

# Honors Student Handbook

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# The Honors Scholars Program

## The University of North Carolina Wilmington

*“A university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning.” – Benjamin Disraeli*

The goal of the Honors Scholars Program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington is to provide academically talented students with a variety of innovative and unique educational experiences, both in and out of the classroom. We challenge students to perform at their highest levels and act as positive role models for the entire campus community. To this end, the Honors Scholars Program offers exciting academic and cultural opportunities for students to encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and independent work skills. Honors Scholars also have the opportunity to interact with the faculty to develop close working and social relationships.

### I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND REQUIREMENTS

The complete list of requirements for graduation with honors is described in the UNCW 2009-2010 University Catalogue. In general, students may take all four years of honors work, or join the program in their last two years to do "departmental honors" only. In order to graduate with "university honors", students must complete the requirements for general honors in their first two years and go on to complete departmental honors in their majors.

#### HONORS COURSEWORK:

Honors Basic Studies: In the freshman and sophomore years, the Honors Scholars Program offers various sections of honors basic studies courses to assist students in working toward their Basic Studies requirements. *Students entering the program as freshmen must take 12 hours (about 4 courses) of honors basic studies sections.* The specific honors sections of basic studies course change every semester to meet a wide array of requirements in various subjects. Please refer to the online schedule on the honors website for the specific courses offered in each semester.

Honors Interdisciplinary & Enrichment Seminars: A major focus of the honors program is the seminar. Seminars cut across traditional boundaries of academic disciplines offering students the opportunity to explore issues in depth. In general, honors seminars focus on a specific topic of inquiry. They involve students in both in-class and out-of-class activities that enrich their learning experiences. Students take a section of the honors seminar in each of their first four semesters—for example, HON 110 in first semester freshman year; HON 210 in first semester sophomore year, and HON 120 in spring semester of both freshman and sophomore years. HON 120 and HON 210 sections are offered both fall and spring semesters to facilitate student class scheduling. These seminars are regular credit courses and count toward graduation and in your grade point average. *The three-hour Honors Seminars (HON 110 and HON 210) count for basic studies credit in "Category G--Interdisciplinary Studies".*

### Course Descriptions of Honors Seminars:

**HON 110 Freshman Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar (3)** Prerequisite: Formal enrollment in the Honors Program or consent of the Director. Introduces the honors student to the college experience through direct involvement in research, service and leadership activities. The nature of knowledge; the concept of university; how a university education changes individuals and affects the future. Includes field experiences, collaborative learning and independent scholarship. Emphasis on discussion; required student projects.

**HON 120 Honors Enrichment Seminar (1)** Prerequisite: Formal enrollment in the Honors Program or consent of the Director. Students study a specialty topic and participate in a variety of related enrichment activities on the campus and in the community. By direct contact, students have the opportunity to broaden their educational experience in both traditional and contemporary forums. Discussion and brief written assignments. May be under different subtitles, for a maximum of three semester hours.

**HON 210 Topical Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar (3)** Prerequisite: Formal enrollment in the Honors Program or consent of the director. An in-depth investigation of a special topic using the approaches of several disciplines; may be team-taught. Topics and approaches vary. Examples are "Brain and Behavior;" "The Geography of Food;" "Nature: Literature and Science;" "Issues in Coastal Management." May be repeated under different subtitles.

### **DEPARTMENTAL HONORS: *A look toward the future...*:**

Departmental Honors at UNCW provides the opportunity for superior students at the junior-senior level to engage in an advanced individual scholarly project in a specialized area. Departmental Honors work involves independent study under the supervision of a faculty member in the student's major field. This independent study should be outstanding scholarly work appropriate to the academic standards of the student's major discipline, and should be completed in two 3-credit hour semesters or three 2-credit hour semesters. The results of the honors work are summarized in a paper and presented orally before an examining committee. Generally, students do their work in departmental honors in their last two semesters. However, a student may begin in the junior year. Honors Scholars are encouraged to begin planning their Departmental Honors work as soon as possible.

The specific project and its content and methods are the choice of the faculty supervisor and student. Research projects are appropriate in all disciplines. Artistic performances or exhibitions, or research applications related to internships or service projects may also be appropriate. The critical feature is that the honors project reflects an in-depth scholarly endeavor relevant to the academic discipline. In all cases, the project should be grounded in a critical review of the literature and place the scholarly question or hypothesis in that academic context. ***In addition, an oral exam and a written record, such as a research paper or project description, are always required.***

Students may apply for departmental honors when they have earned at least **74 semester hours** credit with a quality point average of **3.2 or better** on *all college work attempted (including transfer hours)*. At least **30 semester hours** of work with a 3.2 or better quality point average must have been completed at UNCW. Academic departments or schools may require a higher grade point average for eligibility for Departmental Honors in their discipline. ***Consult the booklet, "A Guide to Departmental Honors for Students and Faculty," for more information.***

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HONORS COURSES AND REQUIREMENTS

### *⌘ What are honors classes like?*

All honors classes are small (generally no more than 20 students) allowing for greater discussion and interaction. The courses are designed to allow students to take responsibility for their own learning, to work collaboratively, and to encourage experiential learning. Some classes may move faster or go into more depth than regular courses. All are intended to foster creative and critical thinking skills. Active participation and shared inquiry is encouraged. The instructors selected for honors courses reflect the primary mission of UNCW--excellence in undergraduate teaching. Many have won awards for their teaching accomplishments.

*"Spoon feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon."*

*--E. M. Forster*

### *⌘ Are honors courses harder than regular university courses?*

The answer will vary with each course. Honors courses are not intended to be harder than regular courses, but rather are expected to challenge students in appropriate ways. You are more likely to be expected to practice critical thinking skills, engage in abstraction and synthesis, and work independently. Perhaps the instructor will go into more depth or use more primary sources. We advise the instructors that honors courses should be designed to challenge the Honors Scholars and that the students can be counted on to actively participate in class each day. For these reasons, they may be viewed as harder than "regular" courses by non-honors students. However, many students note that they enjoy this class format more than lecture style classes!

### *⌘ Will my grades drop as a result of taking honors courses?*

Experience indicates that the answer is no. Actually, many students do their best work in honors courses. Your grades, of course, depend on your own motivation, study habits and interest.

### *⌘ Is there a different grading scale in honors courses?*

There is no predetermined "curve" in honors classes (or any classes). Theoretically it is possible for all students in an honors course to earn a grade of "A". Honors courses count the

same as all other courses in figuring a student's grade point average (GPA). That is, they are not weighted in figuring the GPA.

*⌘ Do I have to do all four years of the program?*

In order to graduate with University Honors, a student must complete the required honors sections and seminars in the first two years and departmental honors in the major. Or, a student may enter the program as a junior/senior and graduate with departmental honors only.

*⌘ How do I get ready for departmental honors?*

You should start to think about departmental honors early in your college career, and begin by talking with faculty members about their work and your ideas. Learn from other students about the entry process, talk to your honors advisor, and get to know the faculty in your major. Although the project is usually undertaken in the senior year, you should begin to prepare well before that. In order to begin preparation, many students do an independent study (491) course to investigate a topic or perhaps work closely with a professor in a lab or research setting. Watch for workshops on "Preparing for Departmental Honors" each semester.

*⌘ What do I have to do to remain in the program?*

To maintain good standing in honors, a student must earn a GPA of at least 3.0 at the completion of 27 hours (or 2 semesters) and reach a GPA of 3.2 or higher at the completion of 58 hours and thereafter. It is to a student's advantage to complete all the general honors sections and seminars requirements in the first two years, but a student may use later years to finish honors requirements if necessary. In the first year, all required cultural and service activities must be completed.

*⌘ How is my honors work formally recognized?*

All honors courses and seminars are indicated as "honors" on your transcript. When students complete honors seminars and honors basis studies sections, they are recognized the following fall with a certificate and a "UNCW Honors Scholars" pin. Students who complete the departmental honors requirements graduate "with honors in the major" which is noted on the transcript, diploma and in the graduation program. They also receive a medallion which they wear to graduation.

## **II. FACULTY MENTORS**

Faculty mentors in a variety of academic disciplines participate in teaching honors courses. Others are available for discussion and assistance on special projects and issues. On occasion, the Honors Program has also been able to match students to mentors in the community in fields such as medicine, business, veterinary medicine, or civic leadership. Please see the Director for information about mentors.

### **III. ADVISING**

Academic advising for Honors Scholars is the responsibility of the Director and Associate Director of the Honors Program and three designated faculty honors advisors, Drs. Kim Sawrey, Diane Dodd and Vibeke Olson. The honors advisors are trained as University College advisors and are familiar with the requirements for the Honors Program as well as those of basic studies and the various majors.

Drs. Bruce, Atwill, Dodd, Olson and Sawrey will set up individual appointments with each of you to assist in your course selection and program planning, as well as to address any other questions about your academic progress. Students normally meet with their advisors at least once a semester to discuss their academic progress and arrange their schedules for the following term. Students are welcome to make appointments with their advisors at any time they have questions or issues to discuss. Once you officially declare your major –typically sometime in the second year--you will be assigned an advisor in your major department. Be sure to let her or him know you're an honors student. The Honors Program will continue to follow your progress.

### **IV. REGISTRATION**

A major benefit of the Honors Program is priority registration. Basically, Honors Scholars pre-register for classes at the beginning of the regular pre-registration period for each semester, permitting them greater choice and availability of courses. They usually get the courses and instructors they want, when they want them. We use the SEANET registration system, with honors students having a special code which allows them access to honors courses. Your honors advisors will assist you in planning your academic career, selecting courses, and working through the registration process.

### **V. SCHOLARSHIPS/ WORK ASSISTANCE**

Each year, the Honors Program offers opportunities for outstanding Honors Scholars to earn merit-based scholarships on a competitive basis. At most, these may be equivalent to in-state tuition and fees, and are awarded one year at a time. Formal requirements and procedures may be obtained from the Director.

The Honors office distributes information and administers applications for several national scholarships. These are very competitive, and offer large awards to students in specific fields, usually for their junior/senior years and for graduate study. Students interested in competing for these need to begin early and set their goals high. A list of the scholarships handled by our office is on the CSURF website.

Many Honors students are also interested in work study and work assist positions on campus. In many cases, students are able to work in faculty laboratories, the Learning Center, or other locations on campus. These positions can add to your experience and knowledge. You can contact the Honors Program, Career Services, or the academic department offices for more information.

#### **IV. RESIDENCE LIFE--The Honors House and other Honors Housing**

A university education occurs not only in classes, but in every aspect of the academic community. One's living situation can add significantly to the learning process by developing skills for personal growth, social interaction, and leadership. For this reason, honors students who live on campus have the opportunity to reside together, *and this is mandated for first year students as space allows.*

All first year honors housing is in the Tri-House area. Most first year honors students live in Honors House. There are study rooms and lounges on each floor, a kitchenette on the upper floor, a classroom and a 24-hour computer lab on the ground floor of the building. The honors lab has several computers with a library of software and access to the Internet for your use. Each bedroom is also equipped with computer hook-ups. There is wireless access throughout.

We also have honors housing in Cornerstone and International House. These residence halls offer the same amenities as Honors House.

Honors Resident Assistants reside in the Honors House, and along with the Honors Mentors, conduct special programs and assist in the adjustment of students to university life. The Tri-House area is a vibrant community, and honors students who live in the honors section of Cornerstone or International House will have key-card access to Honors House as well.

Many of second year students live in the Honors wing of Seahawk Crossing. This residence hall is located immediately behind International House, and is part of the honors living learning community as well.

#### **VII. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Experiences outside of class add significantly to a student's education and development. Honors Scholars are encouraged to take advantage of as many campus and community activities as possible to enrich their learning. Co-curricular activities are often incorporated into the classroom experience. Virtually every day in the academic calendar is filled with campus events--and these are an enriching component of your university education. The Wilmington community also has ample cultural and intellectual activities, often free or at little expense to students. One example is the *Cinematique* film series, co-sponsored by the Thalian Hall for the Performing Arts and our local public radio station, WHQR. Each month, they host screenings of two or three notable films at the historic Thalian Hall downtown. We offer honors students' vouchers for free tickets. We also offer honors students' vouchers to other community events as well. You may pick up all vouchers and special offers in the Honors Office.

***Remember to check the Honors website for updated listings of co-curricular events.***

### **CULTURAL AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

In the freshman year, Honors Scholars are required to participate in a minimum of five different co-curricular and cultural activities (3 in the fall and 2 in the spring) as well as service hours to remain in good standing in Honors. This will be discussed in your HON 110 seminar. Students who join Honors in the spring are required to participate in at least two cultural activities.

In the first year, we expect that you will:

- 1) Join at least one campus group and become an active member by the end of the year. Examples are: varsity or intra-mural sports, student government, campus newspaper, campus voluntary organization, etc.
- 2) Attend campus events each semester. Examples are lectures, concerts, plays; and
- 3) Attend off-campus cultural events each semester, such as concerts, *Cinematique* film series, public lectures at art gallery or aquarium.

*The Honors Program has received some limited funding to assist in the purchase of tickets for required events.*

### **SERVICE:**

In the fall semester of freshman year, Honors Scholars are required to participate in service activities. This will be discussed in your Honors 110 seminar. We hope that you will continue in the spring semester.

*Opportunities At UNCW:* Honors students are fortunate in their talent and ability to learn, and in the special opportunities they receive on our campus. As a way to share this good fortune with the wider university community, Honors Scholars are encouraged to spend at least one evening a month tutoring other UNCW students, or in some equivalent service activity. Tutoring can occur in the Honors residence or the Learning Center in Westside Hall.

*Off-campus:* Honors Scholars are encouraged to volunteer their services for a charitable or service group in the Wilmington-New Hanover County community. Some students may accomplish this in conjunction with a project for the interdisciplinary seminar, or with the Honors Scholars Association. The Center for Leadership Education and Service has lists of agencies requesting volunteers, and can even provide transportation to the sites. One-time "service plunges" are easy and fun ways to make a difference.

## **VIII. STUDENT RESEARCH, TRAVEL, AND CONFERENCES**

As an honors student, you will have many opportunities to work in close association with faculty members in research. Often this involves presenting the results at professional meetings or symposia. Through CSURF (The Center for the Support of Undergraduate Research and Fellowship) the Honors Program has funds to assist with student travel and registration at professional meetings. In addition, students are often invited to attend honors conferences sponsored by the National Collegiate Honors Council, the Southern Regional Honors Council, and the North Carolina Honors Association.

2009 North Carolina Honors Association Meeting  
North Carolina State University

44<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Collegiate Honors Council Conference  
October 28<sup>th</sup>- November 1 2009  
Washington, D.C.

Southern Regional Honors Council Conference  
TBA

## **IX. FIELD TRIPS AND STUDY ABROAD**

Learning can be most meaningful when it is first-hand. For this reason, the Honors Scholars Program will include many chances to participate in the world around us through study off campus, group field trips and study abroad. Each fall, a lyceum experience is planned to offer scholars an opportunity for travel and learning off campus. This year, we will go to Washington, D.C. during Fall Break. The cost of this trip is heavily subsidized by the university. Students will be asked to pay a small amount to help cover expenses. Information about signing up will be available in your freshman seminars.

**Honors Fall Lyceum 2009**  
**October 3-6**  
**Washington, D.C**

All honors students are encouraged to take advantage of the many study abroad opportunities at UNCW. There are lots of ways to participate in study abroad- during spring break, a semester, a summer, or a year abroad. For example, during spring breaks, HON 120 students have participated in week-long trips to Prague, Scotland, Paris, and Ecuador as part of honors seminars! We call these Honors International Splashes! In Spring 2010, we are featuring travel to Spain and Portugal!

Also, there is an honors study abroad semester to the University of Swansea in Wales during the Spring semester. The International Programs Office at UNCW organizes many exciting study abroad experiences for semester and summer. All are welcome to participate in these programs.

### **SPRING 2010 HONORS SEMESTER IN WALES**

UNCW will once again be hosting an honors study abroad semester at the University of Swansea in Wales for Spring 2010. Students can earn a full semester's credit, including honors seminar and basic studies course credit, while living and studying at the Swansea campus situated on the beautiful Welsh coast. Students from any major are welcome. Dr. Jim Herstine, Health & Applied Human Sciences, will be the Faculty Director for this semester.

## **X. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:**

In addition to a wide variety of programs and events open to all UNCW students, several very special opportunities are available to Honors Scholars.

*Student-faculty:* Many students say that social interaction with faculty is among the most satisfying aspects of their college experience. As Honors Scholars, you will have the opportunity to meet and socialize with faculty in many situations. Accompany a faculty member to lunch; come by and have tea and conversation in the Honors Office; be invited to faculty members' houses for small get-togethers; join with faculty at receptions and special events.

*Student-student:* The Honors Scholars Association is planning several activities for the fall semester. They will contact you with more information on these events. The Outdoor Discovery Center also offers off-campus challenge experiences such as ropes courses, kayak trips, and camping trips. In addition, the Honors Mentor Program serves to incorporate new students as stronger members in the Honors and University communities. An Honors Mentor will be matched with each HON 110 class and will be available to you for assistance.

## **XI. HONORS SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION:**

The community of honors scholars has a distinctive place not just in the classroom, but in its own student organization, the Honors Scholars Association. This is a student-run group officially recognized by the student government association at UNCW, with its own constitution and elected officers. The HSA organizes activities, service projects, and social events. This year's HSA Officers are:

**Heather Page, President**  
**Mark Schiavone, Vice President**  
**Shirley Parker, Secretary**  
**Logan Robles, Treasurer**  
**Kelley Salvesen, Public Relations Coordinator**  
**Garrison Libby, Webmaster Coordinator**  
You can email them for more information.

## **XII. FRESHMAN HONOR SOCIETY**

Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society is a national college honor society for freshmen. Its goal is to encourage and reward high scholastic achievement. Students are invited to join when at the end of their first academic year, they have a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or better with no grade lower than "C" on thirty hours or more course work at UNCW. Dr. Lee Johnston in political science is the faculty sponsor.

Looking ahead- in your junior and senior years, you may receive an invitation to Phi Kappa Phi. This is similar to Phi Beta Kappa.

### **XIII. HONORS ADVISORY COUNCILS**

We have an active Student Honors Advisory Council (SHAC) that meets to discuss issues with the directors. We will continue this group this year and include representation from each class year, as well as the officers of HSA. Please see Dr. Bruce or Dr. Atwill if you are interested in learning more about this group.

There is also a Faculty Honors Council whose purpose is to advise the directors on matters related to the Honors Program curriculum and policies.

### **XIV. REFERENCE SOURCES**

For information concerning academic programs, offerings, and regulations, please see *University of North Carolina Wilmington Undergraduate Catalogue 2009-2010* edition.

For information about student life, rules for conduct and other official matters, see the *UNCW Student Handbook and Code of Student Life*, 2009-2010 edition.

For information about the requirements and procedures for completing departmental honors, please consult *A Guide to Departmental Honors for Students and Faculty*, available from the Honors Office.

Visit the Honors Scholars Program on the Web at <http://www.uncw.edu/honors/>

## ***TO GRADUATE WITH UNIVERSITY HONORS***

- (1)** Complete at least 12 credit hours of basic studies courses honors sections.\* You may take more than 12 hours.
- (2)** Complete 6 credits of "Interdisciplinary Honors Seminars" (HON 110 and HON 210)\*. You may take an additional HON 210 seminar to substitute for 3 hours of honors basic studies requirements.
- (3)** Complete 2 credits of "Honors Enrichment Seminar" (HON 120)\* You may take an additional HON 120 as an elective hour toward graduation.
- (4)** Maintain academic eligibility:  
At the completion of 27 credit-hours at UNCW, an overall grade point average of 3.00 or higher in all coursework is required. An overall grade point average of 3.20 or higher must be established by the completion of 58 credit-hours and maintained thereafter.
- (5)** Earn a minimum of a "C" (2.00) in all honors work ("B" (3.00) in 499 and honors contract courses) and have a 3.00 overall GPA in all honors curriculum coursework. If a student earns a grade below a "C" in an honors basic studies course, the grade may count toward that student's basic studies requirements but not toward his or her honors requirements. If that student wishes to complete the honors requirements for University Honors, he or she must take an additional honors basic studies course and earn no lower than a "C." Students earning below a "C" in HON 210 or HON 120 must take additional seminars, respectively, and earn no lower than a "C."
- (6)** Complete requirements for Departmental Honors  
The requirements for Departmental Honors are determined by the academic departments, and always include a 6-credit senior honors project.

***\*Note: students entering as sophomores or second semester freshmen complete HON 210 (3 cr.), two credit hours of HON 120, and at least 9 hours of honors basic studies***