

Honors Program Handbook



Last Modified: September 7, 2016

Goals of the Unity College Honors Program

The Unity College Honors Program offers an engaging challenge for academically talented and motivated students from all academic disciplines. The Honors Program takes an integrated approach, valuing permeable boundaries between learning environments and disciplines. Through a variety of curricular and co-curricular components, Honors students will be encouraged to reach their potential as independent thinkers and creative problem solvers.

As an Honors student, we know you are a motivated and capable scholar. Therefore, we want to provide challenges that support your growth in new directions. We expect all Honors students to:

- Seek experiences to expand knowledge and grow as scholars
- Integrate knowledge and skills across curricular and extra-curricular experiences
- Apply their sustainability science education to their careers and daily lives
- Develop skills in transdisciplinary problem solving
- Be effective leaders and communicators

Support for Honors Program Students

If you have questions or need advice about the Honors Program, you are welcome to get in touch with the Honors Program Director:

Dr. Pamela MacRae
Dean of the School of Biodiversity Conservation &
Associate Professor of Sustainable Fisheries Management
Unity College
pmacrae@unity.edu
207-509-7256

Entry Requirements into the Honors Program

Students with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.50 are able to apply for the Honors Program after their second semester at Unity College. Students who have transferred into Unity College 30 or more credits and maintained a cumulative GPA of at least a 3.50 at their previous institution may apply to the Honors Program after completing one semester at Unity College with a GPA of at least a 3.50.

To apply, a student must complete the [Honors Program Application Form](#) and provide one letter of recommendation from a Unity College faculty member to the Honors Program Director (honors@unity.edu). This application may be submitted at any time during the academic year and during a student's time at the College; as long as you meet the requirements summarized above. With that in mind, any student intending to apply to the Honors Program is encouraged to meet with the Director prior to beginning the application process. The application and letter must be submitted electronically to honors@unity.edu, and the student will be notified electronically about the outcome of the application within two weeks of receipt of all materials.

Honors Program Curriculum

To fulfill the Honors Program requirements, students must complete:

- Two Honors Seminars (UC 3001) with an A or B
- A six credit thesis (UC 4013 for two semesters OR UC 4003 and UC 4013 OR UC 4023 for two semesters OR UC 4033 for two semesters) with a transdisciplinary component with an A or B
- Designated components of the Unity College Co-curricular Leadership Program

Honors Seminar (UC 3001)

Through lively discussion and critical reading and writing, students will develop their skills in synthetic reasoning while expanding their knowledge of current issues and transdisciplinary topics. Previous seminars have included the topics of Science and Media, National Parks' Response to Climate Change, and Ethnobiology. This course may be repeated for credit under a different theme. 1.5 class hours.

Credits: 1

Offered: Semester II

Prerequisites: Sophomore status and a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.33

UC 4003 Senior Thesis I: Project Planning and Design

Through instructor and peer guidance, students in this course develop a full project proposal for their thesis. Students should come into the course already with some idea for a project and an idea of a thesis advisor. Students will refine their project ideas, conduct a thorough literature review, construct a detailed project plan and timeline, and test data collection protocols. Course activities will include project planning, peer evaluation of project ideas, and time for consultation with the instructor to receive feedback. This research based thesis class is open to all majors including but not limited to natural, physical and social sciences, although sampling and analysis methods will differ between fields of study. 1.5 class hours; 1.5 computer lab hours.

Credits: 3

Offered: Semesters I and II

Prerequisites: Junior status, MA 2243 and a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00.

UC 4013 Senior Thesis II: Data Collection, Analysis, and Presentation

A thesis is a substantial written work that documents and defends a viewpoint or hypothesis relying on the use of rigorous field, lab, or other research. During this course students work mostly independently under the guidance of their thesis advisors to complete data collection and analysis, write and revise their written thesis, and develop and deliver a presentation for a public defense. Students will also meet once a week with other thesis students and faculty to gain and provide feedback on projects. This course may be repeated for credit when planned for through the proposal stage or in instances of extenuating circumstances that require significantly more work than had been expected. This research based thesis class is open to all majors including but not limited to natural, physical and social sciences, although sampling and analysis methods will differ between fields of study. 2-1.5 class hours; other hours dependent on individual.

Credits: 3

Offered: Semesters I and II

Prerequisites: UC 4003, Senior Status, and minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.00.

UC 4023 Creative Thesis

The creative thesis is a capstone experience that allows you to showcase your skills and abilities as a writer: in other words, it represents a bridge between your work as an undergraduate student and as a student in a Master of Fine Arts program or as a professional writer in an environmental field. Usually completed during your senior year, this project enables you to create a publishable collection of work in your chosen area of specialty; perhaps it is a chapbook of poems, a series of feature articles, a memoir, or a digital platform for a local nonprofit. The specific topic and methodology of the project will be determined by you and your two faculty thesis advisors. A student who wishes to enroll must consult with the faculty advisors to develop a work plan and timeline, outline learning objectives, and determine modes of evaluation as part of the thesis proposal. This written thesis proposal must be approved by your faculty advisors and filed with the Director of Undergraduate Research two weeks prior to pre-registration. A copy of the final thesis will be deposited in the Dorothy Webb Quimby Library. The senior thesis may be taken at the 4000 level only, for a maximum of three credit hours for each of two semesters. Hours dependent on individual.

Credits: 3

Offered: Semesters I and II

Prerequisites: Consent

UC 4033 Applied Thesis

The applied thesis is a capstone experience that allows you to showcase your skills and abilities as a practitioner within a field. Usually completed during your senior year, this project enables you to plan, develop, and implement a significant project in your area of specialty. Examples could include planning, securing funding for, and implementing a plan for a universal trail for a land trust or a greenhouse program for a school. The specific topic and methodology of the project will be determined by you and your two faculty thesis advisors. A written thesis proposal must be approved by your faculty administrator and filed with the Director of Undergraduate Research. A copy of a final thesis report that includes a description of the planning and implementation and an evaluation, or plan for evaluation of effectiveness of the project will be deposited in the Dorothy Webb Quimby Library. The applied thesis may be taken at the 4000 level only, for a maximum of three credit hours for each of two semesters. Hours dependent on individual.

Credits: 3

Offered: Semesters I and II

Prerequisites: Consent and Junior Status

Honors Program Extra-Curricular Experiences

Leadership Program

Students will work with the Chief Student Success Officer and the Dean of students in coordination with the Honors Program Director to complete one of the leadership programs offered at Unity College. Students should anticipate that it will take a least one full academic year to complete this program.

Student Conference

The Unity College Student Conference is an opportunity to celebrate excellence in academic work created by Unity College students. As an Honors student, you should be seeking opportunities to publicize your academic work and receive feedback from those outside the classroom. Therefore, all Honors students are required to present annually at the Unity College Student Conference after their freshman year.

Community Service

Being an Honors student is not only about studying hard and getting good grades. Honors students take on challenges, seek out opportunities to grow, and strive to be leaders. Honors students at Unity are encouraged to engage in community service.

Other Events

During the year the Honors Program will sponsor several events intended to broaden your horizons. These may include visits to museums, attending a conference, a trip to see an engaging speaker, or participation in a community event. The Honors Program is for the students, and we encourage student involvement in suggesting events and assistance in organizing the events. If you have ideas, please let the Honors Program Director know. Participation in these events is not required for completion of the Honors Program, but is definitely encouraged.

Remaining in Good Standing with the Honors Program

Honors students are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.50 and make satisfactory progress towards completion of Honors Program requirements. Satisfactory progress includes planning for and completing the required curricular components credits, contributing to the community through service, participating annually in the Student Conference (after freshman year), and practicing academic honesty in accordance with the Unity College Honors Code.

If your cumulative GPA falls below 3.50, or if you are not making satisfactory progress towards completion of Honors Program requirements, the Honors Program Director will request a meeting to review your standing. Together, we will develop a plan and goals for getting you back on track with the Honors Program. If after another semester you are not making progress on the goals established, if your GPA is too low, or if you are so far behind in the curriculum that completion is not possible, you will receive a letter from the Honors Program Director indicating that you are no longer in the Honors Program.

Recognition of Honors Program Students

Students who complete the Honors Program requirements will be honored at graduation with special honor stole and noted in the graduation program. Completion of the Honors Program will also be noted on your transcript.