

HONORS PROGRAM

The USC Upstate Honors Program offers enhanced educational opportunities tailored to the special needs, aspirations and motivations of students with outstanding intellectual and creative abilities.

Vision

The USC Upstate Honors Program underscores the commitment of USC Upstate to academic excellence and the life of the mind. The Honors Program offers enhanced educational opportunities tailored to the special needs, aspirations, and motivations of students with outstanding intellectual and creative abilities. By bringing together talented students and dedicated and accomplished professors in small classes and individual research settings, the Honors Program creates a community united by a passion for learning and driven by a hunger for knowledge.

In addition to traditional honors course work oriented toward interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving, honors students complete research projects, internships, and service learning activities that challenge them to reach their full potential and to imagine even more ambitious goals for themselves and their world. The Honors Program enriches the learning experience with study abroad opportunities, research assistantships, faculty and community mentoring, and a range of co-curricular activities and experiences that build a shared sense of intellectual curiosity and achievement of the highest standards of academic excellence.

Mission Statement

The goals of the USC Upstate Honors Program are as follows: to encourage an intellectual orientation by providing a challenging curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking, creative and active learning, integration of academic disciplines, in-depth exploration of new fields of study, and application of learning to other environments; to develop the skills and qualities necessary for leadership both at USC Upstate and in the larger community through an emphasis on service learning and public presentations; to provide a center of intellectual identity and community; and to meet the needs of outstanding students for engagement and intellectual pursuits beyond the classroom walls.

Application Process

Students apply for the Honors Program by submitting the following: an application that includes student's academic record; significant extracurricular, community, and service activities (including employment); accomplishments, awards, and talents; involvement in academic research. An interview with the appropriate Honors Coordinator may be required.

Exceptions to these requirements may be considered by the Honors Coordinator Council.

Students who have not been admitted to the Honors Program but have a cumulative GPA of 3.25 may participate in honors courses with the permission of the appropriate Honors Coordinator in consultation with the faculty member teaching the honors course.

Honors Credits from Other Institutions

Up to nine credit hours or three courses from other National Collegiate Honors Council institutions may be accepted for honors credit into the USC Upstate Honors Program. These courses must be compatible with the USC Upstate Honors Program. A syllabus or complete description of courses offered for acceptance into the program may be required

for review by the appropriate Honors Coordinator. All credits must be approved by the student's Honors Coordinator.

Completion Requirements

To complete the Honors Program, honors students must earn a USC Upstate degree, satisfy all major and Honors Program requirements, and remain in good standing throughout their college careers. Honors students must:

- maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 each semester and achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.25 at the time of graduation;
- complete a minimum of 12 credit hours through the Honors Program;
- demonstrate significant contributions to honors activities either by serving on the Honors Student Council or by participating in the programming of the Honors Program.

Students who fall below the required minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in any semester are placed on honors probation. At the end of the probationary semester, students with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher are returned to regular honors status. Students with a cumulative GPA lower than 3.0 but with a semester cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher remain on honors probationary status. Students whose probationary semester cumulative GPA is lower than 3.0 are dismissed from the Honors Program. Students may apply for readmission to the Honors Program if their cumulative GPA is 3.0 or higher.

Requirements for Graduating with Honors

To graduate from the Honors Program, students must:

- complete at least 12 credit hours of honors seminars, courses, or internships
- maintain an average cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher.
- Organize a service activity approved by the Honors Coordinator, and submit a reflection essay about this community engagement.

Curriculum

To enroll in honors courses, students must be members of the Honors Program or granted approval by the appropriate Honors Coordinator in consultation with the faculty teaching the course.

Faculty members interested in teaching an honors course should submit a syllabus to the appropriate Honors Coordinator for approval.

Priority enrollment in honors courses is given to students in the Honors Program, but students meeting the admission criteria for the Honors Program may enroll in honors courses with permission of the appropriate Honors Coordinator and the approval of faculty teaching the courses.

Honors Students and General Education

All graduates of USC Upstate should demonstrate five core competencies as described in the Academic Programs section of the Academic Catalog. These competencies include the following:

1. communication,
2. technology and information,
3. quantitative and qualitative reasoning,
4. perspective taking, and
5. ethical reasoning.

A USC Upstate honors student must develop and refine these competencies by completing a coherent set of introductory-level courses which may be drawn from both honors and regular course offerings.

Honors students are encouraged to take an interdisciplinary approach to the general education competencies by enrolling in Honors Arts and Humanities, Honors Natural Science and Mathematics, Honors Social and Behavioral Sciences, the Honors General Education Tutorials, and special honors courses when their program of study permits. Students will coordinate with their Honors Coordinator and their major advisors to satisfy the general education competency requirements through no fewer than 30 credit hours in general education courses, including at least one course in each of the three main divisions: the humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences and natural sciences and mathematics.

In addition, students must fulfill any particular general education requirements that serve as foundational courses for their designated major. For example, an honors student majoring in biology must complete Precalculus I and II as well as General Chemistry and General Chemistry and Qualitative Analysis. Working with their major advisors, honors students will identify these courses by the end of their first year at USC Upstate.

In addition to completing the honors focus of study, honors students select an academic major and fulfill the requirements of that major. Courses designated as honors courses, such as BIO 110H or ENGL 102H, can substitute for non-honors courses. Special honors courses, tutorials, or internships may substitute for comparable general education courses or courses in the major program of study, or serve as electives. Honors students will work in coordination with their Honors Coordinator to fulfill the requirement to graduate with honors.

Honors Sections of Regular Courses or Labs (0-4 cr. hrs.)

An open call for honors courses is issued each semester to faculty. Proposals are reviewed by the appropriate Honors Coordinator and approved through the course approval process outlined in the Faculty Manual. Honors courses are not necessarily taught every semester, although some courses may be offered regularly.

H option courses must be approved by an Honors Coordinator. The design of the course is determined by the instructor depending on their expertise, in conjunction with the Honors Coordinator. Instructors interested in teaching an H option course should submit the augmented syllabus to the Honors Coordinator for approval. H option courses cover the same material as regular courses, but they must be different from regular courses by requiring coursework that is more challenging and enriching for honors students. Honors sections may involve a different teaching approach, additional readings, or special requirements. Course descriptions for honors sections must show greater rigor, more in-depth study, higher expectations, intensive reading, writing, and/or research than non-honors courses.

Orientation and Advising

Honors Coordinators work with faculty advisors and honors students to build an Honors curriculum that meets the goals of each student.

Special Benefits

Benefits for honors students include availability of the Honors Student Lounge, participation in honors activities, priority registration, faculty research mentors, and the opportunity to attend Honorary Society meetings. Students graduating in the Honors Program receive special

notation on their diplomas and transcripts, an Honors Certificate, and special recognition at graduation. Honors students are identified by a stole at graduation.

Honors Student Council

The Honors Student Council is an honor student committee serving as a liaison with the Honors Faculty Council. The Honors Student Council represents the needs and concerns of honors students to the Honors Faculty Council and the Director of the Honors Program. The Honors Student Council assists the Director in arranging academic, social, cultural, and service activities.

Admission

Admission to the Honors Program is selective and competitive. Great care is taken to admit the best-qualified applicants.

Eligibility for Admission to the Honors Program:

First year students, sophomore-level and above students, and transfer students are eligible for admittance in the Honors Program upon review and approval by the appropriate Honors Coordinator.

A first-year student is eligible to apply to the Honors Program if the student meets at least two of the following criteria:

- a minimum SAT score of 1100 or ACT of 24;
- a ranking in the top 10 percent of high school graduating class;
- a cumulative high school grade point average of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale;
- a Merit Award Program finalist;
- a Chancellor or Valedictorian Scholar;
- evidence of motivation and commitment to academic excellence.

A current USC Upstate sophomore or junior is eligible to apply to the Honors Program if the student meets the following criteria:

- a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher on a minimum of 30 hours from USC Upstate;
- evidence of motivation and commitment to academic excellence.

A transfer student is eligible to apply to the Honors Program if the student meets the following criteria:

- a cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher from other academic institutions;
- evidence of motivation and commitment to academic excellence.

Honors Courses (HONS)

To enroll in honors courses, students must be members of the Honors Program or granted approval by the appropriate Honors Coordinator in consultation with the faculty teaching the course. Honors courses require coursework that is more challenging and enriching for honors students; projects and assessments that offer more opportunities for creativity and problem-solving; assignments that include more intensive reading, writing, and research; and increased opportunities for co-curricular activities that complement course content. Honors sections may involve team-teaching or an interdisciplinary approach to the topics.

HONS U101 The Life of the Mind. (3) A facilitated seminar taught by multiple faculty members with an interdisciplinary theme centered around the life of the mind, including questions about the nature of education, knowledge, and the self. Introduction is provided to various academic fields through interdisciplinary projects and problem solving

and significant interactions with honors faculty and other USC Upstate departments and resources. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U120 Honors Fine Arts and Humanities. (3) An interdisciplinary approach to introductory fine arts and humanities studies. A critical introduction to these fields is achieved through the exploration of an interdisciplinary theme. Themes may include art therapy, ekphrasis, or the history of religious art. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U121 Honors Natural Science and Mathematics. (3) An interdisciplinary approach to introductory natural science and mathematics studies. A critical introduction to these fields is achieved through the exploration of an interdisciplinary theme. Themes may include the history of physics, introductory bioinformatics or the statistics of gender. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U122 Honors Social and Behavioral Sciences. (3) An interdisciplinary approach to introductory social and behavioral science courses. A critical introduction to these fields is achieved through the exploration of an interdisciplinary theme. Themes may include the psychology of elections, sociology of relationships, or work and economics. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U199 Honors General Education Tutorial. (3) An introduction to one or more of the disciplines included in select general education distribution areas (Fine Arts, Humanities, Natural Science, Mathematics, Social and Behavioral Sciences) that addresses applications of the field/s of study and or takes an interdisciplinary perspective. Examples include introductory legal philosophy, biomedical ethics, or behavioral economics. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U201 Self and Society. (3) An interdisciplinary seminar centered on community, leadership, and societal problem solving through projects and community-based problem-solving. Scholarly reflection on service projects and significant interactions with community leaders. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U250 Honors Travel. (1-3) Visits to and study of international or US sites of historic, cultural, and/or literary significance. Content and itinerary will vary depending on the instructor's area of interest. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U301 The Ethical Factor. (3) A seminar with an interdisciplinary theme centered on ethics and ethical problem solving. Examples include America's evolving moral landscape and civil rights, or science, ethics and religion. Interdisciplinary research projects and problem solving, scholarly reflection through written and oral communication, and interactions with guest speakers from the University and the wider community foster leadership and advanced academic skills. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U350 Honors Travel. (3) Visits to and study of international or U.S. sites of historic, cultural, scientific, and/or literary significance. The focus and work product for the course vary depending on the instructor's area of interest. Prerequisite: Admission to Honors Program or overall GPA

of 3.25 at USC Upstate or accredited institution with permission of the Director of the Honors Program.

HONS U398 Honors Special Topics. (3) Interdisciplinary approaches to enduring issues or current topics. Technology-based and/or presentation-based projects may be required. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director.

HONS U399 Honors Tutorial. (3-4). Directed research and reading of a complex and comprehensive nature in keeping with individual interests and goals and culminating in a final project and/or written report. Research may involve both primary and secondary sources in one or more disciplines. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Director of the Honors Program for a total of no more than eight hours of undergraduate Honors credit.

HONS U400 Honors Internship. (1-4) Directed hands-on practicum experience in keeping with individual interests and goals. Honors interns complete additional research and reading and prepare a written report at the end of the term. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director. May be repeated with the consent of the Director of the Honors Program for a total of no more than eight hours of undergraduate Honors credit. A University contract must be completed with all required signatures.

HONS U401 The Process of Progress. (3) A seminar with an interdisciplinary theme centered on the nature of research and research-based problem solving. Tracing the process of design and discovery of a documented well-known research project leads to the application of that model to individualized honors projects. Example project models might include the human genome project and its implications for the limits of humanity, or the TED movement. Prerequisite: Acceptance to the Honors Program or consent of the Honors Program director and 9 Honors credits.