

Department of Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Anthropology

Academic Honors

The Department of Philosophy offers an honors program for students majoring in philosophy, majoring in philosophy with a concentration in environmental ethics, or majoring in philosophy with a concentration in religious studies. Ordinarily, a student aiming to complete the honors program requirements in the philosophy major or the philosophy-environmental ethics major will complete all of their honors credits in philosophy; the same is true of the religious studies major.

1. Admission

Students with at least 30 credits in the university and 6 credits in philosophy or religious studies who have a GPA of 3.5 or above in those departmental courses may apply for admission to the honors program by contacting the Department Chair or Department Honors Advisor. A brief "Application for Admission" form will be filled out and initialed by the student, the student's department advisor, and the department honors advisor. The Department Honors Advisor will notify the applicant regarding admission to the honors program.

2. Requirements

- a. Completion of all the requirements for the major with a GPA of at least 3.5 for courses in the major.
 - b. Completion of a minimum of 6 honors credits in philosophy and/or religious studies courses with a grade of "A Honors."
 - c. Completion of 1 credit "Independent Study: Honors Project" in Philosophy 399 or Religious Studies 399.
3. Procedures for departmental honors for majors in philosophy, philosophy with a concentration in environmental ethics, or philosophy with a concentration in religious studies.

Ordinarily, students applying for admission to the department honors program will contact the Department Honors Advisor during the end of their sophomore or the beginning of their junior year. Students will be asked to complete an "Application for Admission" form in which the student identifies the specific courses they intend to take for honors credit, and nature of the honors project itself. While it is the responsibility of the student to familiarize himself/herself with the honors requirements (available on the department website), the Department Honors Advisor will guide the student in developing his/her course of study. The student will complete the appropriate short forms to be kept on file.

Courses

- a. Students must request permission from the instructor of the course in which they wish to work for honors credit. Honors courses may only be selected from offerings within the department. If the instructor agrees to the request, then the student will complete the "Proposal for Honors Course Credit" form and gather the appropriate initials. Finally, the student will provide the

Department Honors Advisor with the completed form. Work done for honors credit must meet the standards set by the instructor and the department (see below).

- b. Students must notify the Department Honors Advisor of the courses they take for honors credit as they are taken by completing the appropriate "Proposal for Honors Course Credit" form.
- c. Normally, no more than two courses may be taken for honors with a single instructor (including 399 Independent Study: Honors Project). The Department Honors Advisor may waive this requirement in special circumstances.
- d. Courses taken for honors credit must include one or more substantial projects beyond ordinary course requirements, as agreed to by the supervising instructor of the course. Such projects must demonstrate (1) a mature, critical grasp of some issue relevant to the course, plus (2) a facility and familiarity with some of the relevant scholarly literature. Ordinarily, such projects would be substantive critical essays.
- e. No 100-level course may be taken for honors credit.
- f. Should the student's work meet honors standards, the final grade for the course will carry the designation "A Honors," the only grade acceptable for honors.
- g. In the event that a student does not satisfactorily complete the requirements for honors course credit, the instructor may assign an appropriate letter grade (for non-honors credit). In such cases, instructors will normally be in communication with the student regarding this outcome.

Projects

- a. Normally, students will register for a 1-credit 399, Independent Study Honors Project, during their last year and after having taken two honors courses in the department.
 - b. Prior to registration for the honors project, students will normally secure the agreement of one full-time, tenure-track faculty member in the department to serve as advisor for the project. As with other honors coursework, the student will fill out a "Proposal for Honors Course Credit" form to indicate the topic for the project. The completed form (with professor's initials) will be submitted to the Department Honors Advisor.
 - c. The honors project must demonstrate a mature, critical defense of a clearly defined thesis, plus a facility and familiarity with the relevant scholarly literature. The department regards the honors project as the culmination of a student's undergraduate studies in his or her major. The project should be a substantive, creative work in the discipline. A written project would typically be an essay of appropriate length (to be determined in conjunction with the supervising professor). Two models are, first, a high quality, revised, polished, and well-defined term paper, and second, an articulate, sharply focused essay appropriate for publication in a professional journal or for presentation at a professional conference.
 - d. The honors project will normally eventuate in some public presentation (at the level of the department, the university, or professional academic community), including the following: the Philosophy Club, a departmental colloquium, the L&S Undergraduate Research Symposium, a professional academic conference, or a journal article. The student will work with the supervising professor to coordinate an appropriate public presentation. Such a presentation should demonstrate the same virtues expected of written work.
 - e. Should the student's work meet honors standards, the final grade for the honors project will carry the designation "A Honors," the only grade acceptable for honors.
4. Students meeting all requirements will be awarded honors in their philosophy, philosophy with a concentration in environmental ethics, or philosophy with a concentration in religious studies major.