

HONORS PROGRAM

Academic Year

2011-2012

Department

Honors Program

Department Chair

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Description of Program/Major

Mission

The Honors program serves a diverse community of students who have proven themselves especially talented, skilled and successful in their academic careers. Our mission is to attract such students to St. Mary's University and to provide them with a challenging and rewarding program—a program which (1) complements their professional development with courses in the Catholic intellectual and liberal arts traditions, (2) encourages them to engage critically in the self-conscious formation of their worldview, and (3) prepares them to succeed after graduation to make a positive difference in the world.

Requirements

The Honors program is open only to students who have applied and been accepted into the program. Honors scholars complete 24 hours of course work and write a senior thesis or project. The courses are intended to be taken sequentially, with one course taken each semester for eight semesters. All but one of these courses satisfy a St. Mary's core curriculum requirement. The one exception is HO 4301, which is taken in conjunction with the Honor's senior thesis or project. Honors courses are intended to foster the learning community of Honors scholars. For this reason, students are expected to take their Honors courses in sequence with their class. Substitutions and exceptions may be considered only in special circumstances. Honors scholars must also maintain minimum GPA requirements to remain in the program. At the completion of the first year, scholars must have a 3.0 or higher, and at the end of subsequent semesters, students must maintain a 3.25 or higher.

Department Courses and Descriptions

Self and Meaning: Quest for Authenticity (3)

HO 1301

This course meets the requirement for SMC 1311 and is taken in the fall semester of the first year. The goals and objectives overlap with those of SMC 1311. The focus is on the theme of authenticity, an important line of philosophical investigation in late modern and contemporary philosophy. Investigations into authenticity concern the nature and quality of the relationship between the conscious self and the world one is situated in.

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Focus of the Social Sciences (3)

HO 1302

This course meets the requirement for SMC 1313 and is taken in the spring semester of the first year. The goals and objectives overlap with those of SMC 1313. The course serves as an introduction to the social sciences and the study of the social structures and institutions which shape the lives of individuals. The instructor will provide the course with a thematic focus appropriate to her or his discipline. Students should be introduced to the methods of social sciences while considering local, national and global issues. Common good and communitarian approaches should be considered.

Independent Study (3)

HO 1399

In special cases, with the Director's permission and with approval of the appropriate undergraduate dean, an Independent Study course may substitute for one of the regular courses in the Honors Curriculum; such courses are given an HO designation. A maximum of two such courses may be included in a student's Honors curriculum.

The Practice of Citizenship (3)

HO 2301

This course meets the requirement for SMC 1313 and is taken in the spring semester of the first year. The goals and objectives overlap with those of SMC 1313. The course serves as an introduction to the social sciences and the study of the social structures and institutions which shape the lives of individuals. The instructor will provide the course with a thematic focus appropriate to her or his discipline. Students should be introduced to the methods of social sciences while considering local, national and global issues. Common good and communitarian approaches should be considered.

Emergence of the Universe (3)

HO 2302

This course meets the requirement for SMC 1312 and is taken in the spring semester of the second year. The goals and objectives overlap with those of SMC 1312. This course introduces students to the study of the natural sciences as (1) a method, (2) an ethical process and (3) an on-going quest for a comprehensive understanding of the physical, chemical and biological evolution of the universe.

Independent Study (3)

HO 2399

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Aesthetic Experience (3)

HO 3301

This course meets the requirement for SMC 2304 and is taken in the fall semester of the third year. The goals and objectives overlap with those of SMC 2304. The focus is on fostering an understanding of the evolution of aesthetic expression in literature and the arts in Western culture and the ability to interpret individual works of literature and art through their historical context.

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Religion: Experience and Tradition (3)

HO 3302

This course meets the core requirement for a second theology course and is taken in the spring semester of the third year. The course explores the process by which human experience and the human quest for God give rise to religious tradition. The course may adopt an interdisciplinary approach in which the emergence of religious tradition is studied not only from a theological perspective but also from the point of view of other disciplines such as sociology and philosophy.

Independent Study (3)

HO 3399

In special cases, with the Director's permission and with approval of the appropriate undergraduate dean, an Independent Study course may substitute for one of the regular courses in the Honors Curriculum; such courses are given an HO designation. A maximum of two such courses may be included in a student's Honors curriculum.

Senior Thesis or Project (3)

HO 4301

This course is taken in the fall semester of the fourth year. Honors students must take this course or an equivalent course in their major.* The course guides students in planning, researching, outlining and writing their senior thesis or project. Students also arrange to work with a faculty mentor whose academic discipline is appropriate for their topic. *Engineering major do not take this course but instead take EG 4340W (or equivalent), as they begin work on their senior design project. Similarly, Honors students in other majors that require a senior course on research methods may, in consultation with the director, opt out of this course. However, all Honors students must complete their senior thesis or project.

Prospects for Community and Civilization (3)

HO 4302

This course meets the requirement for SMC 4301 and is taken in the spring semester of the fourth year. The goals and objectives overlap with those of SMC 4301. The course is taught as a senior seminar intended to bring the Honors curriculum to a conclusion with the consideration of current problems and the possibility of solutions that can sustain cohesive communities and human flourishing. The intent is for Honors students to refocus their work as a learning community toward the future as they prepare for graduation. While interdisciplinary in scope, the specific content of the course will be appropriate to the instructor's discipline. This course does not require an extraordinary research and writing assignment, but should have graded requirements comparable to other Honors courses.

Independent Study (3)

HO 4399

In special cases, with the Director's permission and with approval of the appropriate undergraduate dean, an Independent Study course may substitute for one of the regular courses in the Honors Curriculum; such courses are given an HO designation. A maximum of two such courses may be included in a student's Honors curriculum.

Department Faculty

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