

# University Honors Program

*Director:* Rosemary J. Cleary (Social and Behavioral Sciences)

*Honors Faculty:* Bjelic (Criminology), Briggs (Interdisciplinary Studies), Briggs (Computer Science), Caffentzis (Philosophy), Conway (Philosophy), Gavin (Philosophy), Harrison (Geography-Anthropology), Lualdi (History), Moore (Biology), Sanford (Environmental Science), Schmidt (Political Science), Uzzi (Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures),

The Honors Program is designed for the undergraduate who enjoys challenging coursework in a supportive learning community. Students who enter the program work closely with faculty in seminar-style courses (colloquia) with an average of 15 students per class. Drawing from many disciplines, these courses seek to tap and develop the curiosity, creativity, and motivation of every student. All Honors Program work stresses independent learning, original thinking, and the development of skills in research, writing, and oral expression. Full- or part-time students within any major are eligible and there is no residential requirement, allowing for a dynamic mix of traditional and nontraditional age students.

Honors students also complete a thesis. The student-selected thesis project is advised by a committee of the student's choosing and is the final requirement in the program to graduate with General University Honors.

The Honors Program is more than a series of courses. Students are part of a creative social and intellectual community centered at the Honors House, 102 Bedford Street, on the Portland campus. The Honors House contains three seminar rooms, a student lounge, and the Program's faculty and administrative offices. Students come to the Honors House to attend classes, study, meet with professors, and socialize. The intimacy of this learning community creates a unique sense of support and camaraderie. Speakers, seminars, discussion panels, artistic presentations, and social events are sponsored by the Program throughout the academic year, bringing together faculty, students and staff in a friendly and democratic atmosphere.

Honors Program work is rewarding for highly motivated students, regardless of their academic interests or career plans. It emphasizes the development of independent thinking and communication skills, and as such, it provides an excellent background for students preparing for graduate school or the job market. These skills are also put to use within the Program, as students are encouraged to participate fully in all decisions affecting the Program through the Honors Student Organization and student representatives to the Honors Faculty Council. Most important, the Program develops a love of inquiry and education that stems from, and goes well beyond, the acquisition of specific knowledge.

## ***Honors Program Requirements***

To graduate with General University Honors, a student must successfully complete the following sequence:

HON 101 Wisdom Stories from Antiquity (4 credits)

HON 102 Medieval Mindscape (4 credits)

**or**

HON 103 Human Origins and the Human Body (4 credits)

HON 201K Sciences of the Human Body (4 credits)

HON 202 Progress, Process, or Permanence (4 credits)

**or**

HON 203 Environment, Population, Behavior, and Global Change (4 credits)

HON 301W Cultural Practices and Ambiguous Identities (3 credits)

HON 311W Thesis I (Workshop) (4 credits)

HON 312 Thesis II (4 credits)

Honors students may also choose from the following elective Honors courses:

HON 100C Thinking and Writing in Honors (4 credits)

HON 105D Calculating and Reasoning with Symbolic Representations (4 credits)

HON 321 Honors Directed Research (1-3 credits)

HON 331 Honors Directed Study (1-3 credits)

Courses taken in the Honors Program may not be taken on a pass-fail basis.

## **Core Curriculum Requirements**

Successful completion of the Honors Colloquia (HON 101, HON 102 or HON 103, HON 201K, and HON 202 or HON 203) will satisfy the following Core curriculum requirements: Skills of Analysis/Philosophy (E), History-centered Fine Arts (G), Humanities Literature (H), Other Times/Other Cultures (I), and Natural Sciences (K). Students who do not successfully complete all the Honors Colloquia should consult with the director concerning the use of Honors Colloquia to satisfy Core curriculum requirements. Additionally, completion of HON 100, Thinking and Writing in Honors, will satisfy the English Composition (Area C) of the Core requirements; HON 103 will satisfy half of the Social Science (Area J) requirement; HON 105 will satisfy the Quantitative Reasoning (Area D); HON 201 will satisfy the Natural Sciences (Area K) requirement. The Writing Intensive (W) requirement can be satisfied by completion of either HON 102, HON 103, HON 301, or HON 311.

## **Admission to the Honors Program**

*Standards* The Honors Program is designed for highly motivated, intellectually curious students who would benefit from working closely with faculty in a challenging and enriched course of study, and admission to the Honors Program is based on criteria designed to identify such students. Many factors are considered: the applicant's overall academic record; SAT and other test scores; extracurricular activities; recommendations; work experience; and, in some cases, an application essay. The Honors Program seeks a diverse group of students to provide a stimulating environment for all participants.

*Application Procedures and Deadlines* Students newly admitted to USM who either graduate in the top 10% of their high school class, have a minimum 3.25 GPA, and/or have a combined 1050SAT/ 22ACT—as well as qualified students who are not recent high school graduates—will be offered admission into the Honors Program. Other students interested in applying for admission to the Program should write or call University Honors Program, University of Southern Maine, 96 Falmouth St., P.O. Box 9300, Portland, Maine 04104-9300, (207) 780-4330, or visit our Web site at [www.usm.maine.edu/honors](http://www.usm.maine.edu/honors), for an Honors application form. To be considered for September admission, a completed application should be received at the Honors House by March 1. Later applications will be considered on a space-available basis. Applicants are notified of admissions decisions as soon as they are made or, generally, by May 1.

## **Retention in the Honors Program**

To remain in the Honors Program, a student must maintain a minimum class standing within the University as well as within Honors courses. These two standards of progress, Overall Class Standing and Successful Completion of Honors Courses, are in addition to those set forth by the University.

*Overall Class Standing* To continue to remain in the Honors Program, students must maintain an overall grade point average according to the number of USM credits accomplished. The minimum GPA and credit hours are as follows:

<i>Earned Credit Hours</i>	<i>For Good Standing</i>
1-22	2.5
23-52	3.0
53-82	3.25
83+	3.4

These standards take effect when students begin the Honors Program. Students beginning the program with lower GPAs than required for good standing will be required to meet with the program director in their first semester of study to develop an academic plan to achieve good standing.

*Successful Completion of Honors Courses* In addition to maintaining an overall minimum grade point average, Honors Program students must successfully complete Honors courses. These minimum grades serve as additional prerequisites for any subsequent Honors courses. The following minimum course grades have been established for program participants, recognizing the demanding nature of the Honors Program:

<i>Course</i>	<i>Minimum Grade Required</i>
HON 100C, HON 101	C+
HON 102, HON 103, HON 301W	B-
HON 201K, HON 202, HON 203	B

In the event that an Honors student fails to meet these standards of progress, at the Honors Program director's discretion, the student may be placed on probation with the Honors Program and required to meet with the director to work out a plan

to achieve the minimum GPA and grades required for good standing. Students not able to achieve the minimum GPA and grades within the time frame agreed upon in the plan, who do not meet with the director to develop a plan, or who, after achieving good standing after probation again do not meet minimum standards, may be dismissed from the Honors Program.

***Graduating with  
General University  
Honors***

Honors students who successfully complete all required Honors courses (HON 101, HON 102 or HON 103, HON 201K, HON 202 or HON 203, HON 301W, HON 311W, and HON 312) and have attained a 3.4 grade point average in all University work including Honors courses, will graduate with General University Honors. General University Honors designations are in addition to cum laude, magna cum laude, and summa cum laude, which are awarded solely on the basis of cumulative grade point average (see Graduation Honors Policy in the Academic Policies section of this catalog).

**HON 100C Thinking and Writing in Honors**

This course combines the basic mechanics of a college writing course with an introduction to text analysis and critical thinking. It is specifically designed to provide skills that will be used in all the Honors courses. It is highly recommended for all entering Honors students. Cr 4.

**HON 101I Wisdom Stories from Antiquity**

The ancient cultures of the Mediterranean and Middle East are traditionally understood as roots of Western civilization. In this course students explore ancient philosophical, literary, political, and social traditions while critically reflecting upon the impact of those traditions as they influence cultures we identify as “our own.” Cr 4.

**HON 102I/W Truth(s), Lie(s), and Legacy(s) in a Medieval Mindscape**

This course will explore the functions of religion in human society including the creation of community and the creation of outsiders with special emphasis on the medieval period. Cr 4.

**HON 103J/W Religious and Scientific Perspectives on Human Origins and the Human Body**

In this course, students will examine a range of culturally based accounts of human origins (creation stories), considering evidence for these accounts from the perspective of both cultural and scientific studies. Seminars prepare students to assess the influence of social and historical context as these mediate our understanding of the human body and its origins. An integrated strand of weekly applied/laboratory sessions will accompany these seminars, providing students the opportunity to apply various methods of scientific and social scientific inquiry. The course also makes explicit contemporary and historical controversies about the origin of the human body and asks students to examine critically the consequences of these capacious civic debates. Cr 4.

**HON 105D Calculating and Reasoning with Symbolic Representations**

This course is about power of abstract, visual, primarily symbolic, representations of phenomena. These representations include quantities representing counts or measurements, predicate calculus representations of natural language assertions, graphical (in both the vertex and edge sense and the Cartesian coordinate sense) of structures and relationships, and other visual presentations of information. Cr. 4

**HON 201K Interdisciplinary Inquiry in the Sciences of the Human Body**

This course provides an interdisciplinary introduction to scientific discourses and scientific practices concerning the human body. It combines selected concepts and methods of inquiry from several disciplines, including molecular biology, human genetics, anatomy, biological anthropology, human ecology,

and the history of medicine. Students and faculty will critically examine the history of various constitutive practices and scientific representations of the body, including many Western scientific conceptions of the body as these have emerged from the European Renaissance through modernity. An integrated sequence of weekly laboratory/practicum sessions will accompany these seminars, providing students the opportunity to apply various methods of scientific inquiry from disciplines that address the human body. These explorations are synthesized by students in an independent research project. This project provides an opportunity for student to address their own embodiment in the context of a capacious civic question (e.g., the human genome project, environmental toxicity, viral epidemics, genetic therapy, etc.). Cr 4.

**HON 202H Progress, Process, or Permanence: All That is Solid Melts into Air**

“All that is solid melts into air” (Karl Marx) is an apt metaphor for this course, which examines concepts of certainty and uncertainty from various 19th- and 20th-century perspectives. Who has the answers? Are there any answers? Can there be such a thing as “progress,” and does our “modern” perspective (whatever that is) give us a unique point of view for addressing these issues? Cr 4.

**HON 203 Environment, Population, Behavior, and Global Change**

This course explores the ways in which environment, population, and behaviors converge in the dynamics of various contemporary global changes and challenges. Interdisciplinary study is a central characteristic of this course. Students integrate literary, artistic, social, scientific, historical, applied or practice-based approaches in cultural analysis of global changes and challenges. The course is inquiry-based, providing students an opportunity to pose their own questions for research in a format that prepares them for thesis research and writing. Following a series of readings and self-directed inquiries, each student synthesizes their learning in a final project. Cr 4.

**HON 299 Honors Seminar**

A different seminar on a topic of contemporary debate will be offered at least once a year. The seminars will normally focus on issues involving multicultural perspectives. Cr 3.

**HON 301W Ambiguous Identities and Cultural Practices**

This course examines cultural performance across a broad range of social, disciplinary, and professional practices. It provides an opportunity for students to engage theoretical and practical articulations, by encouraging them to develop skills of critical assessment of cultural phenomenon. Students focus on a context specific “turning point”—an existential crisis, a professional, cultural or political rupture, or some other liminal phase of experience, especially those characterized by injustice, prejudice, or

stereotyping. The subject area of students' exploration may be chosen from topics in disciplinary or interdisciplinary fields of investigation, from social or professional interest, or from current or past experience. Cr 3.

#### **HON 311W Honors Thesis I: Workshop**

Each Honors student will plan and carry out a major thesis project as the final stage of Honors work. This workshop course will acquaint students with research proposal development for the project and assist them in the design and evaluation of project outlines. It will involve both group meetings and individual work with the student's project mentors. Cr 4.

#### **HON 312 Honors Thesis II**

This course will consist largely of independent research and writing, with assistance from the project

mentors, carrying on the preliminary work done in Thesis I. The project will be completed, and the oral defense scheduled, at the end of the course. Cr 4.

#### **HON 321 Honors Directed Research**

This optional course allows an Honors student with interests in a particular subject area to do research in that area under the direction of a faculty supervisor. The research may be carried out in any subject area, with the approval of the director. Cr 1-3.

#### **HON 331 Honors Directed Study**

This optional course allows an Honors student to design a reading course in collaboration with a faculty supervisor. It is of particular value to students with self-designed majors who may need to supplement existing courses with additional material. Approval of the director is required. Cr 1-3.