

URI Honors Program

Senior Honors Project

Handbook

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The Senior Honors Project **(HPR 401 and HPR 402)**

What is a Senior Honors Project?

The Senior Honors Project provides a capstone research, scholarly and creative experience for students completing the Honors Program. It offers talented and motivated undergraduate students the opportunity for independent, distinguished research and creative work that is oftentimes not available until graduate studies. This Project is done under the guidance of a faculty sponsor and culminates in presentation to a small audience of interested listeners at the annual Senior Honors Research Conference.

Who is eligible?

Any junior or senior who has an overall GPA of 3.2 or higher may complete an Honors Project. Projects are *required* for those students expecting to complete the Honors Program and graduate with honors designation on their URI transcripts. Exceptions may be made to the class standing requirement in unusual circumstances or when there is time conflict, such as may occur with study abroad, requirements of a particular major program of study, or distinguished early opportunities for independent work. Rare exceptions may also be made to the GPA requirement when warranted. All exceptions are granted solely by the Director or Associate Director of the Honors Program.

What is an acceptable topic?

There is no formula or limit for the topic of your project. Above all, it should be one that challenges you creatively and cognitively; that captures your heart and mind and is your original work. Hopefully it will focus your attention on a topic of your own selection about which you feel passionate.

In selecting your topic, talk to faculty who are familiar with the subject matter. Tweak your ideas. Make an appointment with people in the field of study who may be able to offer ideas and support. Come by the Honors office or visit the honors web site to look at past Honors Project abstracts and summaries.

Once you have an idea and a potential faculty sponsor (or sooner if would like), schedule an appointment with Carolyn Hames, Associate Director of Honors, to talk about your project and receive preliminary approval to move forward. You do not have to have anything written at the time of this first appointment.

When should I start?

Start as early as possible. As you are taking classes during your first few years, be alert to the ones that especially intrigue you. Get to know the professor and find out what research and creative work he or she is doing. Cultivate academic relationships with potential faculty sponsors early and keep those relationships alive.

Should I do a 3-credit or 6-credit Senior Project?

This will depend on the needs and possibilities of your own program of studies, and on the scope of the project you undertake. Your faculty sponsor and the Honors Program staff can give you guidance. When you undertake a 3-credit project, you register for HPR 401. When a project is substantial enough and the time commitment warrants it, the project may be done for 6 credits, and you will sign up for both HPR 401 and HPR 402. Normally, six credit Honors Projects are done over the course of two semesters back-to-back. In some circumstances, exceptions are granted.

Most students complete 3 credit projects. Think of this as about 10 hours of focused work per week (thus 6 credits would be 20 hours per week). When students elect to complete 6 credit projects, they frequently are taking the work done in HPR 401 "to another level".

Should I do a project in my major, and if I do, may I receive major credit?

You may do your Honors Project in your major, your minor, or some other area of interest. For example, a Biological Sciences major has done a project in photography, and a Marine Affairs major has done a project in philosophy. The norm, however, is for students to propose topics within a major or minor field of study to insure they have sufficient preparation for the work.

Some students request that the Honors Project credits also count for credit towards their major. Approval for this is at the discretion of the Department Chair of your academic major, and his or her signature on your *Senior Honors Project Proposal and Application* will indicate approval for such. If you are granted major credit, it may also be necessary to submit a "Curriculum Modification" form to the College from which you are graduating. Check with the Department Chair about this.

What is the role of the faculty sponsor?

Your faculty sponsor is key to the success of your project. The Senior Honors Project, HPR 401, is an independent study. Your faculty sponsor will help you shape and refine your topic, give you advice and guidance as you proceed, set up a schedule of times to meet with you to discuss your progress and evaluate and grade your final work. Even when your project is interdisciplinary, it is wise to select one professor to serve as your primary sponsor. Professors from the same or different departments who are interested in your work may serve as additional advisors or consultants as you need them and they are willing, but one professor needs to be responsible for your final evaluation and grade. All full-time continuing faculty at the University are eligible to sponsor Senior Honors Projects. This is not a requirement of their workload, but a voluntary privilege they will undertake with you based on your talent, preparation, persuasion and long-term academic relationship. Final proposals require the signature of your sponsor's dean so that the Dean will be aware of the faculty member's commitment to you. By perusing the abstracts and project summaries on the honors web site you can see which faculty have sponsored projects in the past.

What is the role of the Honors Program staff?

The role of the Honors Program staff is primarily administrative. Proposals are submitted to them and they give approval for Senior Honors Projects. The Honors Program staff also serves as a resource and sounding board for the creation of Honors Project topics, as a resource for finding a possible faculty sponsor, and for encouragement and advice as the Project develops.

What is the deadline for getting an Honors Proposal approved?

Your formal written *Senior Honors Project Proposal and Application* is due to the Honors Office in a timely fashion the semester before you intend to complete the project. Don't procrastinate! Ideally, we would like to be talking with you on this by mid-semester of the semester before you will be doing the Project. Come see us!

Registration for Senior Honors Projects, both HPR 401 and HPR 402, occur by permission only. Once the *Senior Honors Project Proposal and Application* is given final approval by the Honors Program staff, you will receive a permission number for entrance into the course(s).

Will I be required to present my final project?

At the end of each academic year, the Honors Program sponsors a Senior Honors Research Conference. Each honors student presents his or her final project to a small public audience of interested listeners including other students, faculty, family, and friends. Presentations may be made by way of readings, speeches, posters, photographs, videos, computer displays, or a combination of these, as well as any other effective means of summary and communication. This is not a time of examination or defense, as with an M.A. or Ph.D. thesis, but a time of public sharing and celebration of the excellence of your achievements. It is highly recommended that you attend a few of these presentations at the Conference the year before you do your Project so that you have a better understanding of what this entails. Dates and details can be found on the honors web site or by contacting the Honors Program office.

What will become of my Project?

An electronic copy of your final project must be submitted to the Honors Office on a CD-Rom. Guidelines for doing this are posted on the honors website. Abstracts and summaries of all Honors Projects can be viewed on the honors web site.

Is financial support available for Honors Projects?

In the fall semester of each year, the Honors Program in conjunction with the Office of the Provost makes available on a competitive basis Undergraduate Research Awards of up to \$400 to defray costs incurred in undergraduate research and creative work. Approximately twenty awards are made each year. Watch for the call for proposals around mid-term of the fall semester. Applications are available from the Honors Office and the Provost's Office. A statement of support is required from the faculty sponsor.

In addition, the Honors Program has been fortunate to secure some special funds for student projects. Information about these, including the Kumpf and the Smith Clark Scholarships, are available of the honors web site.