

HONORS PROGRAM

The Honors Program is the academic program of distinction at Benedictine College. Sponsored by the Sheridan Center for Classical Studies, the Honors Program is one expression of the College's heritage as an "Heir to the 1500 years of Benedictine dedication to learning."

The Honors Program seeks to introduce exceptionally talented and motivated students (up to 40 each year) to the great works of Western civilization through seminars, which delve into the Great Books and through coursework, which studies the place of science, art, and story in culture. At the same time, the Program pushes students to explore cutting-edge developments in their fields through student research that culminates in a Final Project during the student's senior year, and through Honors-level coursework within their disciplines. Scholars in good standing with the Program are eligible for a \$2,000 stipend in support of their Final Project once that project is approved by the Honors Committee. The Final Project must be proposed to the Honors Committee during a Scholar's junior year.

The Honors Program provides an academically enriching experience through intensive seminar classes and discussion of great texts. To that end, Honors courses are generally limited to 16 students.

Honors Scholars receive the Honors Cord to wear at commencement, and are given specific recognition during the commencement ceremonies.

Program Outcomes

The main outcome Scholars should expect of the Honors Program is personal development: greater knowledge, a greater love for learning, and a set of skills that will serve them well in graduate school and in their unfolding professional careers. This development is pursued both inside the classroom and beyond in the following ways:

1. Students will understand the integration of different fields of knowledge through the lens of Christian humanism.
2. Students will learn about the Western tradition of learning and beauty long associated with the Benedictine tradition of education.
3. Students will foster the academic skills of close reading (through classic or primary texts) and constructive engagement in dialogue with opposing viewpoints (through seminar discussion).
4. Students will practice mature discernment of, and preparation for, future vocation and career.

In short, the program aspires to create graduates who will "transform culture in America" by transforming the environments in which they find themselves.

Acceptance into the Program

Typically, prospective students complete an application for admittance to the program during the year prior to their matriculation at the College. To be considered for the Honors Program, students must have a minimum 3.75 high school GPA and at least a 29 ACT (or equivalent). These applications are considered by the Honors Committee, which may decide to admit, waitlist, or deny applicants. In the event that a given cohort falls below 40 students, the Program may fill these openings by considering applications from transfer students or from exceptional students already enrolled in the College.

Once admitted to the program, students enroll into a zero-credit "Honors Participation" course (e.g., HONR-SMST1 Honors Program Participation

1, HONR-SMST2 Honors Program Participation 2, etc.). In order to pass this zero-credit course and progress to the next semester and to maintain good standing in the program, students must do the following:

- attend an average of 75% of required Honors events;
- maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0;
- maintain appropriate moral and academic conduct. Honors Scholars are expected to maintain the strictest interpretation of the Academic Misconduct code contained in this Catalogue.

The Program's co-chairs review each Scholar's performance at semester's end and assign a grade of "pass" or "no pass" for each HONR-SMST. Students who fail to maintain these standards may be placed on probation for a semester if, in the judgment of the Program's co-chairs, their academic performance, attendance record, or conduct warrants. If adequate improvement is not evident after a semester of probation, the student may be expelled from the Program at the discretion of the Honors Committee.

Students may voluntarily withdraw from the Honors Program at any time. However, students who have spent their \$2,000 stipend are required either to complete and present their senior project to the College, or to work with the Honors Committee to arrange repayment of the stipend.

Honors Curriculum

Honors Scholars are educated from a distinct curriculum that builds upon Benedictine College's general education requirements and draws from its liberal arts heritage. The curriculum is divided into an Honors core, additional Honors courses, and an Honors capstone course. The Honors experience culminates in the Final Project.

The Honors Program is committed to ensuring that students from all majors can participate in the program. To that end, an Honors Scholar may petition the Honors Committee to have up to six credits of program requirements waived if it can be demonstrated that, due to the demands of the Scholar's major(s), it would be impossible to complete those requirements by his or her intended date of graduation.

The Core Honors Curriculum

Honors Scholars take part in distinctive courses that fulfill specific components of Benedictine College's core requirements.

Freshmen Scholars Retreat

Honors Scholars are introduced to academic life at Benedictine College through a week-long academic scholars retreat prior to the beginning of classes their freshman year. They will also receive an introduction to the academic rigor of the program, as well as to many of the faculty who will teach in it.

HONR-1030 Honors English Research Seminar.

All Honors Scholars are required to complete this course in place of English Composition. This course is an advanced expository writing course with a strong emphasis on research writing.

THEO-2000 Christian Moral Life.

A special section of Christian Moral Life, denoted as THEO-2000-HON, will be taken by Honors Scholars.

PHIL-2310 Philosophy of Nature.

Honors Scholars take this course to fulfill their philosophy core course. Honors students must also complete PHIL-2010 Logic in preparation for Philosophy of Nature, with Logic satisfying one of their two required Philosophical Inquiry foundation courses.

Courses in Western Civilization

Honors Scholars complete three courses on themes within Western civilization, exploring how the genius of the Christian worldview has found expression in different works, debates, or scholarly advances through history.

HONR-2200 Story and Western Civilization [Repeatable].

This course proposes a relationship between civilization and story in the West, starting with the philosophical foundation of aesthetics, its developments in the liberal arts tradition, and the ways in which major Western storytelling accomplishments have helped form, shape, and nurture civilization itself. The course focuses on exploring that relationship by means of a close reading of a selection of related yet varied texts by two major authors chosen by the professor (which may vary by semester). Must be in the Honors Program.

HONR-2400 Science and Western Civilization. (Or HONR-2450: Science and Faith)

This course proposes a relationship between civilization and science in the West, beginning with the 'scientific revolutions' of the early modern period-Galileo and Copernicus-and continuing through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Newton, Darwin) through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (e.g., Heisenberg). Special attention is paid throughout the course to the development of the scientific method and to the structure of revolutions in scientific thought. The course proceeds by engaging in Socratic discussion of Great Books from the history of Western science.

Alternatively, Honors Scholars may take HONR-2450 Science and Faith.

This course brings the Church's ancient faith into dialogue with the modern sciences, beholding them as distinct and mutually enriching paths to truth. The Magisterium has consistently emphasized that such a conversation facilitates a broader understanding in which religion and science are mutually purified and enabled to thrive. Toward this end, students will explore a variety of sources essential to engaging science in the light of faith.

HONR-2600 Beauty and Western Civilization.

This course proposes a relationship between civilization and art in the West, from the first emergence of the arts in pre-historic times through the origins of the West and towards contemporary time. It also explores how Western artists formed, shaped, and nurtured civilization itself, emphasizing the relationship between illusion and truth, principles of beauty, and virtue. The course explores that relationship by means of a survey of some form(s) of artistic expression, such as architecture, painting, music, or sculpture chosen by the professor (which may vary by semester).

Additional Honors Courses

Honors Scholars will complete at least 12 hours of further coursework. These twelve hours may be completed by any combination of the three following options:

The Great Books Courses. Any course from the Great Books sequence may count towards the completion of this requirement.

Honors-Approved Courses. Each semester, the Honors Program arranges special courses for Honors Scholars. These special courses, capped at 16 students, are taught in a seminar style, are writing intensive, and focus on great works within a given discipline. Typically, they fulfill at least one general education requirement and often fulfill requirements for various majors. Each semester, the Honors Scholars will be asked to suggest topics for these courses. Previous Honors-approved courses have included topics as diverse as psychology, the History of Science, History of Jazz, and political science.

The Professional Track. Students majoring in professional fields whose requirements to graduate would otherwise prohibit them from completing the Honors Program may contact the Program's co-chairs to make arrangements to fulfill the "Additional Honors Courses" requirement through coursework within their major. The co-chairs will meet with the student and the chair of the relevant department to select four courses in which the student will complete additional work. The additional work in these four classes should cohere into a particular competency within the student's chosen field and should mark the student as exceptional in that field.

The Final Project

Honors Scholars complete a year-long project, which is taken as the non-credit bearing course HONR-4950 Senior Honors Capstone.

Typically, planning for this project should begin during a Scholar's sophomore year, and the project should be presented to the College in a Scholar's senior year, at a time and venue selected for this purpose by the Honors Committee. Education students are asked to complete their projects prior to student teaching. The purpose of this project is to bring the educational goals of a liberal arts formation beyond the classroom, preparing the students for a future as an active participant in the life of the mind. The final project should be developed in conjunction with a faculty mentor and it should reflect the highest standards of undergraduate research in a given discipline. At an early stage, the project must be presented to and approved by the Honors Committee. After approval, the Scholar may use the \$2,000 stipend provided by the Program for the project. In approving projects, the Honors Committee will give special consideration as to whether proposals would prepare Scholars for their professional goals following graduation.

The Final Project will be graded with either a "pass" or "no pass." Those who fail to pass the Final Project will not graduate from the Honors Program.

Capstone Requirement

HONR-4950 Senior Honors Capstone.

The capstone course is the culmination of the Honors Program. The course will focus on integrating and synthesizing the Honors experiences in which the students have participated through an exploration of works related to a specific topic or theme chosen each year.