

HONORS PROGRAM

The Saint Joseph's University Honors Program seeks to produce well-educated, articulate citizens who exemplify the highest standards of academic, professional and personal achievement. The program offers an enriched General Education curriculum that broadens cultural interests, integrates knowledge, sharpens writing skills, and encourages student involvement in the learning process.

The curriculum is composed of intellectually rigorous courses that satisfy both General Education and major requirements. Many Honors courses are interdisciplinary team-taught courses in the arts, sciences, social sciences, and business.

Honors Recognition

Successful completion of the requirements for University Honors is noted on the student's academic transcript.

Recognition of completion of the College Honors thesis or Honors capstone course sequence is noted on the student's academic transcript at the course level.

Learning Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: Students will pursue a program of study of interdisciplinary courses and courses offered in traditional disciplines.

Objective 1.1: Explore issues in a multiplicity of disciplines and integrate knowledge from those disciplines.

Objective 1.2: Demonstrate analytic and critical skills in examining literary, artistic, historical, philosophical, theological, sociological, political, scientific, legal, linguistic, or business texts.

Goal 2: Students will engage in rigorous thought, critical analysis, and synthesis in the context of problem solving.

Objective 2.1: Engage in independent scholarly or creative research, analysis, and synthesis that prompt them to invent written arguments that reflect the acquisition of knowledge, insights, and skills.

Objective 2.2: Demonstrate confidence and clarity in speaking in classroom presentation, discussion, and debate that demand data gathering, analysis, and critical reflection.

Objective 2.3: Address topical, social, scientific, cultural, or business issues either inside or outside the classroom, and propose original, creative, and enduring solutions to real world issues and problems.

Objective 2.4: Engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation to promote intellectual self-confidence or spiritual humility.

Goal 3: Students will produce a scholarly or creative project or capstone experience under the guidance of members of the Honors faculty.

Objective 3.1: Engage in independent scholarly or creative research, analysis, and synthesis that prompt them to invent written arguments that reflect the acquisition of knowledge, insights, and skills.

Objective 3.2: Explore aesthetic dimensions in creative works – stories, poems, plays, paintings, sculpture, architecture, film, and

music – and learn the style, perspective, and techniques of a major artist or movement.

Goal 4: Students will create an intellectual environment through scholarly, creative, social, cultural, or business activities.

Objective 4.1: Engage in independent scholarly or creative research, analysis, and synthesis that prompt them to invent written arguments that reflect the acquisition of knowledge, insights, and skills.

Objective 4.2: Explore aesthetic dimensions in creative works – stories, poems, plays, paintings, sculpture, architecture, film, and music – and learn the style, perspective, and techniques of a major artist or movement.

Objective 4.3: Address topical, social, scientific, cultural, or business issues either inside or outside the classroom, and propose original, creative, and enduring solutions to real world issues and problems.

University Honors Requirements Membership in the University Honors Program

Membership in the University Honors Program is by invitation of the Honors Director prior to the student's first semester at the University.

University Honors Program

Graduation with University Honors requires successful completion of a minimum of eight Honors courses as part of the regular undergraduate degree requirements and a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.5. Two of those courses will comprise a College Honors thesis or Honors capstone sequence.

Requirements:

Successful completion of University Honors requires at least eight Honors courses. Students typically schedule Honors coursework in each of their eight semesters, although adjustments may be made to this schedule on the advice of the Honors Director.

The following further restrictions apply to the minimum eight-course requirement:

- At least two courses must be team-taught interdisciplinary Honors courses.
- Two courses must comprise the mandatory College Honors senior thesis or Honors capstone sequence.
- Students will select their four remaining Honors courses from those offered and approved by the Honors Program. These may include Honors team-taught courses.

To remain in the Honors program, students are expected to maintain a 3.50 GPA, which is the minimum required for graduation with University Honors. Students whose GPA is below 3.50 are subject to removal from the Honors Program. Honors students should also, on average, take one Honors course per Fall and Spring semester after entry into the Honors Program. Falling behind by more than Honors one course may lead to removal from the program.

Students are assigned an advisor from the department in which they declare a major. They should, however, consult with the Honors Director

and Associate Director as needed to ensure that their course schedules are arranged in such a way as to integrate the fulfillment of university requirements with those of the Honors Program.

College Honors Requirements

College Honors

College Honors is a two-semester independent reading/research thesis or capstone sequence that is typically completed in the senior year, under the supervision of a faculty mentor. All Honors students have the opportunity to complete a College Honors thesis, which is administered by the Honors Program in coordination with faculty mentors. Individual departments and interdisciplinary programs may choose to offer students the alternative of a capstone sequence. University Honors students need only complete one College Honors thesis or capstone sequence, and may choose the major (or sometimes minor) department or program in which to complete that sequence. University Honors students should consult the College Honors Guidelines document on Canvas to determine the College Honors requirements/options in their major department or program.

Whether Honors thesis or Honors capstone sequence, College Honors will satisfy two of the eight Honors course requirements for completion of University Honors. In order to be eligible for College Honors, University Honors Program students must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.5 in all course work at the end of their junior year and must be on track for the completion of their eight required Honors courses for University Honors.

College Honors may be offered to non-Honors students who have a minimum 3.5 GPA. This will be at the discretion of the Honors Program and the department in which the Honors thesis or Honors capstone sequence will be conducted. College Honors is an optional experience for non-Honors students.

College Honors Capstone Overview and Procedures

The College Honors capstone sequence comprises two courses, often but not always taken in consecutive semesters, that are already part of a student's own major (or sometimes minor) program and are "upgraded" with additional work to become Honors capstones. Honors capstones are not always actual capstones in a major, as not every major has a formal capstone or capstone sequence. Honors capstones are instead determined by the department or program in consultation with the Honors Program, and many department or programs choose not to offer a capstone option. If there is no Honors capstone option offered by a particular department or program, a thesis is the only available path to College Honors in that particular department or program. Current Honors students should consult the College Honors Guidelines document on Canvas to determine their options. In some circumstances, an Honors Oxford Tutorial course may be able to substitute for a second capstone in programs with a capstone sequence that does not have a specifically designated second capstone course. Please consult the Honors Director for more on this option.

Students seeking to upgrade a course to become an Honors capstone should first consult with the instructor of their Honors capstone course option (as listed in the College Honors Guidelines document) in order to confirm that instructor's willingness to upgrade the course. If the instructor is willing, the student should register for the course when they register for other classes. In the semester prior to taking that course, or at the very latest by the end of the first week of class, each student should

submit an upgrade approval form (<https://forms.sju.edu/advsupport/view.php?id=43377>), including a statement of additional work to be upgraded, and evidence of the mentor's willingness to upgrade the course. The successful completion of two such "upgraded" courses will complete College Honors.

College Honors Thesis Overview

Although not every program offers a College Honors capstone option, every Honors student in good standing is eligible to complete a College Honors thesis. The College Honors thesis should be original in its conception and analysis. This may mean the discovery of new knowledge, the reinterpretation of standard methods, theories and assumptions, or the formulation of data produced from fresh investigations. The College Honors thesis should be the result of serious research, original thinking and a clear understanding of the context in which this research is conducted. Students submitting a proposal for a College Honors thesis should provide evidence of background knowledge and requisite skills before they begin their work. Interdisciplinary projects involving the student's minor as well as major are encouraged, but these require the approval of the Honors Director and the Department Chairs of both the student's major and minor.

The College Honors thesis may take many forms: traditional narrative/analysis, in-depth study of specific texts or themes, empirical research, practical applications, or a creative/inventive endeavor. Projects involving empirical research should develop a coherent hypothesis, and test it professionally and systematically. Length may vary according to each subject; however, it is expected that the College Honors thesis will be substantial in scope, length, and bibliography, and that it will be documented in accordance with the standards of the relevant discipline and include an abstract, title-page, table of contents, introduction, notes and bibliography. It should generally be modeled after the work that would be done for a master's thesis in the same field or discipline (understanding that interdisciplinary projects may borrow elements from multiple fields or disciplines); projects designed solely, primarily, or substantially for publication in a campus student journal or newspaper are thus ineligible for the College Honors thesis. The final result will be shared in an oral presentation (the thesis "defense"), as well as in a written thesis, and should place the specific topic in a broader scholarly context by demonstrating familiarity with the authoritative literature and research on the subject.

College Honors Thesis Procedures and Deadlines

Below are the procedures for students who are planning to pursue the College Honors thesis. Current Honors students may find the timeline and deadlines provided in the College Honors Guidelines document available on Canvas.

By the end of their junior year, students should confirm with the Director of the Honors Program their intention to pursue the College Honors thesis. They will be expected to outline a general area of research and to name their primary mentor for the project. Students who plan to begin thesis work in the fall semester will be expected to remain in touch with their mentors throughout the summer months as they conduct preliminary research into their topics.

First semester of College Honors Thesis

By the end of the first week of class, each student must submit an approval form (<https://forms.sju.edu/advsupport/view.php?id=43377>), including a proposal outlining the project's general objectives, a

bibliography, and a schedule of meetings to be held during the semester, as well as evidence of the mentor's willingness to supervise the thesis. (For examples of successful recent Honors thesis proposals, students should visit the Honors Canvas course page.) After approval, the registrar will be asked to create the first-semester Honors thesis course. After the creation of this course, the mentor should submit one of two initial Research Assessment forms: one for research (<https://forms.gle/F4JJD67YbBsBUS9h8/>) projects, or another for creative (<https://forms.gle/bNMC1TjAdQwiCM8a9/>) projects. During this first semester, each candidate, in consultation with their mentor, should also select a second reader for the thesis. The second reader may be from any department, and should have a compatible interest in the thesis topic. The second reader will serve to offer advice, criticism and suggestions throughout the process of the College Honors thesis. During this first semester, the Honors Director will also assign a member of the Honors Program Committee as a third reader of the thesis. These three faculty together form a thesis committee. The candidate must schedule a meeting with this committee that should take place before the last day of classes to present a clear progress report of the work completed and an outline of what lies ahead. This meeting is for the committee to learn about the project's current and planned state, to ask questions, and to give targeted, constructive feedback; it not open to the public or to other students. Finally, the mentor should submit a second mid-year research (<https://forms.gle/GG6Sv7mq8u4XMRRf6/>) or mid-year creative (<https://forms.gle/WnsZBwqUmug6zWqF7/>) Research Assessment form.

Second Semester of College Honors Thesis

The second semester of the College Honors Thesis culminates in an oral presentation (the thesis "defense") and formal submission of the written Honors thesis. By the end of the first week of class, each student must submit another approval form (<https://forms.sju.edu/advsupport/view.php?id=43377>), including an updated proposal and new evidence of the mentor's willingness to continue supervising the thesis. After this form is approved, the registrar will create the second-semester Honors thesis course. Prior to midterm of the second semester, the candidate must present a first draft of the entire project to the mentor for critical review. In the final month of the second semester of thesis work - a week or more before the oral presentation discussed below - the candidate must submit a final draft to their mentor and the members of the thesis committee, including the second reader and the appointed representative from the Honors Program Committee. The candidate and mentor may also invite additional faculty members from related fields to the oral presentation, provided that those faculty members will also read the thesis. This presentation should occur by the last day of classes. Like the Fall presentation, this event is closed to the public. However, students are encouraged to present their work in other venues, including public lectures, conferences, and publications. As soon as possible, the date, time and location of this presentation should be posted in shared documents made available by the Honors directors. After the presentation, the mentor will complete a final research (<https://forms.gle/6vhZaA1hx5EEemZKJA/>) or final creative (<https://forms.gle/FqJu1uoMig3pRdFS6/>) online Research Assessment form. The thesis committee should also sign a thesis cover sheet (available on Canvas). An electronic copy of the thesis, with signed cover sheet, should be sent in .pdf format to the Honors administrative assistant and both of the Honors Program directors no later than the conclusion of the examination period. This material must be filed with the Honors directors before recognition can be given at graduation.