



# HONORS PROGRAM HANDBOOK

*August 2024*

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## The Honors Program at H-SC

For 50 years, the Honors Program has been a community where students and faculty work together to build intellectual engagement.

The Honors Program is meant for the student who has intellectual curiosity, independence of thought, excitement for and in learning, and appreciation of developing intellectual competence. The program is for the young man who sparks the enthusiasm of fellow students and as well as his professors with his own drive to improve and explore.

The program helps students find connections, starting with interdisciplinary connections between different ideas. Students connect to the College’s professors, creating opportunities for future mentorship. Honors students also connect with a diverse network of deeply curious students. The Honors Program draws together entrepreneurs, future medical professionals, athletes, artists, leaders, and other high-achieving persons from across the campus.

### *Other opportunities for academic distinction*

The Honors Program is a distinct, unique honor that spans the College—recognized on the diploma as “With College Honors.” But there are a variety of other notable achievements that students can achieve at Hampden-Sydney.

### *Departmental Distinction*

Each academic department at Hampden-Sydney may award distinction in a *major*, as noted in the catalog, with each department setting its own specific requirements. Talk to your major advisor(s) about distinction policies in individual majors.

### *Honor Societies*

**Phi Beta Kappa** — An interdisciplinary honors society founded in 1776, Phi Beta Kappa is known as “America’s most prestigious honors society.” Only 10 percent of students in each graduating class are eligible for membership, and only 10 percent of American colleges and universities have chapters. Membership offers in the junior year are a particular distinction; in the senior year, membership is usually offered to the top 10 percent of graduating students by GPA (although the national organization has [additional requirements](#) regarding courses taken).

In addition, Hampden-Sydney hosts a number of “disciplinary” honor societies that honor achievement in an area of study:

Alpha Chi Sigma (Chemistry)	Pi Mu Epsilon (Mathematics)
Alpha Epsilon Delta (Health Sciences)	Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science)
Alpha Psi Omega (Theater)	Psi Chi (Psychology)
Chi Beta Phi (Science)	Sigma Tau Delta (English)
Eta Sigma Phi (Classics)	Sigma Xi (Science and Engineering)
Omicron Delta Epsilon (Economics)	Society for Collegiate Journalists
Omicron Delta Kappa (Leadership)	(Journalism)
Phi Alpha Theta (History)	Theta Alpha Kappa (Religion)
Phi Sigma Iota (Foreign languages)	

### *Latin Honors*

Hampden-Sydney College recognizes students who achieve strong cumulative grade point averages on completion of a degree.

*Summa cum laude* (“with highest praise”), for students with a grade-point average of 3.7;

*Magna cum laude* (“with great praise”), for students with a grade-point average of 3.5;

*Cum laude* (“with praise”), for students with a grade-point average of 3.3.

## Joining the Honors Program

Incoming first-year students with a weighted 3.8 high school GPA may apply to join the program. Annually, the program seeks to admit roughly 10 percent of a matriculating class.

Incoming transfer students with a 3.8 GPA in high school coursework and a 3.5 in transferred college coursework may apply to join the program.

After the first semester, students with a 3.5 GPA are invited to join the Honors Program.

After the second semester, students with a 3.3 GPA are invited to join the Honors Program. To fulfill the HONS 201/202 requirement, students should join the program no later than the end of their third semester.

## Requirements of the Honors Program

If accepted into the program, students are expected to maintain a 3.3 grade point average and must graduate with a 3.3 GPA or higher to receive College Honors. Students must complete the following course of study (see the 2024-25 catalog, page 12):

- **First year honors sections.** In the fall semester of the freshman year, all honors scholars are expected to enroll together in a special honors section of a core course. In addition to fulfilling a requirement of the College core curriculum, this class provides honors students with the opportunity to engage intellectually with each other and with a faculty mentor. In special cases due to scheduling conflicts and similar concerns, honors students, with written permission from the Honors Director, may substitute another 200-level honors course for the first year experience. Students taking this option are not exempt from the sophomore requirement, and must take the usual sophomore honors seminar.

In the sophomore and junior years, students complete two additional requirements:

- By the end of the sophomore year, honors students complete one of the **Honors Seminars 201-202**.<sup>1</sup> These interdisciplinary seminars are designed around varied and engaging topics, and are meant to foster intellectual curiosity while building analytical skills.
- Students may choose one of the following four options to personalize the other requirement: 1) **Independent Research** undertaken in the junior year. Independent research includes a minimum of 3 credit hours. Proposals for independent research must be reviewed and approved by the Honors Council in advance. The course description must specify that it is to count for Honors.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: the catalog notes that HONS 201-202 should be taken in the sophomore year. Some students have requested to be allowed to take HONS 201-202 in the spring of their first year. The language here reflects the fact that such appeals have always been granted. The catalog language will be amended in the future accordingly.

- 2) **Summer research.** Students may choose to submit a proposal for participation in the summer research program. To fulfill this option they must complete the approved project, as evaluated by the Honors Council.
- 3) An additional **Honors Seminar 201-202.**
- 4) **Honors Reading Seminars.** Students may combine three 1-credit HONS 261-262 courses over the course of their tenure at HSC to fulfill this requirement.

In the junior and senior year, students must also undertake and complete the Honors Capstone.

Honors students enroll in **Honors 301** in the fall of their junior year. Honors students may appeal to be released from this course (the Council recommends in the spring of the sophomore year), on demonstration of sufficient ability or experience as evaluated by the Honors Council and in consultation with their capstone advisor. (Students may also appeal to take a 1-credit independent study with an advisor to substitute for Honors 301).

**Honors Capstone.** The honors capstone promotes independent, self-reliant study, and appreciation of the intricacies of an academic discipline within the broader spectrum of the liberal arts. The senior capstone project allows students to design and implement a year-long project in their major department(s). Interdisciplinary projects are also encouraged. Students submit a capstone proposal in the junior year, which is then reviewed and approved by the Honors Council.

It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they meet program requirements. Many honors students undertake double majors, year-long study abroad, etc. Students should plan ahead to ensure that all requirements (HONS 201, the elective, and the capstone) are completed to achieve College Honors. Although the community aspect of the program is one of its merits, there is no formal residency requirement.

### ***GPA and GPA warnings***

Students need a 3.3 CGPA to successfully complete the program. If a student falls below this requirement, a GPA warning will be sent.

If in the best estimation by the Honors Director a student does not seem likely to graduate with a 3.3 CGPA, the director may contact the student (and advisor) recommending the student withdraw.

Students with less than a 3.3 CGPA will be strongly discouraged from proposing an Honors Capstone project and may be removed from the program. Any student below the grade threshold at the end of their junior year must submit a written letter to the Honors Director making a case to continue in the program, specifically indicating why they envision their last two semesters will see their GPA rise while undertaking a significant, two-semester project.

Students with a CGPA less than 3.3 who successfully petition to pursue an Honors Capstone project will earn College Honors only if they raise their CGPA to meet the minimum 3.3 requirement by the time of graduation.

### ***Student Appeals***

In some circumstances, students may wish to appeal an aspect of the program. Typical appeals may include:

- If graduating early, requesting to undertake the capstone in the junior spring and senior fall.
- Requesting to take HONS 201-202 in the junior year due to conflicts with sequence courses in the major(s).
- Requesting to substitute an independent course in place of HONS 301.

Generally, the Council notes that requests to lessen or change requirements would need compelling justifications and may not be granted.

Any student appeal should be directed as a formal e-mail to the Honors Director, CC:ing your academic advisor(s). The director will submit appeals to the Honors Council with any additional supporting materials (the Council recommends a supporting letter from an academic advisor while the appeal is necessary). Documentation may be provided to strengthen the appeal.

If the Honors Council agrees to the appeal, it will be forwarded to the Executive Committee of the Faculty, as are all requests involving catalog language, for their approval. Successful appeals require approval of *both* the Honors Council and the Executive Committee. While students may appeal requirements, the Honors Council expects that all students will fulfill the HONS 201 requirement, the elective, HONS 301 or an equivalent, and the capstone.

### ***Withdrawal from the Program***

Students may withdraw from the Honors Program at any time by giving written notice to the Honors Director. The Honors Director may request that a student meet with them before finalizing a withdrawal, to review individual progress.

## **Honors Courses**

The Honors Program offers four types of honors courses.

**First-year Honors Courses.** These courses vary in content by the year and bring first-year students together in a core curriculum class, emphasizing the community of the honors cohort.

**HONS 201-202.** These are honors seminars designed to engage students and reward dedicated students with courses not generally available to the student body. They are not intended to be more difficult—or ‘easier’—than regular courses, but are designed to allow students to dive more deeply into some topics or explore new ones.

**HONS 261-262. Honors Reading Seminars** provide honors students and talented non-honors students opportunities for a focused, discussion-based seminar on a single (or small group) of texts (including non-textual texts — e.g., works of art, music, etc.). Reading Seminars will normally not include examinations and are 1-credit courses.

**HONS 301.** This course explores how research is framed in different disciplines and develops students’ abilities to prepare a full proposal that illustrates the aims, process, and anticipated outcomes of the senior honors capstone project.

**HONS 497-498.** The honors capstone courses are available for students in the honors program who wish to undertake their work within credit-bearing courses. The final grades in each course are determined by the supervising committee chair, and are reported to the Honors Director.

## Summer Research Experiences

Students may complete the elective program requirement with summer research.

Most students will pursue this with participation in the summer Undergraduate Research Program. **Students should inform the Honors Director *in advance*, CC'ing their academic advisor and the advisor for the summer research project.** Successful completion of the project, as communicated by the Director of Undergraduate Research **and the advisor of the project**, is sufficient evidence to meet this requirement.

Students may have other on-campus and off-campus research opportunities, which may count towards the requirement. In such cases, the opportunity must be communicated to the Honors Director in advance, pre-approved by the Honors Council, and a final example of the project must be provided for review by the Honors Council.

## Honors Independent Research

Students may complete the elective program requirement with a 3-credit independent research course (495) with a faculty member.

To do so, students and the advising faculty member should obtain pre-approval for the proposed project from the Honors Council, and in submitting the 495 form to the registrar indicate that it is an *honors* independent research course.

## The Capstone

Each honor student will complete a two-semester capstone project; this will normally be the two semesters of the senior year. Capstone projects may include a credit component (HONS 497-498), as determined by the student and advising committee chair. Note that some committee chairs may *require* a credit component in order to agree to supervise a project. The honors capstone is normally *distinct* from any capstone requirements for majors. For projects that are sufficiently large and involved, students may appeal to the Honors Council to have special major capstones count for honors. Note: such cases are rare.

Honors capstone projects must pass a field appropriate presentation and/or defense (ideally a public presentation) as judged by the honors capstone committee. Honors capstones require all three members of the committee to approve the completed project in order for honors to be earned. Committee members may decline to approve a project if reasonable deadlines and administrative requirements are not met.

### *The proposal process*

In the fall of the junior year, students (starting with those graduating in 2027) are required to take Honors 301. This 1-credit course brings the honors cohort together as they devise suitable projects for proposals in the spring of the junior year. (In some cases, students may appeal to the Council to undertake a 1-credit independent study to replace Honors 301; such appeals should be made *prior to the commencement of the fall semester in question.*)

**Selecting a Topic:** In selecting a topic, consider the following questions:

- What questions, issues, approaches interest you?



- Your topic should have a clearly identified hypothesis or thesis, and pending your discipline, should constitute an argument for your position; projects in the creative arts should identify how they are an original, creative work within the existing oeuvre.
- Is your topic something of personal interest? Scholarly merit? Or of relevance to anticipated vocation? How does your project “add” to your story at Hampden-Sydney?
- Is there a faculty member at H-SC who can supervise the project?
- Can it be finished in two semesters?
- Are the books, laboratory instruments, etc., available at H-SC?

While many topics will be analytical research questions, in some disciplines other kinds of projects may be suitable — creative endeavors or entrepreneurship. The language provided below is not intended to preclude such work, and students and potential advisors are invited to discuss such approaches with the HONS 301 instructor and Honors Director.

**Proposing a Topic:** In the spring of the junior year, honors students will give formal capstone proposals. These will fully address the following points:

- A full, detailed description of the original question, project, and activities proposed. There must be an explicit thesis (even if you wind up changing it during your research).
- A description of the methodology used in the project.
- A description of the anticipated product of these activities.
- A description of the value and significance of the proposed work.
- An annotated bibliography that shows knowledge of existing work on the topic and (if relevant) established data to be used.

**Council Evaluations:** The Honors Council will review the proposals, looking for clarity, evidence that the student is prepared to undertake the project, and scholarly merit. Above all, the proposal should show that the student is ready to begin the project and bring it to a successful conclusion. Proposals will be:

**Accepted.** While questions may be raised, the student will progress to begin the capstone in the following fall.

**Revise and resubmit.** While the project has merit, it may be unclear, show a lack of student preparation, or be unclear in its scholarly merit. The student will be invited to resubmit to address stated questions, and the project will be considered for a second (and final) time.

**Rejected.** The project, in the estimate of the Honors Council, is not seen as suitable to move forward.

### ***Selecting an Honors Committee***

Students will select an advising *committee chair* who is a current full-time faculty member with suitable expertise, willingness to supervise the project, and who will be in residence on campus over the course of the project. Committee chairs should be noted on the proposal (see above).

In consultation with their committee chair, the student will nominate a second reader with suitable expertise and willingness to take part in the project. Second readers may include



emeriti faculty or faculty at other institutions but should not include faculty not in residence or on sabbatical (in special cases, students may appeal this). The Honors Council will review second reader proposals and confirm that they are willing both to accept the role and to meet expectations; if a non-local faculty member is requested, the Honors Council may ask to see a plan for how advising and meeting attendance would be undertaken.

The Honors Council will assign a third (Council) reader to the project, with the expectation this reader will be from a different department than the project in question.

### ***Changing Committee Members***

In the event of illness, accident, departure from the college or other unforeseen event regarding a committee member, the student, Honors Director, and other committee members will work to secure an alternate member, and the Honors Council will formally review and approve the change.

### ***Honor Capstone Requirements & Contracts***

During the two semesters of the capstone, the Honors Council has certain requirements:

- Students must meet with their entire committee (chair, second reader, council reader) *twice* in the first (usually fall) semester. At least one meeting must be within the *first four weeks* of the semester's start. Your committee may require an early date.
- Requests for meetings should be made *at least two weeks* before the proposed meeting date(s).
- Students must meet with their entire committee in the second (usually spring) semester, within the *first four weeks* of the semester's start. Your committee may require an early date.
- An oral defense date must be communicated to the Honors Director by the 10th week of the second semester.
- An oral defense must be completed no later than the end of the thirteenth week of the second semester. Unless special permission is secured in advance from the Honors Council, failure to meet this requirement shall result in the project being rejected and honors not earned.
- The final product must be provided to the Honors Director not later than the last day of classes. If written work, two copies must be provided to be bound; other work should be provided on appropriate storage media with a signed paper title sheet. (The title sheet format is available on the web page). In addition, students must provide a 50-150 word abstract *by e-mail* (sent to the Director of Honors) for use by the H-SC library.
- Failure to meet these administrative requirements may result in the rejection of the project and honors not earned.

Note that the project committee — principally the advising committee chair — may add additional requirements. This might include:

- Earlier meeting, defense, or draft and final project deadlines;
- Specific requirements (e.g., page length);
- Whether the project can draw on material used for departmental capstones;
- That a credit-bearing component (e.g., HONS 497-498) is required).

### ***Withdrawing or Suspending an Honors Capstone***

Honors capstone projects may sometimes be withdrawn or (more rarely) suspended.

- Students may choose to end an honors capstone project at any time, after conferring with their committee chair and sending a note to the Honors Director.
- Advising committee chairs or second readers may, if they have concerns that cannot be resolved with the project, withdraw from the project after meeting with the other committee members. The withdrawing member should write an e-mail explaining the problem to the Honors Director. It is expected that withdrawing faculty will meet with the student and encourage the student to withdraw. The Honors Council may choose, at its discretion, to meet with a student to determine if a replacement advising chair is warranted to allow the project to continue.
- The Honors Council representative may advocate an end to the project, if the student has missed multiple requirements (as above) or has shown a lack of progress on the project in the second semester. In such cases, the Honors Council will meet with the project committee members and then the student, and may request an additional faculty member(s) review the project in process.
- Students with medical, family, or other emergencies that lead them to an emergency withdrawal for a semester may request that their capstone project be *suspended*. If approved, they could complete the project the semester they return to campus.

### ***Final Product***

The capstone should result in a final product suitable for the disciplines (or interdisciplinary approach) proposed, and that can be assessed by the Honors Program. This should be something that *can be provided and archived by the library* and that is accessible to an educated lay audience. This might include:

- A written final capstone paper, of appropriate length given disciplinary standards.
- A video or audio recording of a performance.
- A portfolio of created original visual images.
- A portfolio from a museum exhibition.
- Computer code on a reliable storage medium.

Note that for creative endeavors, the performance or act of creation alone is not sufficient — something must be available to archive *or* a substantive written component must be provided.

### ***The Oral Defense***

The H-SC catalog on page 12 notes the requirement for an “oral defense before the supervisory committee.” The Honors Council in 2024 determined that there is an expectation of a *public defense*, with a time, date, and place to be communicated to the Honors Director by the tenth week of the second semester. Public defenses are open to the entire college community.

The student and three committee members may choose a private component of the oral defense limited to the committee, but should normally have a public component. If there will be a private component, this must be communicated by the tenth week of the second semester.

The Honors Council notes the following “best practice” characteristics of an oral defense:

- An oral defense should be scheduled for a minimum of 60 minutes, inclusive of presentation and question and answer period.
- An oral defense includes some presentation of the project: this will often be an overview, the questions that drove the project, methods, results, and an argumentative defense of the thesis.
- A substantial period of time (at least 30 minutes) must be reserved for questions from the supervisory committee. Additional time may (and typically should) be allotted for other audience members.
- Questions may include specific comments about aspects of the work, but will often explore why and how the honors student made specific decisions in pursuing the project; why the student made specific structural decisions in framing the work; and other questions regarding insights into the project. (In other words, a “defense” of the project.)

### ***Approval by the Committee***

A successful honors capstone project must be signed by all three committee members. It is the student's responsibility to secure the signatures, *which must be completed by the last day of classes in the second semester.*

If a committee member is unwilling to sign a project, the student and advising chair may appeal to the Honors Council for a review. *This must happen as early as possible.* The Honors Council will solicit and appoint a committee of two additional faculty to review the project.

### ***Submission of the final project***

Two hard copies of the final project, signed by the entire committee, are due on the *last day of classes* in the second semester, to the honors director. In addition, the student must e-mail the *abstract alone* to the honors director, for use by the library in indexing.

One copy of the project will be given (or mailed) to the student.

## **Capstone expectations for students**

Students undertaking the honors capstone embark on a significant, year-long project expected to result in scholarly thought, creative expression, or an entrepreneurial project that represents work significantly above the norm at Hampden-Sydney College. A successful capstone, with completion of the other program requirements, results in one of H-SC's most notable student achievements, “with College Honors.”

Expectations for projects vary by disciplinary boundaries; over 2024-25 the Honors Council will be soliciting those boundaries to provide greater guidance for students and supervising faculty.

The student has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that:

- Clear expectations are created and shared with the committee as to the nature of the project and its final product;
- Meetings are scheduled held by the stated deadlines;
- If necessary, they reach out to the advisor (and committee members) for advice and feedback;
- They raise concerns with committee members or the honors director if a faculty member involved is not meeting their commitment to mentoring and guiding a project.

The Honors Council expects that all Honors capstones meet the following expectations:

- The work should be of a quality that exceeds the work normally expected for the grade of ‘A’ in a course in the discipline. The student’s committee ultimately decides how far beyond this minimal expectation a student must go.
- Inform the chair (and committee) of problems or delays in the project, as far in advance as reasonably possible.
- The student contacts faculty in a timely manner in scheduling meetings, defenses, etc. — the expectation being to provide at least *two weeks* of advance notice.
- The student and committee schedule and attend at least three full meetings of the committee as a whole (two in the fall, one in the spring, not including the defense).
- The student meets with the chair as requested over the course of the project.
- The student attends and passes an oral defense.
- The student makes any changes required by the committee and have them approved, *before the submission deadline*.

### Capstone expectations for advising committee chairs

Undertaking the advising of a capstone project is a significant commitment of time to mentor a student’s intellectual development. While the student has the ultimate responsibility in delivering a project of intellectual merit in a timely fashion, the advisor should mentor the student to aid this process. Advisors should thus be prepared to raise concerns with the student (and committee members) if deadlines go amiss, the student does not complete work or the project lacks merit.

Faculty agreeing to serve as a committee chair are agreeing to fulfill the following minimum expectations. They will:

- Help guide the student, working out a timeline for the project with clear expectations of what should be done and when it should be completed.
- Monitor deadlines and project quality.
- Lead the faculty on the committee to ensure that the student is well supported.
- Provide key insight and expertise on the topic at hand.
- Provide the student with feedback, including substantive written feedback on at least one (complete) draft and preferably written feedback on earlier drafts.
- Assess the suitability of the initial proposal: is the proposed topic interesting, is the student able to use the methodology outlined, is the data available, etc?
- Ensure that the student meets all requirements (see *Honors Capstone Requirements, page 10*).
- Modify and clarify requirements at the beginning of the project, including whether a credit component is required (e.g., HONS 497-498).
- Attend at least three full meetings of the committee as a whole (two in the fall, one in the spring).
- Provide additional meetings as needed with the student.
- Attend the oral defense, with prepared questions based on the current draft of the project, and contact the other committee members in advance regarding questions and approach to the defense.
- Raise concerns with the student and committee if the project does not seem to be on a trajectory for a final completion, or if the project does not show sufficient merit. (See *Withdrawing, page 10*).

- Ensure that the quality of the final project goes beyond ‘A’ work as normally expected in a class. When the student is unwilling or unable to do so, the chair must reject the project and communicate to the student the reasons for so doing.

### Capstone expectations for second readers

Being second reader on an honors capstone provides faculty with the opportunity to provide an honors student with additional insight and expertise, and to provide additional support to the committee chair.

Faculty agreeing to serve as a second reader are agreeing to fulfill the following minimum expectations:

- Provide relevant insight and expertise on the topic at hand.
- Attend at least three full meetings of the committee as a whole (two in the fall, one in the spring).
- Provide the student with feedback and expertise, including substantive written feedback on at least one (complete) draft in the spring and preferably written feedback on earlier drafts.
- Attend the oral defense, with prepared questions based on the current draft of the project.
- Raise concerns with the student and committee if the project does not seem to be on a trajectory for a final completion, or if the project does not show sufficient merit. (See *Withdrawing*, page 10).

### Capstone expectations for Honors Council readers

Council readers are assigned by the Honors Council, and are normally drawn from outside of the student’s home departments. Council members may not have significant expertise on the subject, but provide the viewpoint of the “educated layperson” — given that Hampden-Sydney is a liberal arts college, Honors capstones are encouraged to be accessible to a wider audience.

Council representatives fulfill the following minimum expectations:

- Ensure the student is meeting required deadlines (see *Honors Capstone Requirements*, page 10) and providing reminders to the student as needed.
- Enforce those deadlines, up to and including rejecting the project when rules and deadlines are not met.
- Attend the meetings of the committee as a whole.
- Provide the student with written feedback on at least one (complete) draft in the spring.
- Attend the oral defense, with prepared questions based on the current draft of the project.
- Raise concerns with the student and committee if the project does not seem to be on a trajectory for a final completion, or if the project does not show sufficient merit. (See *Withdrawing*, page 10).

### Honors Course Selection

Each semester, faculty are encouraged to submit proposals to teach honors courses. In the fall, honors first year, HONS 201, and HONS 261 courses are solicited, to be taught the following fall; in the spring, HONS 202 and HONS 262 courses are solicited, for the following spring. (E.g., a call for courses in fall 2024 is a request for courses in fall 2025.)

For all three courses, priority is given to faculty; then qualified staff; then qualified other members of the community in how courses are selected and allocated.

First-year honors courses offered in the fall must be a course suitable for first-year students and meeting a requirement in the core-curriculum. (Honors sophomores or juniors may take such

courses with permission to the instructor, after all first-year students have been placed.) Proposals are forwarded to the Honors Council, and should meet Honors Program SLOs and CLOs (for proposals taught in Fall 2025 and after).

HONS 201-202 proposals are forwarded to the Honors Council, which selects courses by considering the following:

- The Council prefers that contingent faculty (faculty on fixed-term contracts awaiting renewal during the summer) offer HONS 201-202 courses in spring semesters.
- Does the course meet Honors Program SLOs (for proposals starting with Fall 2025)?
- Does the course provide a special opportunity for honors students and engage them in ways consonant with the goals of the honors program?
- Is the course inter- or multi-disciplinary?
- Does the proposal make a compelling case why the course is suitable, what honors students would gain from it, and how the course is interdisciplinary?
- Looking to the proposing faculty member's home department or program, has the department/program been underrepresented in Honors offerings in the past 5 years?

The Council welcomes courses that count for core requirements (pending approval by the Academic Affairs Committee), but does not formally use this as a criteria to judge courses.

The Honors Council supports team-taught courses, although such proposals are contingent on home departmental/program needs and whether the Dean of Faculty determines the annual budget can support this. Please secure approval from home departments or programs before proposing a team-taught course.

HONS 261-262 proposals are forwarded to the Honors Council, which selects courses based on the following criteria:

- The Council prefers that contingent faculty offer HONS 261-262 courses in spring semesters.
- Does the course meet Honors Program SLOs (for proposals starting with Spring 2026)?
- Does the proposal make a compelling case why the course is suitable, what honors students would gain from it?

### **Honors Student Learning Outcomes**

The Honors Program is reviewing student learning outcomes for the program, and will put new SLOs in place over the 2024-25 course year.

### **Honors Course Learning Outcomes**

The Honors Program is reviewing SLOs, and will put new SLOs in place over the 2024-25 course year.

### **Student Housing**

A limited amount of Honors Housing is available for sophomores, juniors, and seniors in a wing of the newly renovated Venable Hall. Honors Students have priority for this wing and may apply early for consideration.

### **VCHC Nominations**

As a Virginia Collegiate Honors Council institution, H-SC may nominate two students each spring for the VCHC's "honors student of the year" and "up and comer" awards. The Honors Council will select a senior and a first-year or sophomore for the respective awards.

## The Honors Council

The Honors Council is comprised of four faculty members and three students.

The Honors Director is appointed by the Dean of Faculty. The Honors Director chairs the council; in addition, one faculty member from each division is appointed by the Dean of Faculty for staggered three-year terms.

Three student members are also on the Council. Student members are members in good standing of the Honors Program; seniors who do not undertake a senior capstone are not eligible to continue service.

Faculty members are expected to evaluate capstone proposals, serve as council readers on honors capstone projects, select honors courses, advise on new policies, and hear and determine student appeals. Student members similarly advise on new policies and lead lecture and program initiatives. Student members are encouraged to provide a conduit to allow honors students to shape the program.

### *Student Member Selection*

Each fall, the Program inducts a new student member from the rising sophomore class, to serve a three-year term. (If a student steps down temporarily or permanently from the council, a replacement is drawn from that cohort.) There is thus a sophomore, junior, and senior member.

Each spring, the Honors Director will invite self-nominations from first-year students in the Honors Program. The Honors Council will select, by vote of the Council as a whole, a representative from those nominated.

In the event a student resigns, the Council will use the same procedure, inviting self-nominations from students in the appropriate cohort.