

Honors Program Requirements

What to know as you prepare to register for your courses.

At a glance:

- 4th year students:
 - You should have completed nearly all the requirements for the honors degree. You should be currently enrolled in (or have completed) HONR449H and plan on enrolling in HONR451H and HONR450H or an approved substitute.
 - You should have completed or have a plan to complete your service-learning project and essay.
 - You should have completed at least 20 hours of honors coursework and earned a B or better in each of those courses.
 - You should have completed at least one honors symposium course or plan on enrolling in one of the three offered next semester.
 - Make sure your schedule allows you to earn the required 24 credit hours of honors courses with at least 6 credit hours in your major discipline.

- 3rd year students:
 - By the end of the spring semester, you should have a minimum of 19 honors credit hours.
 - You should have completed HMXP102H and CRTW201H.
 - You should have completed at least 15 hours of honors coursework (including currently enrolled courses) and earned a B or better in each of those courses.
 - You should have completed at least one honors symposium course or plan on enrolling in one of the three offered next semester.
 - You should begin thinking about your culminating project and the associated course sequence (1st semester: HONR449H, 2nd semester: HONR451H and HONR450H (or approved substitute)).
 - If you have not already completed your service-learning project, it would be a good idea to get that completed.
 - Make sure you have at least one honors course in your plans for next semester. You may need to contract this course (see below). **Contracts are due on Jan 10th!**

- 2nd year students:
 - By the end of the spring semester, you should have a minimum of 13 honors credit hours.
 - You should have completed HMXP102H.
 - If you have not completed CRTW201H, make sure to include it in your Spring course schedule.
 - You should have completed at least 9 hours of honors coursework (including currently enrolled courses) and earned a B or better in each of those courses.
 - If you have not already completed your service-learning project, it would be a good idea to get that completed.
 - Consider taking an honors symposium course next semester.
 - Make sure you have at least one honors course in your plans for next semester. You may need to contract this course (see below). **Contracts are due on Jan 10th!**

- 1st year students:
 - By the end of the spring semester, you should have a minimum of 7 honors credit hours.
 - Ideally, you're enrolled in ACAD101H and either WRIT101H or HMXP102H this semester.
 - If you are currently enrolled in WRIT101, you should take HMXP102H
 - If you are currently enrolled in HMXP102H, you should take CRTW201H.
 - Make sure you have at least one honors course in your plans for next semester. You may need to contract this course (see below). **Contracts are due on Jan 10th!**

Honors Program Requirements

A total of **24 credit hours** of honors coursework with a grade of **B or better** and a cumulative **GPA of 3.30** or higher is required to complete an honors degree.

1. **General Education Component** (6 hours): Honors sections of "The Human Experience: Who Am I?" (HMXP102H) and "Critical Reading, Thinking and Writing" (CRTW201H) for a total of 6 credit hours must be completed.
2. **Cultural Component** (1-3 hours): One honors symposium must be completed (1 credit hour) or one special topics Honors seminar (3 credit hours).
3. **Coursework component** (12 hours): Completed 12 credit hours of Honors coursework with a minimum of 6 credit hours in your major.
4. **Independent Study Component** (5 hours): This is a two-semester course sequence that helps you prepare to complete a culminating project (HONR449H - 1 credit hour) and complete the project (HONR451H and HONR450H – 4 credit hours total).
5. **Service-Learning Component**: A service-learning project and a 3–5 page reflection essay must be completed. In some cases, this can be completed as part of coursework

To be in good standing, students must accumulate the following honors credit hours with a B or better and maintain a GPA of 3.30 or better.

- **Freshmen** should have accumulated 7 honors credit hours by the end of the freshman year
- **Sophomores** should have accumulated 13 honors credit hours by the end of the sophomore year
- **Juniors** should have accumulated 19 or 20 honors credit hours by the end of the junior year
- **Seniors** must have accumulated 23 or 24 honors credit hours by the end of the senior year

Students not in good standing will be placed on probation and will be asked to meet with the Dean of the Honors College to identify an action plan. If a student fails to meet with the Dean or does not successfully implement the action plan, the student will be removed from the Honors program and lose perks including early registration.

What counts as an honors course?

1. **1-credit honors symposia or 3-credit Honors seminars**, which meet the Cultural Component requirement. Three 1-credit symposia are being offered in the Spring:
 - a. HONR202H – Mass Extinctions Past and Present

Brief description: The 6th Mass extinction?! Join us for a critical discussion-based exploration of the concept and reality of the 6th mass extinction. The Earth holds the record of no fewer than 5 mass extinctions through the last 500 million years of complex life on this planet. We will investigate the causes, consequences, and scale of these past events, and compare them with our current biodiversity crisis. This seminar will interweave the scientific, historical, and modern ideas and perceptions of extinctions across many different plant and animal groups, with a goal to answer the provocative question, “are we in the 6th mass extinction?”

b. HONR204H: Social Media and Evolving Law

Brief description: While many social media users enjoy the open nature of access to participate in an expansive community and the sense of anonymity certain digital platforms offer, today's excesses have invited legal intervention. This course will examine readings and engage in discussions of whose rights to protect and how. Areas of legal protection examined include creators' needs to redress the intellectual property challenges experienced with online curators or other unauthorized copying, purchasers' expectations for influencers to be responsible for standing behind what they promote, and limitations on harmful speech. We will also engage in the continuing national debate on how to regulate social media content and identifying the appropriate authority to serve as gatekeeper.

c. Understanding AI: Innovations, Ethics, and Societal Impacts

Brief description: This course provides an interdisciplinary look at the role of artificial intelligence in contemporary society. We will explore the history and future of AI, ethical questions, privacy issues, environmental considerations, and the potential, both positive and negative, of AI tools. This course requires no technical background and emphasizes the societal and practical implications of AI technologies, equipping students with the critical thinking skills to engage with AI in their personal and professional lives.

2. **Sections of pre-determined honors courses by major.** These courses have honors sections that are regularly offered and do not need any additional effort to count toward our honors coursework.
3. **Contracted honors courses.** In many cases, you'll need to work with your instructor to 'contract' a class for honors credit. In order to do so, you'll need to follow these steps:
 - Ask the instructor if they are willing to enter into an honors contract. Most instructors will agree, but it is ultimately their choice.
 - Collaborate with the instructor to complete the [Honors Program Contract Form](#).
 - Completing the form will trigger a process that asks the instructor and their Department Chair to approve the contract.
 - When all approvals are received, a confirmation will be emailed to you and your instructor.

Special considerations to note for Spring 2025 contracts:

1. **No honors contracts will be awarded for CRTW201H or HMXP102H.** Make all efforts to fit one of the pre-determined sections into your schedule. If this is not possible, you should plan to take the course during the Fall of 2025.
2. **All Honors contracts must be submitted by the end of the first week of classes (Jan 10th).** Make sure to be proactive and plan accordingly (submitted does not mean approved – I understand that sometimes instructors and Department Chairs can take some time to approve the form).

The Honors Culminating Experience (the Independent Study Component)

Students must take three courses to complete this requirement:

1. HONR449H: Preparing for the Honors Culminating Experience. This class is designed to help you work through the beginning stages of your project, including finding a mentor, identifying a research or creative project, and developing or reinforcing basic research skills.
2. HONR450H or the appropriate substitute course in your major.
3. HONR451H: Senior Honors Culminating Experiences Seminar. This course is required to be taken concurrently with HONR450H (or approved substitute) as you develop your thesis or complete your culminating project. You should enroll in this class immediately after completing HONR449H.

Honors Service-Learning Requirement

This requirement is composed of two parts: 1. completing the service activity and 2. composing and submitting a reflection essay.

Students typically meet the service activity part of the requirement in one of three ways:

- by taking a course with a service-learning component
- by serving in a community (such as volunteering at a local homeless shelter)
- taking part in Winthrop's day of service, such as Rolling in Rock Hill.

The reflective essay should summarize the experience, consider its value and how it might be improved, and discuss the value of service learning in general.