

The Honors College

Office of the Dean: 16 Library

713-743-9010

Dean: Ted L. Estess, Ph.D., Syracuse University

Associate Dean: William Monroe, Ph.D., The University of Chicago

Originally created in 1959, the University Honors Program became The Honors College at the University of Houston in 1993. Created to serve the intellectual needs of gifted students in over 100 fields of study, the Honors College provides the careful guidance, flexibility, and personal instruction that nurture individual excellence.

Benefits of Honors College membership include priority registration for courses, competitive scholarships, special academic advising by faculty, opportunities for individual study, and the chance to live in the Honors residence halls.

The curriculum of the Honors College is both flexible and varied. The College draws on the talents of the finest faculty members across the university to teach smaller honors sections of courses in various disciplines. These courses take the place of regular required courses and fulfill the university's baccalaureate degree requirements. One key sequence of courses, "The Human Situation," is team-taught by the core Honors faculty and designed to ensure that Honors students are introduced to the philosophical, literary, and historical foundations of Western civilization, from classical Greece to modern America.

Students make significant contributions to the life of the Honors College. The Student Governing Board conducts evaluations of all honors courses each semester and maintains the results in the Honors Center for students to consult when selecting courses and instructors. Members of the Student Governing Board also sit on the Honors Council, where they interview prospective instructors and help formulate college policy.

In addition to their participation in the College's academic affairs, students help plan and attend special events throughout the school year. Designed especially for beginning students, the fall Honors

Retreat is the first event of each academic year.

Students new to the College join upper-level advisors and Honors faculty at a wooded retreat center for two days of recreation and interaction. Other extracurricular activities supported by the College during the year include productions by the Houston Grand Opera, performances by the Houston Symphony, plays at the renowned Alley Theatre and Stages Repertory Theatre, parties in the Honors Center and at the university swimming pool, recitals, dramatic readings, and lectures by resident and visiting scholars.

Admission

The Honors College welcomes applications from students who are entering the university as freshmen, have been enrolled for a semester or two, or are transferring from other colleges or universities. To apply for admission to the college, students must complete a short application form, provide copies of standardized test scores (SAT or ACT) and transcripts, and submit a sample of their writing.

Admission to the Honors College is competitive. Generally, continuing UH students and transfer students should have at least a 3.25 cumulative GPA, and first-time-in-college students should be in the top 10% of their secondary-school class and have scored 1200 or better on the SAT, or 27 or better on the ACT. These scores are not "minimum admission requirements," however, and all students interested in the Honors College are encouraged to apply.

Graduation with Honors

Students who fulfill Honors College course requirements and complete a senior honors thesis graduate with University Honors and Honors in their academic major, the highest distinction that an undergraduate can earn at the University of Houston. Students who fulfill honors course requirements but elect not to undertake a senior honors thesis graduate with Membership in the Honors College. Students who earn these academic distinctions receive special recognition at commencement ceremonies and on their transcripts.

Academic Requirements

Honors students are expected to take at least one honors course each semester and to maintain a 3.25 minimum cumulative grade point average. The Honors College does not grant degrees; baccalaureate degrees are granted by the college of the student's major.

Honors College and Core Curriculum Requirements

The Honors College curriculum has been designed to coordinate with university-wide core curriculum requirements. Honors students, therefore, do not take more course work, but they are asked to fulfill some of their university core curriculum requirements through honors courses. Students following the guidelines below will fulfill Honors College and core curriculum requirements; students should consult the college of their chosen major for additional requirements.

1. Communication and Humanities Requirements
 - a. Complete the six-hour course, "The Human Situation I: Antiquity," three hours of which count toward the core requirement in Communication, and three of which count toward the Humanities core requirement.
 - b. Complete the four-hour sequel, "The Human Situation II: Modernity." The lecture portion of this course can count toward the university requirement in Communication if necessary.
2. American Studies Requirement
 - a. Complete six hours of courses that satisfy the state mandated requirement in American History, including at least three hours in an honors section (HIST 1377H, HIST 1378H, or an approved 3000- or 4000-level Honors course in American History).
 - b. Complete six hours of courses that satisfy the state-mandated requirement in Political Science by successfully completing POLS 1336H and three hours of advanced Political Science credit from the subfields of public administration, public law, and American politics or from POLS 3331, 3349, 4361, and 4366.
3. Natural Sciences and Mathematics Requirement
 - a. Complete six hours of courses that satisfy the Natural Sciences core requirement, plus at least one hour of laboratory with these courses.
 - b. Complete six hours of courses that satisfy the Mathematics and the Mathematics/Reasoning core requirement. Honors students must demonstrate a proficiency in mathematics at the "elementary functions" level or higher. Elementary functions courses include MATH 1314, 1330 (recommended only for students desiring a foundation course to prepare for additional coursework in mathematics), and 2311. This proficiency may be demonstrated by testing or by course work.
4. Social Sciences Requirement
Complete six hours of courses that satisfy the Social Sciences core requirement. At least three hours must be in an honors section, and at least

three hours must be in a course designated "writing intensive."

5. Foreign Language Requirement

Complete six hours of courses at the 2000 level (or above) in one foreign language, either modern or classical, with a 3.00 grade point average, or demonstrate an equivalent proficiency.

Note:

Students are expected to fulfill the foreign language requirement to the extent possible without adding hours to the degree plan in their major. The requirement is designed to complement the course requirement of particular degree plans and to recognize a student's previous experience with languages other than English. Honors students should be aware that competence in a second language is increasingly important in personal and professional life.

6. Advanced Honors Course Requirement

- a. Complete three hours in an approved Honors Colloquium at the 3000- or 4000-level.
- b. Students wishing to graduate with "University Honors and Honors in [major]" must complete a six-hour senior honors thesis.

Senior Honors Thesis

For many Honors students, the senior honors thesis represents the culmination of a bachelor's degree. It is the final step toward graduation with University Honors and Honors in [major]. The honors thesis provides an excellent opportunity for the mature student, working under the direction of a member of the faculty in the chosen field of study, to apply skills and knowledge acquired in the first three years of college toward the completion of an independent scholarly or creative project. During the process, students deepen the work they have done and apply the skills and knowledge they have accumulated. Moreover, they are expected to make full use of the University's resources (especially the guidance and criticism of faculty members).

Students wishing to undertake a senior honors thesis need not be members of the Honors College, but they should have a 3.25 cumulative grade point average as well as a 3.50 grade point average in the field of the thesis or project. Interested students should pick up the "Guidelines for the Senior Thesis" from the Honors College office.

Honors College Faculty

David Bao, John Bernard, Susan Collins, Ted L. Estess (dean), Cynthia Freeland, Everette Gardner, Andrew Hass, Christine LaVeaux, Ross Lence, Traci Levy, Stuart Long, William Monroe, Michael Moore, Iain Morrisson, David Shattuck, Robert Zaretsky