

# DEPARTMENTAL HONORS HANDBOOK

## *Eligibility and Requirements*

Certain majors on campus offer students the ability to complete a Departmental Honors Program. Students applying for admission to the Departmental Honors are usually sophomores who express an interest to their faculty advisor or department chair. To be eligible for Departmental Honors, you must have a minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA and 3.5 GPA in your major, or the consent of your faculty advisor. If your major does not offer Departmental Honors and you are a member of the Honors College, you can complete the program through the Honors College. The following departments currently offer Departmental Honors Programs:

Art  
Biological Sciences  
Computer & Information Sciences  
Economics  
Electronic Media and Film  
English  
History  
Kinesiology  
Mass Communications  
Mathematics  
Modern Languages  
Philosophy  
Physics, Astronomy & Geosciences  
Political Science  
Psychology  
Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice

Once accepted into a Departmental Honors Program, you must complete the requirements as listed in the catalog for your major. The program typically requires you to complete 6-9 credits in directed readings and Honors Thesis. Your thesis culminates in a final presentation before a three-member committee and your thesis advisor and is open to the public. The appropriate designation appears on your diploma and final transcript.

If your major does not offer Departmental Honors and you are a member of the Honors College, you may complete an Honors Thesis in one of five ways:

- The **traditional thesis**, which is particularly well suited for students who plan to attend graduate school.
- The **community service project**, which is based on the student's interest in social issues. A journal and formal paper with a research focus are required.

- The ***supervised internship***, which is a guided practical experience with an applied focus. It may also fulfill a departmentally required internship. A formal integrative paper is required.
- The ***teaching project***, which is especially appropriate for students who are interested in education or the teaching/learning process. The project must be at the collegiate level and includes a formal paper, with a discussion of pedagogical issues.
- The ***education abroad project*** may include research, teaching, community service, or an internship completed while a student participates in an approved education abroad program. Results are presented in a formal paper.

You are required to choose one option and design a project that is equivalent to 6-9 semester credits at the upper division level. Each thesis or project involves working with a supervising faculty member, completing a significant piece of writing, and scheduling an oral presentation to the Thesis Committee. The oral presentation is open to the public.

***Examples of Acceptable Projects for Honors College Students:***

*Teaching project:* Design a questionnaire to determine the level of anxiety about computer-based technology, prepare a lesson to deliver to the class, serve as lab instructor for computer assignments and analyze the results of a post-class questionnaire.

*Education abroad project:* A sociology major interested in social movements spends a year abroad in France. While registered for a full academic load, she designs and administers a questionnaire in French, which identifies the primary reasons for participation in the student protests of 1998. Her research requires her to have personal contact with French students and conduct all interviews in French. She then analyzes and examines demographic variables of the students involved as well as their policy positions. She then compares this French protest movement to the one that occurred 30 years earlier.

These Honors Thesis/Project requirements provide you with flexibility in designing your final capstone experience and in relating it to your interests and career goals. Obviously, this thesis/project will require considerable effort. However, the abilities developed during the process of completing this thesis: researching, creating, analyzing and evaluating data, and writing and speaking about the knowledge and conclusions are invaluable in the work you will do after graduation and in your activities as a responsible member of our society.

## **Departmental Honors Policies and Procedures**

### ***Choosing a Topic and an Advisor***

You need to consider decisions concerning the selection of your advisor and a thesis topic carefully. Because of the preparation required to register for the thesis project, you will need to come to the process with a good idea of your topic. Your previous course work and other experiences, academic and otherwise, will help you choose a topic area, which you are interested in studying in greater depth. Past academic activities, such as short papers and readings from a variety of courses, may help you to determine a starting point. Building on previous work by using both the knowledge and interest you have already developed is recommended and encouraged. You may begin with several possible topics in mind or with several possible approaches to one large topic area.

When you have some ideas, you should begin to look for an advisor. An advisor might be an instructor you have had in a previous course or someone who has supervised you in an internship. Your thesis advisor must be qualified in your topic area and should have a significant interest in the field. The advisor must also be willing to work closely with you.

### ***Applying for Departmental Honors***

A Departmental Honors Application Form and an attached Honors Thesis Proposal must be delivered to the Honors College Office, Cook Library, room 524, prior to enrolling in your Honors Thesis Course in your major or in the Honors College (HONR 499). An application form is attached to the end of this handbook. A Proposal for the Honors Project should be attached to the application. This proposal should include a title page bearing the name of both the author and the thesis advisor.

Most Honors Thesis Proposals are five to six pages, plus a bibliography. They represent the product of a semester of carefully supervised analysis, reading, and research in the Honors directed Reading/Study Course. Your advisor should be certain that your proposal is feasible in aim and appropriate to your ability and time constraints.

### ***Honors Thesis Guidelines***

Your Honors Thesis should follow the standard format including a title page, approval sheet, and consecutively numbered pages through the notes and bibliography. Your thesis should follow the stylistic conventions of your discipline. Below are samples of a title page and an approval sheet.

***Sample Title Page:***

The Relationship Between Constitutional Interpretation and Public Policy:  
How the Federalists and Antifederalists Became  
Modern Conservatives and Liberals

by

James Smith

An Honors Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Towson University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the B.A. with Honors

June 2002

**Sample Approval Sheet:**

**Honors Thesis Approval Sheet**

**James Smith**

**B.A., May 2002**

**Department:** Political Science

**Specialization:** Law and Political Theory

**Required Work in Specialization:**

1. Advanced Course or Seminar  
Political Science 486, Seminar: Law and Justice  
Professor: Jack Fruchtman, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science  
Date: Spring 2001
2. Honors Directed Reading:  
Political Science 498, Directed Readings in Political Science  
Professor: Jack Fruchtman, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science  
Date: Fall 2001
3. Honors Thesis:  
Political Science 499, Honors Thesis  
Professor: Jack Fruchtman, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science  
Date: Spring 2001
4. Honors Thesis Colloquium: Thesis Approved

Committee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_

Department Representative

\_\_\_\_\_

Department Representative

\_\_\_\_\_

Visiting Examiner

Date: May 21, 2002

### ***Helping with Research***

A list of university librarians by specialty is located at the end of the Handbook on the following page. These librarians can help to familiarize you with the available resources to undertake your research.

### ***Your Thesis Committee***

Your thesis committee is composed of your thesis advisor, two departmental representatives and a visiting examiner. The members should be chosen in consultation with your thesis advisor. Members of the committee are responsible for reading and responding to your thesis and evaluating your work, the public presentation, and the oral examination. At the end of your colloquium, the members must sign the 2 required copies of your thesis, which will be kept in the Special Collections of Cook Library.

### ***Honors Colloquium***

The Honors Colloquium is a public defense of your thesis project. The audience is composed of interested students, invited guests, your thesis advisor and the thesis committee members. Your advisor will introduce you to the audience. You will then give a brief, approximately 10-20 minute, synopsis of your work, followed by an oral examination by your thesis committee. The typical oral examination lasts approximately one hour.

Projects emphasizing the creative or performing arts, rather than traditional academic endeavors, must also include a public presentation. Obviously the nature of the project will dictate the type of presentation. This event should, however, build in time for your thesis committee to ask questions or make comments.

### ***Final Requirement***

An UNBOUND signed original and an additional signed copy of your thesis on WHITE PAPER must be delivered to the Honors College Office in Cook Library, room 524, by the last day of the final exam period. If you are not able to meet this deadline, you should withdraw from the thesis course before the official date to withdraw from classes. You will then be given the grade of W. If you do not withdraw and do not complete the requirements, you will receive an incomplete (I) so that you can complete the project during the following semester.

**List of Librarians by Specialization**

<b><i>Subject</i></b>	<b><i>Library Faculty</i></b>	<b><i>Contact Information</i></b>
Accounting, Business, Finance, Marketing, Management	Christine Black	X42395 ciblack@towson.edu CK314
Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Interdisciplinary Studies, Sociology, Social Sciences, Women's Studies	Kathryn Sullivan	X2395 ksullivan@towson.edu CK314
Art, Music, Theater	Lisa Woznicki	X42550 lwoznicki@towson.edu CK329
Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Nursing, Psychology, Physics	Debra Berlanstein	X42242 dberlanstein@towson.edu CK310
Communication Sciences and Disorders, Occupational Therapy	Sarah Crest	X44725 screst@towson.edu CK317
Communication Studies, Electronic Media & Film, Mass Communication	Mary Ranadive	X45327 mranadive@towson.edu CK329
Computer and Information Sciences, Environmental Planning, Geography, Mathematics	Carl Olson	X43267 colson@towson.edu CK329
Cultural Studies, Dance, Health Science	Marcella Fultz	X42995 mfultz@towson.edu CK329
Economics, History, Philosophy & Religion,	Eleanore Hofstetter	X42450 ehofstetter@towson.edu CK400A
Education	Ada Woods	X45326 awoods@towson.edu CK311
English, Modern Languages	Mary Volland	X42618 mvolland@towson.edu CK309
Gerontology, International Studies, Law and American Civilization, Metropolitan Studies, Political Science	Sara Nixon	X46075 sara@towson.edu CK329
Kinesiology, English	Lisa Sweeney	X45325 ssweeney@towson.edu CK310

**Application for Departmental Honors/Honors Thesis Program**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Completed Credit Hours at TU: \_\_\_\_\_

GPA in Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Cumulative GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Date of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Major at Towson: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee members:

\_\_\_\_\_

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Attach a copy of your proposal and deliver to the Honors College Office:

The Honors College  
Towson University  
8000 York Road  
Cook Library, Room 524  
Towson, MD 21252  
410-704-4677

Signature of Thesis Faculty Advisor:  
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