can see that the student pursued a challenging education.

The Honors Program offers students some unique opportunities: individualized counseling about graduate and professional schools, special counseling about fellowships, and the opportunity to enjoy special activities on and off campus throughout the academic year. Students interested in contributing further to the program may volunteer to help in the Honors Office and to serve on the Honors Council, the student group which advises the Director. Honors students are also eligible for Honors scholarships, merit awards available only to students within the Honors Program.

6. Is there a special course of study for Honors students?

No specific courses are required for graduation with Full College Honors. However, students are required to complete at least twenty-four hours of honors credit, and they must receive a B or better in each course for the credit to apply for graduation with honors. There are distribution requirements: a student must take honors work in at least three different departments, must take at least three courses for honors at the 400-level or higher, and must take four Honors courses outside of his or her major. They may satisfy these requirements while pursuing *any undergraduate major in the university*. (See the GOLD SHEET attached or at www.cla.purdue.edu/honors).

7. What special opportunities are provided for students by the Honors Program?

Every year the Honors Program sponsors several events in “The Honors Experience.” We arrange discounted tickets to Convocations programs and sponsor film showings, pizza parties, numerous trips to special museum showings and theater performances. We likewise host a wide range of meetings with local and visiting faculty members and guest speakers in various disciplines. The program provides informative meetings regarding special educational opportunities, graduate schools and fellowships. Each Spring we host the Honors Colloquium.

Many of these events are informal and are organized with relatively little advance notice or publicity. To be fully informed about these events, Honors students should make it a habit to drop by the Honors Office (1174 BRNG) from time to time and to consult the Honors Program website: www.cla.purdue.edu/honors.

8. What is the relationship between the Dean’s Scholar Program and the Honors Program?

These are two separate programs. Each year approximately 40 beginning students are selected to participate in the Dean’s Scholar Program. The scholars receive a stipend of \$1,000 during their first year of college while working with a faculty member on an independent project. Most of the scholars choose to take Honors courses, and they are regularly informed about Honors events and activities. However, the Honors Program is much larger (approximately 750 students participate in Honors each semester).

9. What is the relationship between the Honors Program and Departmental Honors Programs?

Requirements for College Honors and Departmental Honors are quite separate, and Departmental Honors are entirely governed by the individual Departments. Because courses apply to both programs, students may complete graduation requirements for both Departmental and College programs.

II. HONORS COURSES

10. There are four ways in which a student may receive honors credit for coursework:

- ◆ **Honors-Only** courses are those in which only Honors students are in the class.
- Honors-Option** indicates a course where some, but not all, of the students are taking the course for Honors credit. The Honors students meet with the regular section, but are required to do special work in order to fulfill the Honors option.
- Honors by Special Arrangement** allows Honors students to turn any course into an Honors course by entering into a special contract with the professor. Students should have taken either an Honors-Only or Honors-Option course in the past, and generally must have at least a 3.0/4.0 overall Grade Point Average. Special Arrangements are subject to the approval of the Director of the Honors Program.
- Honors through Independent Study**

11. What is the difference between an Honors-Option and Honors-Only course?

Honors-Only courses are typically small classes in which every student in the course is registered for honors credit. Every student in an Honors-Only course must meet the admission requirements of the Honors Program. Honors-Option courses are classes where most students are registered to complete the standard class requirements, but in which a small group of students is registered to complete the Honors-Option portion of the class requirements.

12. What are some guidelines for Honors-Option and Honors-Only courses?

Basic guidelines for these courses can be obtained from the Honors Office. Please contact the Honors Director: nairne@psych.purdue.edu. See also the Honors Program website for sample course descriptions: www.cla.purdue.edu/honors.

13. Can students receive Honors credit for a course if it is not officially offered as an Honors-Only or Honors-Option course?

Yes. The Honors Lounge 1175 BRNG) has a document for this purpose: HONORS BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT. This form enables a faculty member and student to create a contract by which any course can be converted to an Honors course. The form requires a description of the work to be done for Honors credit, and the course instructor must be a full-time faculty member for the contract to be valid. **Teaching assistants are not authorized to contract for Honors.** Once the contract is submitted to the Liberal Arts Honors Office and approved by the Director of Honors, the Office of the Registrar is informed that the course should appear as an Honors course on the student's academic record. **Special Arrangement requests must be submitted to the Honors Office by the eighth week of classes.**

14. How does Honors by Special Arrangement differ from a Directed Reading or a Directed Research Study Project?

Special Arrangements are usually made for Honors work within an existing course not currently being offered for Honors credit.

15. How do Honors requirements relate to other Purdue requirements?

A student can frequently use an Honors course to satisfy a CORE requirement or requirements for his or her major at the same time. Careful planning with the academic counselor and the Honors Office may make it possible to graduate with Full College Honors without having to take extra courses.

16. How do College Honors requirements relate to University Honors at commencement?

Purdue University recognizes outstanding scholastic achievement at commencement by awarding degrees "with distinction" and "with highest distinction." "The upper 10 percent of the graduates in each of the various Colleges receive degrees "with distinction," the upper three-tenths of those who qualify with distinction receive degrees with "highest distinction," regardless of the College from which they graduate. (Students receiving "highest distinction" are presented with gold and black cords for the commencement ceremony while those receiving "distinction" wear gold cords.)

In addition to having the achievement indicated on the permanent transcript, students graduating with Collegel or Departmental Honors are identified as such in the commencement program. The Liberal Arts Honors Office mails Honors certificates to all Honors graduates following commencement.

17. What are some compelling reasons for faculty to accept the extra work that goes along with offering Honors sections or Honors By Special Arrangement?

Honors faculty generally find it rewarding to work with Honors students. It is refreshing to teach talented, enthusiastic, highly self-motivated students. Faculty often express concern about the academic abilities of students being recruited by the university and find that the Honors Program is one way to attract bright students to our various Departments. Honors faculty are also frequently able to design special projects for their Honors students which permit the students to explore the content of their courses in a more challenging fashion. Some of these projects have been highly influential in determining future career interests. Often students enrolled in an honors course at the 100- or 200-level have enjoyed the relationship with the professor so much that they have changed majors to work further with the professor.

18. Must students have the instructor's permission to enroll in an Honors section or course, or does qualification for the Honors Program in general mean that the student is eligible for any Honors section (provided that prerequisites for the regular section are met)?

Academic advisors have access to the full academic records of all students and are primarily responsible for student registration. Students who meet the eligibility requirements can automatically register for any Honors section. In most cases faculty do not have access to student records and do not wish to see students individually for purposes of determining their eligibility. The Honors Office reviews class records periodically to make sure that students enrolled are properly qualified. Students who do not meet the eligibility requirements but wish to make a case for an exception need to contact the Honors Office (1174 BRNG) and make an appointment with the Director.

19. What expectations can Honors faculty have with respect to the writing abilities of Honors students?

This question has no easy answer. Although many Purdue students, including its Honors students, do not write as well as one might hope, the Honors Office stresses the importance of writing, especially for those who wish to pursue post-graduate and professional careers. Honors students are encouraged to enroll in courses with demanding writing requirements and to take advantage of every university resource to improve and polish their writing.

20. What if you wish to screen students above and beyond the GPA requirement?

Faculty can place additional restrictions (greater than Honors Program requirements) on their own course enrollments. You may, for example, wish to request that only majors be allowed in the Honors course or request that students with a higher GPA be given priority. The best way to control enrollment based on additional criteria is to require faculty approval. That process, however, requires the faculty member or a designee to interview students individually. Additional restrictions also often have the effect of turning students away, leading to low enrollments and, hence, to the possible cancellation of a class. **If you decide upon additional requirements, please alert the Honors Office immediately.** We will note the requirement in the list of courses prepared by the Honors Office.

Faculty may not, however, admit students with less than the 3.0 GPA to any Honors division without the approval of the Director of Honors. Since most faculty do not have access to academic records, students may need to show transcripts or progress reports for faculty approval to be granted. A good grade in a single class does not mean that the overall GPA meets Honors criteria.

21. What if an Honors student is not doing Honors work?

Students currently have eight weeks into the semester to drop or add a course. If a faculty member's assessment of a student's work at that time is not positive, it is appropriate to request the student to drop from the Honors option to the regular section of the course or to drop the class entirely if the course is Honors

Only. **Faculty should feel no obligation to evaluate Honors students positively if their work fails to meet expected standards.**

At the same time, faculty and students both benefit when expectations are outlined clearly and early in the semester. **Problems occur when the student and faculty member do not discuss expectations until after the deadline to drop a course has passed.**

22. What do current and past Honors students regard as their best experiences in Honors courses?

Honors students consistently give Honors-Only courses the highest marks. In a student survey taken recently, over half of the respondents asked for more Honors-Only classes. In particular, they like the ways in which these classes encourage them to interact and to collaborate with other Honors students. They also enjoy learning from a faculty member who is interested in a more intense dialogue with students than that available in many regular classes.

Honors-Option courses are regarded as particularly successful when the students enrolled for the Honors segment meet and work with the professor. Additional time and attention from the faculty are valued more than additional work, although many students also enjoy the alternative assignments (frequently on more sophisticated material) which professors often arrange for them.

23. What should faculty members avoid in designing an Honors course?

Classes in which the student is simply expected to complete extra work without benefit of additional faculty interaction often seem to produce student dissatisfaction. Similarly, Honors courses in which expectations are not clearly defined early in the semester frequently frustrate students.

III. SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES

24. How are events and opportunities publicized for the Honors students?

Students can learn of Honors activities in many ways. The Honors Lounge (1175 BRNG) has several bulletin boards for posting forthcoming events and opportunities for Honors students, and students are encouraged to drop by the office frequently for up-to-date information. The Honors Office publishes an **Honors Newsletter** periodically which is mailed to every member of the Honors Program. Students receive frequent mailings and emails listing forthcoming events, and flyers announcing special meetings are distributed across campus. Announcements of events are sent on a regular basis to professors of current Honors courses to announce to their classes. Even so, many opportunities come to our attention on short notice, making it impossible to notify all interested students by mail, so Honors students are always advised to check on future activities in the Honors Office and their email.

25. Are there special Honors scholarships?

Yes! The Liberal Arts Honors Program annually awards approximately \$12,000 in scholarships to students in the Honors Program. Application deadlines are typically in February (see attached information on scholarship requirements), and final selections are made by a faculty committee.

26. What is the Honors Colloquium?

The Honors Colloquium is an annual event during which Honors students present papers, posters or projects completed for Honors credit. The event takes place early spring semester and runs for an entire afternoon. Honors faculty are encouraged to recommend outstanding students and papers to the Director for consideration for presentation at the event. Faculty are also invited to attend the event and encouraged to bring students with them.

The larger goals of the Colloquium are to provide further public recognition for outstanding Honors students and to offer them an opportunity to present their work in a professional forum. The event displays the variety and quality of Honors work to the university at large, and offers models of exceptional achievement to younger students in the program.

27. How are students and professors notified about the Honors Colloquium?

Early in the Spring semester, all faculty who have taught Honors courses over the previous two years are notified of the forthcoming event by a letter from the Honors Office, which also encourages them to recommend student work for consideration.

Honors students are notified in several ways. Each newsletter provides information about the event. Special flyers and email are also sent out each Spring to every student in the program, notifying them about the event and encouraging them to submit work for consideration.

28. What is the mechanism for submitting students' work for the Honors Colloquium?

Students may submit work to be considered for the Colloquium at any time at the Honors Office (1174 BRNG). They may submit multiple papers, posters and projects for consideration, as long as all work submitted has been completed for an Honors course during **the past two years**. Since submissions will not be returned, students should be sure to keep a copy. Professors may nominate students or particular papers for the Honors Colloquium by writing or phoning the Honors Office on their own. The Honors Office will then contact the students recommended and encourage them to submit their work. All submissions are evaluated by a faculty committee. Approximately a dozen or so papers and projects are characteristically selected for a presentation.

29. How is the Honors Colloquium publicized?

The event is publicized in many ways. Flyers are widely distributed throughout the campus, and the event is announced in the **Journal and Courier** and the **Exponent** as well as on the electronic bulletin board in the Memorial Mall. Notices are sent to every Department in the School to be posted, and all faculty who have taught Honors over the past two years receive letters and flyers about the event.

30. Can a student be in Honors and also participate in the Study Abroad programs?

Absolutely! The faculty Honors Committee has approved new policies that enable Honors students to receive Honors credit for the experience of studying abroad for one full year. Many students arrange to complete additional Honors work before going abroad so that they do not have to add additional semesters to their plan of study in order to graduate with Full School Honors. However, students hoping to acquire Honors credit for work done abroad need to complete the necessary arrangements before going abroad. Such arrangements are possible. in the majority of cases, although on occasion they need the official approval of a Department at Purdue. Honors students are encouraged to study abroad and to plan ahead for that experience.

IV. FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT HONORS

31. Not all of my top students are in the Honors Program. Why is this so?

Unlike many large American universities, Purdue does not link Distinction at graduation with participation in School Honors programs. Hence a student at Purdue can graduate with Highest Distinction without participating in an Honors program. Some students elect to do so, often because they are worried that work in an Honors program may lower their GPA.

Other factors are also at play. Students select their course work in collaboration with their academic advisors. Every effort is made to inform qualified students about the Honors Program and to encourage

advisors to discuss Honors as an option, yet some students do not receive the appropriate information. Transfer students and students who begin at Purdue in other academic divisions often have difficulty obtaining the necessary information. The Honors Office has recently initiated independent mailings to all Liberal Arts majors who qualify for Honors to encourage their participation.

We encourage faculty to recruit Honors students in the classroom. Students typically respond favorably when faculty extend a personal invitation to join an Honors class. Often students fail to realize the many advantages and unusual opportunities available through participation in the Honors program.

32. What is the history of the Honors Program at Purdue?

The current program was discussed and designed by faculty committees in the late 1970s. The first record of a student graduating with Honors from the School of Liberal Arts (then the School of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education) is in December 1982. Since then the Program has grown extensively. Approximately fifty students a year now graduate with Full School Honors, and several hundred take three or more Honors courses during their time at Purdue. Since 1988 a number of students have also graduated from other schools while simultaneously obtaining Honors designation on the official transcript and an Honors certificate from the School of Liberal Arts.

33. How may I get answers to other questions about the Honors Program?

The Honors Office (1174 BRNG) is generally open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. when school is in session. Students and faculty having questions are invited to drop in and visit with the staff and volunteers at any time. Our phone number is **(765) 496-3235**. If no one is available, please leave a message. Your call will be returned as early as possible.

For further information, please write or call:

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