

**THE HONORS DEGREE
PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

Spring 2022 EDITION
(revised 1.14.2022)



The Honors Degree Program has been in existence since 1965. Over the decades, in response to student suggestions and faculty initiatives, the shape and structure of the program have been revised and improved. The present Handbook reflects some curricular and programmatic changes undertaken in 2014. All students entering the program in the fall of 2014 or thereafter are governed by the program provisions summarized in this version of the handbook.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Rollins offers a highly selective program in the liberal arts for students with exceptional intellectual abilities. The Honors Degree Program creates a community of scholars who are encouraged to seek innovative ways to solve the pressing social challenges of the twenty-first century. Successful completion of the Honors curriculum leads to a distinct and separate undergraduate degree, *Artium Baccalaureus Honoris*--the Honors Bachelor of Arts Degree.

Honors students complete a core set of five courses designed to provide an integrated understanding of the liberal arts. These seminars, some of them interdisciplinary, introduce students to the different methods of inquiry in various fields and encourage students to take intellectual risks and apply a liberal arts understanding to critical issues of our time. These courses substitute for General Education requirements of the rFLA neighborhood program and are designed (1) to teach students to think and write critically across a broad range of disciplines; (2) to encourage a synthetic interdisciplinary understanding of the liberal arts; and (3) to challenge students to see the world in a new way.

The Honors Degree Program seeks to build a sense of intellectual community among some of the College's academically strongest students. Attending small and interactive seminars together for four years, Honors students get to know each other through shared experiences, lively discussions, and collaborative projects. Special dinners, immersions, community engagement projects, and speakers help to further the sense of community.

Honors Degree students enter the College at sophomore status with regard to academic and social permissions and are encouraged to proceed with upper-level courses if that is appropriate to avoid the repetition of material covered in high school courses. To facilitate flexibility in scheduling, Honors degree students receive priority in class-enrollment.

The capstone of the program is a two-term Honors Project, ideally in the student's major field, although interdisciplinary thesis projects are also possible, pending approval by the Honors Advisory Board. This capstone thesis leads to exceptional depth of understanding and provides valuable experience in developing and executing an advanced project. We expect our honors students to be among our best majors, not just because of the depth and intensity of the research project, but also because of the breadth of their integrative understanding of nature, society, and the forms of human expression.

The primary purpose of this program is to provide an exemplary experience of the liberal arts education as a whole, encouraging Honors students to develop the character of Odysseus, of one who sees with the eyes of many sciences and comprehends with the

imagination of many arts. Students in the Rollins Honors Degree Program will become part of a life-long community of scholars dedicated to applying the gift of intelligence to the many challenges we face in the world today.

II. THE HONORS DEGREE PROGRAM CURRICULUM

The Honors Degree Program curriculum is a carefully planned sequence of seminars beginning with the Honors Conference Seminar in the first semester and continuing through interdisciplinary seminars that challenge students to incorporate knowledge gained in their major studies in conjunction with their peers to address contemporary problems. The first two courses, 201 and 202, will be taken with other first year students, but the remaining series of classes, 300, 350 and 400, can be taken at any point during sophomore or junior year, allowing freedom of choice in courses and giving students the chance to work with Honors students from other years. HON 300 and 350 may be taken in any order, but the 400-level class should be taken last. In the senior year, students will focus exclusively on their Honors senior capstone project.

The core curriculum is designed to build community by providing a shared experience as students progress through college together. Many Honors Seminars will have a strong interdisciplinary focus, drawing on the perspectives, issues, methodologies, and texts from at least two different disciplines. The course material will vary from year to year according to the expertise and interests of the participating faculty.

In order to ensure that all Honors Degree Students have a broad exposure to all of the Liberal Arts, each seminar will fulfill one or more of the four divisional requirements: Arts (A), Humanities (H), Social Sciences (C), and Natural Sciences (S). **Students should ensure that in choosing classes, they have met all four divisional requirements at some point before completing their Honors coursework.** Depending on the disciplines of the faculty involved, seminars may have up to two divisional designations. Honors students may not substitute courses from rFLA neighborhoods to fulfill their seminar requirements.

FIRST YEAR

HON 201 – Honors Conference Seminar (4 hours – Fall semester)

Topics will vary each year.

HON 202 – First-year Honors Seminar (4 hours – Spring semester)

Topics will vary each year.

SECOND-THIRD YEARS

HON 300, HON 350, HON 400 – Your Last Lecture

Topics will vary each year.

HON 498-499 – Honors Research Seminar (Senior year, 8 hours, Fall and Spring semesters)

Students will pursue individual research projects in various disciplines, culminating in a thesis. These will generally also count for Honors-in-the-Major, though students may petition the Honors Advisory Board, in agreement with their major advisors, to create an interdisciplinary thesis project.

Honors-in-the-Major-Field projects are generally approved and supervised by the student's major department. Individual departments may have additional, specific requirements for students wishing to pursue Honors-in-the-Major-Field. Students will choose a thesis advisor in their field and create a committee of at least two other members, one of whom may be from outside the student's department. Students completing an interdisciplinary thesis will select a three-person committee comprised of faculty with expertise in the different fields of the student's thesis topic.

In addition, each student must make a presentation in the fall semester to his/her committee about the nature of the project and work that has been completed to that point, and make a detailed defense of the project to his/her committee and a more general public presentation of his/her work at the end of the spring semester. An appendix at the end of this document highlights the important dates students should follow during their junior and senior years, as they prepare their theses. The eight (8) semester hours for the Honors-in-the-Major-Field project may count toward requirements credit in the student's major at the discretion of the student's major department.

For students in the 3/2 Pre-engineering or AMP programs, it is imperative that students meet with the Director of the Honors Program during the fall semester of the first year to discuss an academic plan. Students in a 3/2 program will be working on an abbreviated schedule, completing the required courses listed above in three years. These students will complete research and write a thesis during the junior year.

III. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To receive the Honors Bachelor of Arts Degree, candidates must satisfy course and credit, as well as grade requirements.

- A. Course and credit requirements
 - a. Honors Seminars
 - HON 201 (4 hours)

HON 202 (4 hours)
HON 300 (4 hours)
HON 350 (4 hours)
HON 400 (4 hours)

- b. Honors-in-the-Major Research/Independent Study
[Department Code] 498HD/499HD (8 hours total)
- c. Competencies
 - Mathematical Thinking (M)
 - Health and Wellness (B) (currently on hiatus)
 - Foreign Language (F)
 - Writing (W)—fulfilled in HON201
- d. Major Field
Complete courses required for major (40-68 hours)
- e. Electives
(32-48 hours) Includes an optional minor of 6-8 courses

Students must fulfill the above academic requirements in no fewer than 140 semester hours.

B. Grade Requirements

Candidates for the Honors A.B. Degree must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.33 to continue in the program and earn the degree. They must also earn a grade of “B” or better for HON 498/499. Latin Honors at graduation (*Cum Laude*, *Magna Cum Laude* and *Summa Cum Laude*) are awarded in the Honors Program on the basis of cumulative GPA, with the same numerical criteria as in the rest of the College.

IV. THE PROCESS

A. Admissions

Each spring the Honors Degree Program admissions process begins with the selection of the top applicants to the College. The candidates’ credentials are reviewed by the Program Director and by members of the Honors Advisory Board to determine whether admission to the program is to be granted. Candidates are reviewed on the basis of special aptitude for the goals of the program (namely, community, interdisciplinary study, exploration, productive research, and diversity) as well as general scholastic aptitude (i.e., high school grades, rank in class, SAT or ACT scores, difficulty of program of study, application essay, and recommendations).

Admission to the program is highly competitive. While no specific cut-offs are imposed in reviewing candidates, most successful applicants will rank in the top five percent of their secondary school class while enrolled in a demanding curriculum. The pursuit of Honors or Advanced Placement courses, where available, is highly desirable. Application essays are read carefully. Standardized test scores should reflect outstanding potential for success in a demanding college program.

The Board will also look at the records of first year students in the College of Liberal Arts who have truly excelled academically during their first semester. A few such students may be invited to apply for admission to the Honors Degree Program. On the basis of high school records, Rollins records for the first year, and faculty recommendations, the Board may issue a few invitations for membership in the Honors Degree Program. The number of invitations will, of course, be limited by the number of spaces in the class. Students who are admitted as second semester first-year students will be expected to complete all requirements for the program *except HON 201*, but will need to complete the WCMP.

B. Review of Academic Standing and Withdrawal from the Program

The Honors Degree Advisory Board reviews the academic standing of all candidates for the Honors A.B. degree at the end of each fourteen-week term. The student is expected to maintain a grade point average of at least 3.33 (B+) and to complete the appropriate Honors courses. Those students whose work does not meet these minimum requirements will receive a letter of warning and are encouraged to seek advice on improving their scholastic performance. Such students are allowed the next review period to comply with the requirements. Those who fail to achieve the minimum requirements for two terms will be eligible to be transferred from the Honors Program into the regular Rollins Bachelor of Arts program by decision of the Advisory Board.

For those students who choose to transfer out of the program, the following general education requirements will apply:

- a. those completing the five basic courses (HON 201, HON 202, HON 300, HON 350, HON 400) will be exempt from all rFLA classes. Students must still complete the F, W, & M competencies. Students who entered Rollins in Fall 2018 or later must also complete the E competency.
- b. those completing four basic courses (HON 201, HON 202, HON 300, HON 350) will be required to complete one rFLA class above the 100 level. Students must still complete the F, M, & W competencies. Students who entered Rollins in Fall 2018 or later must also complete the E competency.
- c. those completing two to three basic courses (HON 201, HON 202, HON 300, HON 350) will be required to complete two to three rFLA classes above the 100 level. Students must still complete the F, M & W competencies. Students who entered Rollins in Fall 2018 or later must also complete the E competency.
- d. those completing fewer than the first two courses (HON 201 & 202) will be required to take all rFLA requirements.

There are three ways in which an Honors student may leave the program. As stated above, the Board may dismiss a student from the program. A student may voluntarily elect to transfer from The Honors Degree Program into the regular A.B. program. In such cases, the student must complete an Honors Degree Withdrawal Form, obtain his/her advisor's signature and return the completed form to the Office of Student Records. At that time the Associate Dean of Academics of the College of Liberal Arts will review the academic transcript and will communicate with the student regarding academic requirements yet to be fulfilled (in accordance with the above stipulations). Lastly, a student may withdraw from the College and therefore, from the program. In such cases, should a student re-apply for readmission to Rollins, the Advisory Board will determine whether the student should continue in the Honors Degree Program.

Honors Degree Candidates who do not meet graduation requirements at the end of their scheduled term of graduation may, at the discretion of the Advisory Board, be given the option of continuing at Rollins for additional work to complete the Honors requirements or of graduation with a regular B.A. degree (assuming all other graduation requirements are met).

V. PROCEDURES

A. The Honors Degree Advisory Board

Since 1979, the Honors Degree Advisory Board has monitored the policies and procedures of the Honors Degree Program.

The Board has the following members:

The Associate Dean of Academics of the College of Liberal Arts (or designate) and all of the faculty members who are teaching Honors courses in a given academic year.

The Board has the following duties:

The application and review of the graduation requirements for the Honors Bachelor of Arts Degree;

the establishment of guidelines and procedures for reviewing applicants for admission to the Honors Degree Program;

reviewing course proposals for Honors courses
reviewing Interdisciplinary thesis proposals

B. Advising

Upon entering the program, each student is assigned an Honors advisor from among the faculty members who teach HON 201. Students will later choose another advisor as they begin to decide on majors. It is important that all academic advisors understand the special procedures and requirements for Honors degree students. Advisors should keep the following information in mind:

1. The Honors Degree Program offers students a degree having its own distinct general education and graduation requirements. Advisors cannot, therefore, assume that what applies to first year advisees not in the program also applies to Honors Degree candidates.
2. Students who are admitted into the Honors Degree Program fulfill their general education requirements through the Honors Seminars (see III. A. above). Students must still take their required competencies.
3. Special care should be taken in arranging for the Senior Research Project (see IV. D. below).

C. Opportunities for Exploration

Honors Degree students are encouraged to explore off campus opportunities through participation in study abroad, service-learning projects, immersions, internships and other opportunities.

D. Guidelines for the Honors-in-the-Major Research Projects

a. In the Junior Year

Honors students must contact the faculty member in their respective departments at the beginning of the fall semester of their junior year. To ensure that students think through and thoroughly prepare for the senior research project before the end of the junior year, students should work closely with the departmental liaison as well as other members of their major department to develop a suitable project. *Because of the importance of adequate preparation for a successful project, students who are not on campus for part of the junior year are still required to complete the requirements in a timely fashion. Such students should meet with the Honors Program Director well in advance of their planned absence from campus.*

Students should follow the procedures established by their major department for an Honors-in-the-Major project; however, all projects fulfilling the Honors Degree requirements must be a two-semester project for a total of eight credit hours. Students who are required to complete an independent study as part of their major field requirements should arrange a research project that allows them to satisfy both Honors Degree and major requirements simultaneously.

Under exceptional circumstances, students may write an interdisciplinary thesis for the Honors Degree Program that does not also qualify for Honors-in-the-Major. A student should pursue an Interdisciplinary Honors Thesis only if their project is truly interdisciplinary in nature, spanning two or more disciplines with no clear anchor in any one department or discipline. As a result, Interdisciplinary Honors Thesis proposals will be evaluated according to the same rigorous standards as those submitted for Honors in the Major. A student interested in pursuing an interdisciplinary Honors thesis must discuss their interest with the Associate Dean of Academics by February 28 and submit an Interdisciplinary Honors Thesis Proposal to the Associate Dean of Academics by April 1. The proposal form can be found here: <https://www.rollins.edu/rollins-foundations-liberal-arts/honors-degree-program/>. Upon approval from the Honors Advisory Board, a student completing an Interdisciplinary Honors Thesis must complete the standard thesis proposal form found on the Registrar's website. No late proposals will be accepted under any circumstances. Proposals that have been turned down by an academic department cannot become interdisciplinary thesis projects solely to allow the student to finish the Honors Degree Program.

Normally, a student must submit their research *proposal* for the Honors-in-the-Major-field project, approved by the faculty sponsor, to the sponsor's department in early March of the junior year (specific deadline dates will be designated each year). *Proposals* must include the following:

- a statement and explanation of the thesis of the project;
- a description of the project;
- the name and signature of the faculty sponsor and student's advisor;
- proposed names for the other committee members (one member of the committee must come from outside the department);
- the method(s) to be used in the research;
- the materials to be produced and presented;
- a statement of how the project will be evaluated (including provision for the oral defense);
- a proposed reading list.

The proposal will then be considered by the department and, if approved by the department, passed on to the Associate Dean of Academics of the College of Liberal Arts by April 15.

b. In the Senior Year

Unless the major department has established another process for an Honors-in-the-Major-Field Project, honors students should follow the following procedures. Under the watchful supervision of the faculty sponsor, the student pursues the independent research project, as proposed, throughout the senior year. Regular consultations with the faculty sponsor and other committee members help to ensure that the project is on target and in line with the agreed-upon timetable.

For registration purposes, 498 is assigned during their first semester of thesis research and 499 during the second. Students will receive grades for both fall and spring semesters. Should a student not make satisfactory progress on the senior project by the end of the fall semester, the faculty sponsor has the right to refuse to continue the project. The sponsor should report his/her concerns about the project to the other members of the examining committee meeting at the end of the fall semester. With the committee's endorsement, the sponsor should submit a letter to the director of the Honors Degree Program and the Associate Dean of Academics explaining the decision to end the project. The student will receive "NC" for 498.

Since the research project counts as two courses (eight semester hours), it should require approximately the same amount of work as two normal courses, though admittedly such evaluations are difficult. There are no rules concerning the length of the written product associated with the research project, but previous experience suggests that it will usually range between sixty and one hundred pages in the Humanities and Social Sciences, between twenty and thirty pages in Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, and somewhere in between in the Expressive Arts, depending on how much of the project is devoted to creative composition. Quality is obviously more important than quantity. The research project should manifest a level of insight and sophistication appropriate to an Honors Degree student. It should be in a form that shows signs of careful revision and refinement while at the same time demonstrating a degree of independent and critical thought.

The deadline for submission of the research paper to the Examining Committee is two weeks before the last day of spring term classes, although the Committee may set an earlier date. This allows time for the Committee to study the project before the student's defense. The student may well want to submit the paper earlier to allow time for recommended revisions. The student's sponsor serves as chair of the examining committee. After the defense, the sponsor assigns the final grade for the project in consultation with the other members of the committee (see below). The grade must be submitted to the Office of Student Records by the first day of spring term exams. The grade that will appear on the student's transcript for eight semester hours' credit will be the one assigned by the sponsor in consultation with the Examining Committee. The student must earn a grade of B or better on the project in order to graduate in the Honors Degree Program.

c. Examining Committee procedures

In consultation with the faculty sponsor for the Honors Research Project, the student will submit to the Director of the Honors Degree Program a three-person Examining Committee by completing the appropriate form and sending it to the Director early in the fall term of the senior year. Normally, the Examining Committee will consist of the student's project sponsor, one faculty member from the student's major department, and one faculty member from another academic department. Further members may be added to the Committee by the student, or at the direction of the Sponsor. The student will inform the Director if there are to be any changes made to the list of Committee members originally submitted by the student.

The Chair of the Examining Committee is the student's research project sponsor. At least two weeks before the end of the fall semester, the student will be responsible for convening the committee to inform them of progress on the thesis during the fall semester. During the spring, the student should send copies of the research project to all members of the Examining Committee by the above-mentioned deadline. The Committee Chair should then convene the Examining Committee, allowing time for the members of the Committee to have read the research project. During the Examining Committee's meeting, the student will summarize and defend the research project before the Committee members. After the student has been excused, the Committee should evaluate the research and the defense and assign a grade based on the percentage-criteria agreed upon in the original Independent Study Proposal. Honors Degree research projects should be graded as though they were senior research projects in the normal degree program; for the grade, therefore, a higher standard should not be employed. The sponsor submits the grade to the Office of Student Records by the first day of spring term final exams on the usual grade-reporting form.

d. Project Presentations

At the end of the spring semester, the Honors Degree Program will present and explain their projects during the Foundations Summit.

Style Guidelines for Honors Theses

The Olin Library Department of Archives and Special Collections maintains a collection of all Honors Theses written by Rollins College students.

Please observe the following guidelines in preparing the library's copy of your honors thesis.

Submission of Projects

Students completing an Honors Thesis at Rollins are required to submit an electronic copy of their finished thesis to the Olin Library through Rollins Scholarship Online (RSO), the library's open-access institutional repository. RSO acquires, preserves, and makes accessible the scholarly and creative output of the Rollins community. Content is discoverable through Google and other search engines, making your research accessible worldwide.

Honors theses are submitted by their authors using RSO's self-submission feature. The Olin Library Digital Archivist and Honors Director will provide step-by-step instructions on submission in the spring of the senior year.

Spacing and Margins

Double space the text and leave 1" margins on all sides. Do not use running headers in the paper, only page numbers.

Non-Traditional Projects

Some honors projects result in products other than traditional printed text or may include visual images or other graphic material with the text. Please consult with your advisor and the Archives Department for information about submitting these types of projects.

Citations

Instructions for citing references may be found in any of the standard style manuals. Select the style appropriate to your discipline in consultation with your advisor. The following manuals are available in the library reference area: *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by K. Turabian; *The Chicago Manual of Style*; *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*; and *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. In addition, quick guides to [APA](#) and [MLA](#) style may be found on the library web page.

Title Page

Please attach a title page that includes the following information: the title of the thesis; your name; a statement identifying the thesis as a Senior Honors Project; the date of submission; and the name of the faculty sponsor. Please do not include graphics or other artwork on the title page. A sample title page is attached:

A PROBLEM OF EPIC PROPORTIONS:
ELECTION MONITORING IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

Jennifer A. Mock

A Senior Honors Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements of the Honors Degree Program

May 2010

Faculty Sponsor: Jane A. Doe

Rollins College
Winter Park, Florida

Appendix A. Honors Thesis Deadlines

Junior Year

1. Within the first month of the fall semester contact faculty member in major field to develop a suitable project. (Note: for Honors students studying abroad during the fall semester of their junior year, contact faculty member via email prior to the end of the fall semester).
2. During the spring semester, register for independent study if required by your major department as a pre-requisite for Honors thesis work.
3. Within the first month of the spring semester, meet with the appropriate librarian to discuss research resources. E-mail the Honors Director to confirm the meeting and describe what you found helpful about the discussion.
4. Submit Independent Study Form by the 2nd week of March. Be prepared for this proposal to be reviewed by your project sponsor, department chair, and possibly a committee within the department. **Complete these documents in close consultation with your faculty sponsor—departments may have different expectations for these forms.**
5. Register for the fall semester 498 course in your major (or HON 498 for interdisciplinary projects) during Spring Registration by submitting the “Independent Study Form” and the “Honors-in-the-Major Contract” with requisite signatures. Can be found under “Forms” on the Student Records webpage.

Fall of Senior Year

1. Last possible deadline to register for 498 is the end of add/drop in fall senior year (end of first week of classes).
2. Prior to the end of the fall semester, schedule a thesis committee meeting to present work completed to date.

Spring of Senior Year

3. By the end of February, connect with Rachel Walton to discuss questions regarding submitting the thesis to Rollins Scholarship Online, as well as copyright and open access issues (completed for those attending the January Thesis Information Session).
4. Submit thesis to committee no later than two weeks before the end of spring semester classes.
5. Prepare poster presentation for Honors Thesis Celebration.
6. In consultation with the faculty sponsor, convene committee for thesis defense (by end of spring term).
7. Submit *approved* thesis to Rollins Scholarship Online.