University of Iowa Honors Program

Director
• Art L. Spisak

Website: https://honors.uiowa.edu/

The University of Iowa Honors Program is an open and welcoming community, and staff members help students tailor the honors experience to their particular circumstances and goals. The program’s general objective is to enrich the undergraduate experience by cultivating intellectual curiosity and practical skill through challenging course work, creative engagement, and experiential learning to nurture a deeper understanding of one’s discipline and self.

What is especially unique about Honors at Iowa? It gives students the space and opportunities to make connections and develop self-authorship through self-discovery. The UI Honors Program provides those conditions. For example, because honors classes are usually smaller than non-honors sections, honors students have the opportunity to form closer connections with their professors on campus. Such working relationships can change careers and lives through mutual discovery. Iowa honors students also make lasting connections and learn from each other through the unique pre-fall semester workshop, HONR:1100 Honors Primetime, their honors first-year seminars, and through the honors residential community in the Honors House at Daum Hall.

The UI Honors Program is also unique in the strong emphasis it puts on experiential learning (learning by doing), which comprises half the program’s curricular requirements. Experiential learning takes the form of undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, teaching practica, being an honors ambassador or an Honors Writing Fellow (or both), and other opportunities. Learning by doing, besides being the most effective way of acquiring knowledge, also helps with self-discovery.

Students who are serious about their education and making a meaningful contribution to the world with their particular capabilities and gifts can be assured that the University of Iowa Honors Program will help them in their quest.

Unique Honors Academic Activities

Honors Outreach Ambassadors earn academic credit for acquiring and then sharing knowledge of honors opportunities by organizing events around campus and meeting with prospective students and their families.

Honors Writing Fellows are trained and paid to assist in undergraduate courses by mentoring a dozen students each semester on two major writing assignments.

The Iowa Policy Research Organization selects a dozen honors students each year to earn academic credit by learning how to conduct policy analysis and then writing policy papers for Iowa communities and the Iowa Legislature.

Study abroad and internships with a reflective component or embedded project enable students to earn honors academic credit for their experience.

Learn more about honors activities and Experiential Learning on the honors program website.

Cocurricular Programs

Honors at Iowa offers students a rich variety of activities outside the classroom. Many honors students find cocurricular programming a good way to meet people, get involved, and learn more about themselves and the world around them. Some of the programs are volunteer-based, some offer pay, and some award honors credit. These opportunities provide peak educational experiences, especially extensive and intensive interactions with faculty mentors and other honors students.

Honors newsletters, which are written by honors student editors, inform readers on and beyond the campus about honors at the University of Iowa.

Honors student staff earn pay by staffing the honors reception area and the Honors Student Center.

Honors Peer Mentors earn pay by mentoring first- and second-year honors students.

Honors Summer Ambassadors earn pay to orient entering students to the honors program by informing them of academic opportunities and activities.

The Iowa City Foreign Relations Council hosts luncheon dialogues on current international issues. Past speakers include award-winning journalists, Nobel Peace Prize laureates, seasoned diplomats, prominent politicians, and policy analysts. Listening to and talking with these expert speakers allow honors students to become better informed about world affairs.

The Presidential Program engages recipients of the Presidential Fellowship in shared classes, opportunities for prestigious fellowships, and unique programming. Presidential Fellows participate in events with faculty and key administrators, scholarship and fellowship mentoring programs, and volunteer projects.

To learn more, visit Programs and Events on the honors program website.

Financial Support

Honors at Iowa helps students apply for scholarships, fellowships, awards, and prizes. The program offers its own scholarships to honors students selected from academic programs throughout the University. Honors scholarships are available to incoming first-year honors students as well as current honors students.

Iowa students win major national and international scholarships each year. Honors provides advising and nominations for Rhodes, Marshall, Gates Cambridge, Churchill, Truman, Udall, Goldwater, Humanity in Action, National Science Foundation, and other prominent scholarships and fellowships. Announcements about scholarships and other awards appear in honors program emails and on the program’s website. Learn more at UI Undergraduate Scholarships and Fellowships on the honors program website.
Programs

Undergraduate Program of Study

University Honors

Honors at Iowa helps students tailor opportunities to different educational needs and goals. Honors students may take honors courses each semester that they are enrolled at the University. Honors courses are generally small and interactive. They connect students with distinguished professors and offer new topics each semester. Honors courses also are part of the GE CLAS Core curriculum and do not add requirements for graduation.

Students are encouraged to begin honors work early. In HONR:1100 Honors Primestart, entering students earn 1 s.h. of honors credit by taking a short course a few days before fall classes begin. Students who enter the honors program directly from high school take HONR:1300 Honors First-Year Seminar with selected professors on current topics, earning 1 s.h. in the fall semester. Honors students may fulfill GE CLAS Core requirements by completing honors sections such as RHET:1030 Rhetoric, ENGL:1200 The Interpretation of Literature, and CHEM:1110 Principles of Chemistry I.

Upper-level students may take honors courses in their majors or pursue individual instruction with faculty members through honors courses such as HONR:3994 Honors Research Practicum. Students also may earn honors credit for a non-honors course by developing an honors contract with the course instructor; the student and instructor negotiate a unique project for the course and develop the honors contract around the project.

Additional academic opportunities include honors advanced seminars, honors independent studies, and honors practica in teaching and service.

Students learn about honors opportunities in weekly emails from the UI Honors Program. Honors professional staff members and honors peer mentors offer guidance in personal meetings and group presentations. In addition, the honors staff helps students design individualized curricula for their special interests. To learn more, visit University Honors Requirements on the program’s website.

Joining the Honors Program

Students may apply to the University of Iowa Honors Program as entering first-year, entering transfer, or current University of Iowa students. Current students are encouraged to apply prior to earning 60 s.h. in course work.

To remain in the honors program and to graduate with University Honors, students must maintain a University of Iowa cumulative g.p.a. of at least 3.33 and complete the honors program curricular requirements; see “University Honors Curriculum” below. For more information about joining the University of Iowa Honors Program, see How to Apply on the program’s website.

Graduation with University Honors

All students joining the UI Honors Program must attend an honors orientation.

Graduation with University Honors through the University of Iowa Honors Program is recognized at commencement and is noted on both the student’s diploma and transcript. Honors program students completing any undergraduate degree program may graduate with University Honors.

University Honors Curriculum

Students earning bachelor’s degrees at the University of Iowa complete honors course work and experiential learning in order to graduate with University Honors. Students are not required to complete all honors course work requirements before they begin experiential learning.

Honors Course Work

Students complete 12 s.h. of honors course work during their first four full semesters in the program. Students may count a maximum of one honors contract course toward the course work requirement; under preapproved circumstances, they may count up to 6 s.h. of honors contract course credit.

The following honors course work must be completed.

An honors first-year seminar during the first semester at the University of Iowa (for students who enter the UI Honors Program directly from high school). Students who must take a specific first-year seminar required by their major or living learning community may substitute another honors class for the honors first-year seminar requirement.

An honors course or an honors contract course during the first full semester in the program.

Additional honors course work to total at least 12 s.h. within the first four full semesters in the program.

Experiential Learning

Students complete 12 s.h. of honors credit in approved experiential learning activities. Students may satisfy the requirement with one of the options below, or they may combine two or more of these options.

Earn honors in the major; this option fulfills the entire 12 s.h. experiential learning requirement.

Earn up to 12 s.h. in honors credits in mentored research; this fulfills the entire experiential learning requirement. Students who earn less credit for mentored research may combine it with another option to fulfill the experiential learning requirement.

Study abroad and internships can earn up to 12 s.h. in honors credits depending on the length of the experience and the satisfactory completion of a pre- and post-experience questionnaire, a personal narrative, and an optional independent project. Students who earn the maximum 12 s.h. in honors credits fulfill the entire experiential learning requirement; those who earn less credit with the study abroad and internships option may combine it with another option to fulfill the experiential learning requirement.

Earn up to 9 s.h. in honors credits serving as an Honors Writing Fellow.

Earn up to 4 s.h. in honors credits participating in the Iowa Policy Research Organization.

Earn up to 6 s.h. in honors credits for preapproved experiential honors course work. See Experiential Learning on the Honors at Iowa website for details.
Facilities

Blank Honors Center
Honors at Iowa has its home in the Blank Honors Center, a modern facility that helps fosters community among honors students. The Blank Honors Center is located near the center of the University's main campus, next to residence halls and classroom buildings. It offers social areas, a kitchenette, quiet study areas, wireless internet access, a computer lab, and classrooms for students. The center also houses the honors staff and has rooms for meetings, events, presentations, and conversation.

Honors Residential Community
Honors housing is available for first-year honors students in Daum Hall, which is connected by a skywalk to the Blank Honors Center.

Students must apply to live in the honors residential community. See Housing on the University Housing and Dining website for information about how to apply. Visit Honors House on the honors program website to learn more about the honors housing community.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study
Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

University Honors

Joining Honors as First-Year Students During Fall Semester
Course Title Hours

Academic Career
Any Semester
Students may apply to the honors program as entering first-year, entering transfer, or current University of Iowa students.

Honors: To remain in the honors program and to graduate with University Honors, students must maintain a University of Iowa cumulative GPA of at least 3.33.

Honors section of a GE course such as RHET:1030 Rhetoric, ENGL:1200 The Interpretation of Literature, CHEM:1110 Principles of Chemistry I, or EES:1070 Age of Dinosaurs

Meet with an Honors Peer Mentor by the end of the year

Select Honors courses for spring semester

Study Abroad: attend Study Abroad Fair (explore experiential learning options)

Research: attend Fall Undergraduate Research Festival (FURF) (explore experiential learning options)

Consider applying to become an Honors Outreach Ambassador (explore experiential learning options)

Consider Honors Program scholarship opportunities

Sign up to attend an Iowa City Foreign Relations Council lunch/presentation

Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.

Spring
Honors section of a GE course such as RHET:1030 Rhetoric, ENGL:1200 The Interpretation of Literature, CHEM:1110 Principles of Chemistry I, or EES:1070 Age of Dinosaurs

Meet with an Honors Peer Mentor by the end of the year

Select Honors courses for fall semester

Consider applying for an Honors Writing Fellow position (explore experiential learning options)

Research: attend Spring Underground Research Festival (SURF) (explore experiential learning options)

Research: explore research opportunities for summer or second year (explore experiential learning opportunities)

Consider joining Phi Eta Sigma (PES) honor society

Consider applying for an Honors Student Staff position for summer or second year

Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.

Second Year
Fall
Honors section of a GE course such as RHET:1030 Rhetoric, ENGL:1200 The Interpretation of Literature, CHEM:1110 Principles of Chemistry I, or EES:1070 Age of Dinosaurs

Research: attend Marshall Undergraduate Research Conference

Meet with an Honors Peer Mentor by the end of the year

Study Abroad: attend Study Abroad Fair (explore experiential learning options)

Research: attend Fall Undergraduate Research Festival (FURF) (explore experiential learning options)

Consider applying to become an Honors Outreach Ambassador (explore experiential learning options)

Select Honors courses for spring semester

Consider Honors Program scholarship opportunities

Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.
Spring
Honors section of a GE course or a contract course in your major/department.
Check University Honors degree audit.
Meet with the Honors Advisor for your major: is Honors in the Major right for you?
Research: attend SURF; consider what research questions you might pursue
Research: explore research opportunities for summer or third year
Consider applying for an Honors Student Staff position for summer or third year
Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.

Hours 0

Third Year
Fall
Check University Honors degree audit.
Explore HONR experiential coursework (e.g. Honors Teaching Practicum, Honors Service Learning, etc.) Attend FURF
Consider Honors Program scholarship opportunities
Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.

Hours 0

Spring
Check University Honors degree audit.
Consider applying for an Honors Summer Orientation Ambassador position; share your wisdom with new students
Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.

Hours 0

Fourth Year
Fall
Check University Honors degree audit.
Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.

Hours 0

Spring
Check University Honors degree audit.
Sign up to attend the Honors Commendation Ceremony held during finals week; families welcome.
Graduate with University Honors
Internship or Study Abroad: Complete the honors pre-experience questionnaire for possible honors experiential learning credit for upcoming internship or study abroad experiences.

Hours 0

Total Hours 2

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Courses

University of Iowa Honors Program Courses

HONR:1100 Honors Primetime 1 s.h.
Preparation for honors opportunities, especially activities and courses; teamwork on projects that develop skills of invention and communication; presentation of products and performances; connect honors students, honors teachers, and staff members.

HONR:1300 Honors First-Year Seminar 1-2 s.h.
Small discussion classes taught by faculty members on special topics; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, visits to research facilities, field trips). Requirements: first- or second-semester standing.

HONR:1350 Honors Seminar for Presidential Scholars 1 s.h.
Designed to help students know themselves and one another better through participation in selected events and structured experiences; students attend events selected from the University and Iowa City’s rich intellectual and cultural offerings, such as art workshops, literary readings, presentations in the sciences and humanities, hands-on engineering demonstrations, dance recitals, political forums, plays, and music performances (students decide as a group which events they attend); in-class discussion, small-group work, and guest presentations; for first-year Presidential Scholars. Requirements: Presidential Scholarship award received when admitted to the University of Iowa.

HONR:1610 Honors Seminar in Historical Perspectives 3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member to explore and explain historical developments. GE: Historical Perspectives.
HONR:1620 Honors Seminar in International and Global Issues 3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member to introduce perspectives of other nations and cultures through international or global issues. GE: International and Global Issues.

HONR:1630 Honors Seminar in Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts 3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member to appreciate, analyze, create, or perform art. GE: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts.

HONR:1640 Honors Seminar in Natural Sciences 3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member on natural science topics. GE: Natural Sciences without Lab.

HONR:1660 Honors Seminar in Social Sciences 3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member on social science topics. GE: Social Sciences.

HONR:1670 Values and Culture 3 s.h.
Asking fundamental questions about human experience and its meaning while becoming more aware of what, exactly, defines culture and values; students have a chance to consider their own values and beliefs, and the importance to their lifelong goals. GE: Values and Culture.

HONR:1680 Honors Seminar in Diversity and Inclusion 3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member to broaden student perspectives on social and cultural differences and introduce concepts in the structural bases of inequality and the benefits of diversity. Requirements: member of the University of Iowa Honors Program.

HONR:1850 Honors Seminar in Communication and Literacy 3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member; focus on writing, speaking, and critical reading skills or analysis of fiction, poetry, drama, essays.

HONR:1883 War 3 s.h.
Emotions soldiers have as they fight, what makes them continue voluntarily to face death, and how modern society memorializes these experiences; how literature and art transform the experience of war; human responses to war in Homer’s Iliad and select Greek tragedies. GE: Values and Culture. Same as CLSA:1883.

HONR:1885 Reading the Ancient City 3 s.h.
How ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern peoples from third millennium B.C.E. to fourth century C.E. described, celebrated, and deplored life in their great cities (Babylon, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome); readings selected from ancient literary prose, poetry, drama, and religious writings; study of popular writing (e.g., ancient inscriptions, graffiti, letters, and magic spells). GE: Interpretation of Literature.

HONR:2600 Honors Special Topics 1-3 s.h.
Small-class learning with a faculty member on special topics.

HONR:2700 Seminar for University of Iowa Honors Program Fellows 1 s.h.
Scholar development that challenges students to develop self-knowledge that enriches their intellectual life, increases their academic engagement, and deepen their sense of community. Requirements: second-year UI Honors Program fellowship recipient.

HONR:2800 The Green Room 1-3 s.h.
Exploring and broadening interests outside of one’s academic discipline; follow innate curiosity and go beyond the traditional boundaries of the college curriculum. Requirements: member of the honors program and in good standing (UI cumulative g.p.a. of 3.33 or higher).

HONR:3050 Honors Studies arr.
Independent studies arranged with faculty members who certify satisfactory completion of study plans and performance for topics not covered by other UI courses.

HONR:3100 Honors Teaching Practicum 1-3 s.h.
Teaching internship in first- and second-year courses; may include providing tutorial assistance, conducting review sessions, aiding course organization.

HONR:3150 Honors Service Learning arr.
Service learning projects arranged with faculty members who certify satisfactory completion of study plans and service.

HONR:3160 Honors Internship 0-3 s.h.
Independent service internship arranged with faculty members, who certify satisfactory performance and completion of project.

HONR:3170 Honors Outreach Ambassadors 1-2 s.h.
Experience sharing knowledge and experiences of the honors program with other students in meetings during office hours, online chats, other venues; outreach ambassadors; answer questions, provide information, help students find honors opportunities in and out of class.

HONR:3210 Honors Policy Research Practicum 1 s.h.
Theory and practice of public policy research; development of policy-research skills; production of policy-research papers. Requirements: sophomore or junior standing.

HONR:3220 Honors Writing Fellows: Writing Theory and Practice 3 s.h.
Preparation of honors students selected as writing fellows to serve as peer tutors in writing-intensive courses; theories of writing, evaluation of drafts, peer tutoring with students.

HONR:3250 Fieldwork in Social Innovation 3 s.h.
Entrepreneurial skills necessary to actualize ideas in the community; students work with local partners to brainstorm, prototype, and build an original community-based venture involving needs assessment, social history of problem, and concept mapping; students learn soft skills such as interviewing, networking, collaboration, and building trust. Requirements: enrollment in engaged social innovation plan of study and honors program membership in good standing. Same as INTD:3250.

HONR:3994 Honors Research Practicum 1-3 s.h.
Individual research performed in conjunction with a faculty member’s research.

HONR:4990 Honors Thesis or Project 1-3 s.h.
Culminating project of research or artistic creation; preparation and completion of the final product associated with graduation with honors in the student's major. Requirements: member of the University of Iowa Honors Program and junior or senior standing.