HONORS COLLEGE

THE HONORS COLLEGE

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The Honors College provides intellectually curious students who wish to challenge themselves in a unique learning community an opportunity to satisfy all of their university-wide general education requirements through a specially designed, alternative pathway. By completing 6-8 seminars from a menu of interdisciplinary, team-taught Honors seminars focused on primary texts and seminar discussion, students earn either an Honors certificate or Honors degree. Because of the focus on sharpening communication skills, engaging materials from diverse perspectives, and confronting challenging ideas across periods and cultures, Honors College students are prepared to be articulate and responsible members of society and defenders of their own ideas. Students who join the Honors College via the lateral entry option may also earn an Honors certificate upon completion of 4 seminars. The Honors College is a longtime member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and the Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC).

Referred to by one higher education leader as "one of the best in the United States," Westminster University's Honors College offers one of the most comprehensive stand-alone, interdisciplinary, team-taught Honors curriculums in the country. The Honors College also houses Westminster's Fellowship Advising Office, which serves the entire campus. Approximately thirty professors from a wide range of disciplines regularly teach in the Honors College, and eight of them have won the Gore Excellence in Teaching Award, Westminster's most prestigious award for faculty. Honors College students are known for their service on and off campus, regularly serving as captains of athletic teams, student government leaders, and editors of Westminster publications like *The Forum* and *Ellipsis*, as well as volunteering at many local non-profits.

Faculty

Russ Costa, Professor (Honors/Neuroscience)
Alicia Cunningham-Bryant, Professor (Honors)
Connie Etter, Associate Professor (Honors/Justice Studies)
Julie Stewart, Professor (Honors)

Affiliate Faculty

Kelly Asao (Psychology), Kara Barnette (Philosophy), Bill Bynum (Mathematics), Greg Gagne (Computer Science), Julia Kamenetzky (Physics), Han Kim (Public Health), Matt Kruback (Art), Christopher LeCluyse (English), Nick More (Philosophy), Alysse Morton (Management), Kristjane Nordmeyer (Sociology), Brent Olson (Environmental Studies), Michael Popich (Philosophy), Spencer Potter (Theatre), Sean Raleigh (Mathematics), Christy Seifert (Communication), Meghan Wall (Dance)

Program Goals

The mission of the honors college is to invite students into a challenging journey of developing their voices, sharing those voices, and learning to hear the voices of others. The following program-wide learning outcomes are housed under honors college core values:

Collective

- Compassion and empathy
  - Engage with a variety of sources, viewpoints, and individuals on topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, including sources that share the identity or identities being discussed.
  - Recognize how power, privilege, and bias impact relationships on interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional levels, historically and today.
  - Analyze the influence of power in U.S. and global contexts.
  - Discuss how culture shapes social justice.
- Community-centered conversation
  - Explain the context that informs the questions they ask.
  - Explain the implications of the questions they ask.
  - Engage in genuine conversation.
- Support and mentorship
  - Demonstrate self-awareness that facilitates collaboration with others.
- Connections across difference
  - Propose or participate in collective action against bias and injustice within and beyond the campus community.
  - Evaluate which collective strategies are most effective in challenging bias and injustice within and beyond the campus community.
  - Use language that recognizes, respects, and celebrates differences among group members.

Individual

- Academic and personal growth
  - Develop claims that emerge from analyzing relevant texts, evidence, data, and artifacts.
  - Utilize evidence in making written and oral arguments.
  - Reflect on learning and their role in that process.
  - Express themselves creatively beyond written and spoken media (i.e., visual, musical, etc.)
- Student empowerment
  - Examine the intersectionality of their identities in relation to structures of power (such "-isms" and "-obias" as racism and Islamophobia, for example).
  - Analyze the impact of bias and injustice in the world, historically and today.
  - Identify the contributions of figures, groups, events, strategies, philosophies, etc. to social justice and inclusion by structurally marginalized groups.
- Interdisciplinary inquiry
  - Integrate multiple disciplinary perspectives in their discourse.
  - Analyze complex texts and ideas.
  - Design an appropriate research model to answer complex questions.

- Curiosity and dedication
  - Demonstrate quantitative skills to ask and answer questions through data analysis.
  - Analyze data and evaluate sources independently.
  - Explore intellectual curiosity by taking a risk.

Admission to the Honors College

Students applying to the Honors College will be evaluated according to the following criteria: high school GPA and rigor of coursework, interest in the unique approach to learning in Honors, and the quality of a written statement. Current Westminster students who wish to transfer into the Honors College via the lateral entry pathway will have previous university work taken into consideration during the admissions process. Questions concerning the application process should be directed to the Dean of the Honors College.

Benefits of Participating in the Honors College

- *Academic distinction:* the Honors designation on the student's transcript shows graduate schools and employers that they have achieved academic success in rigorous classes. The challenging, comprehensive curriculum also helps students grow as thinkers, writers, and speakers.
- *Small class size:* Honors classes have an intimate, seminar-style feel and allow for close student-professor interactions and mentoring.
- *Excellent faculty:* eight Honors professors have won the university's Gore Excellence in Teaching award, Westminster's top recognition for faculty.
- *Enhanced support, advising, and mentoring:* first-year Honors College students attend supplemental orientation activities to help ease the transition to university life, receive specialized advising from trained advisors, and meet weekly as a cohort during the fall term. Finally, incoming Honors College students are grouped with peer mentors—upper-class Honors College students with extensive experience at Westminster—who can help guide them during their first year at university.
- *Award-winning wellness programming:* Honors College students learn mindfulness strategies from trained practitioners that equip them with tools to manage stress.
- *Interdisciplinary approaches:* the interdisciplinary nature of Honors seminars brings students and two faculty from different departments together to ensure an exciting class atmosphere that prepares students for the interdisciplinary approach of most top graduate programs and professional fields. It also helps students engage in a higher order of thinking because conversations across difference are especially challenging.
- *Alternative Gen Ed experience:* the Honors curriculum offers a unique learning experience that goes beyond the standard university general education classes in a series of specially designed seminars. Honors also offers students an efficient, flexible pathway through gen ed requirements that frees up time to fit in double majors, multiple minors, electives, extracurricular activities, intensive research projects, leadership opportunities, and other enhanced academic experiences.
- *Research opportunities:* the seminar-style approach to learning, the emphasis on writing and research in classes, and the program's support of outside research allow students to investigate their academic interests more fully and create opportunities for the presentation or publication of their work. The program awards independent summer research grants and provides funding to attend academic conferences.
- *Sense of community:* Honors College students take core classes together and interact with Honors faculty and students through other academic and social events. This interaction helps establish a sense of belonging to the university community. The Honors College is housed in Nunemaker Place. Built in 1977, this architecturally striking building provides Honors College students and faculty with a variety of distinctive spaces, including staff offices, meeting areas, and reading and study spaces. Located next to beautiful Emigration Creek, Nunemaker opens out onto a tree-lined patio where students and faculty can eat lunch, read, and relax.
- *Special study abroad opportunity:* Westminster's Honors College is a member of the Principia Consortium, which gives students access to a unique Honors educational experience at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. Honors College students also have access to scholarship support for international MTSE classes.
- *Access to supplementary resources:* these resources include the Honors College listserv, Student Honors Council meetings, the Honors College newsletter, and special enriched learning experiences such as attendance at cultural events. Funding to attend and give papers at academic conferences, leadership training opportunities like the Student Honors Council, special recognition opportunities like the Nelson Creative Arts and Writing Awards, and opportunities to participate in special meetings with distinguished visiting scholars and lecturers are also included.
- *Fellowship Advising Office:* Westminster's Fellowship Advising Office, which serves the entire student body, is housed in the Honors College, ensuring that Honors College students are introduced to a wide range of post-graduate fellowship opportunities like the Fulbright, Marshall, Gilman, and Truman scholarships among many others.
- *Commitment to diversity and inclusion:* the Honors College is guided by a robust diversity strategic plan. The Honors College was the first academic unit on campus to conduct a diversity climate survey and is a leader on campus in inclusive admissions strategies.

Participation in Honors College Courses by Non-Honors College Students

Any Westminster undergraduate in good standing with a 3.5 GPA or higher is eligible to enroll in 300- and 400-level Honors seminars. The Honors College is an active part of the larger university community and welcomes the energy, intellect, and diversity that students from different disciplines across the campus bring to Honors classes. Non-Honors College students enrolling in Honors seminars should check with their program chairs, since these classes will sometimes fulfill certain requirements in a student's own major. Participation in 200-level Honors seminars is restricted to students in the Honors College.

Continuation Policy: Criterion for Remaining in the Honors College

If an Honors College student falls below a 3.0 Westminster cumulative GPA, a period of two semesters will be used to allow the student to return to the minimum GPA for continued participation. Students who do not reach the 3.0 threshold after one year may petition the Honors Council to continue taking Honors classes.

Honors Degree Requirements

Students may complete the requirements below and be awarded a certificate recognizing this achievement contingent on Westminster graduation. Only one course across Section II or III may be taken as credit/no credit. Upon completion of the Honors degree, major and/or minor, and graduation requirements, students will receive either an Honors Bachelor of Fine Arts, Honors Bachelor of Arts, or Honors Bachelor of Science depending on their major program of study.

Requirement Description	Credit Hours	Prerequisites
I. World Language Requirement	**12 or equivalent proficiency**	
Honors Degree recipients must complete 3 semesters of university-level instruction in a single world language or the equivalent. Requirement can		

Requirement Description	Credit Hours	Prerequisites
be satisfied by coursework or proof of proficiency. For example, an incoming student who begins in Spanish III and successfully completes that course will have satisfied the requirement. (May term study abroad trips may not be used to satisfy this requirement.) Honors College students may also demonstrate proficiency through 12 hours of CLEP, FLATS, or other proficiency exam credit in a single language. All coursework that meets this requirement must be taken for a letter grade.		
II. Lower Division Gateway Courses	**8**	
HON 201 Foundational Conversations I	4	
HON 202 Foundational Conversations II	4	These courses are taken consecutively in fall and spring terms, respectively.
III. Lower Division Courses	**20**	
Select five courses from:		
HON 211 Global Welfare & Justice	4	
HON 212 Arts & Performance	4	
HON 213 Environments & the Space of Art	4	
HON 221 Science as Knowledge	4	
HON 222 Science, Power & Diversity	4	
HON 231 Human Culture & Behavior	4	
HON 232 Data/Society/Decision-Making	4	
IV. Additional Coursework	**4**	
Students must complete 4 credit hours of additional coursework from a 200-level Honors seminar listed above, a 300/400-level Honors elective seminar, or an Honors May term course.		
V. Senior Project/Thesis	**2**	
Completion of a senior project in the student's major for a minimum of 2 credit hours. Students whose majors employ a practicum, internship, exhibition, or recital as the senior capstone experience must include a significant written component in which they reflect on that experience. All students completing a thesis or senior project for the Honors Degree must fill out the thesis topic approval and completion forms, which are available on the Honors website, and present their completed work in a public setting such as a regional academic conference, Westminster's undergraduate showcase, or some equivalent venue.	consent of instructor	
VI. Honors Capstone	**0-2**	
Students completing senior projects in the major to satisfy requirements for the Honors Degree enroll in HON 403 during the semester(s) they are conducting that work. Students may take HON 403 for credit up to two (2) times.		
HON 403 Capstone Conversations	0-1	
Total Hours for the Honors Degree	**46-48**	

Honors Certificate Requirements – *For Lateral Entry Students Only*

Students who join the Honors College via the lateral entry option may complete four seminars in the Honors core sequence and be awarded a certificate recognizing this achievement contingent on Westminster graduation. *None* of these courses may be taken as credit/no credit.

Requirement Description	Credit Hours	Prerequisites
I. Lower Division Gateway Courses	**10-12**	
A minimum of two WCore courses (6-8 credit hours) or similar general education courses from a two- or four-year institution are required.All lateral entry students take HON 203 upon entry to the program:		
HON 203 Foundational Conversations III	4	
II. Lower Division Courses	**16**	
Select three courses from:		
HON 211 Global Welfare & Justice	4	
HON 212 Arts & Performance	4	
HON 213 Environments & the Space of Art	4	
HON 221 Science as Knowledge	4	
HON 222 Science, Power & Diversity	4	
HON 231 Human Culture & Behavior	4	
HON 232 Data/Society/Decision-Making	4	
Total Hours for the Honors Certificate	**22-24**	

Honors Certificate Requirements – *For Traditional Entry Students Only*

Students may complete six seminars in the Honors sequence and be awarded a certificate recognizing this achievement (contingent on Westminster graduation). Only one of the courses in Section II may be taken as credit/no credit (*does not apply to HON 201 or 202).*

Requirement Description	Credit Hours	Prerequisites
I. Lower Division Gateway Courses	**8**	
HON 201 Foundational Conversations I	4	
HON 202 Foundational Conversations II	4	These courses are taken consecutively in fall and spring terms, respectively.
II. Lower Division Courses	**16**	
Select four courses from:		
HON 211 Global Welfare & Justice	4	
HON 212 Arts & Performance	4	
HON 213 Environments & the Space of Art	4	
HON 221 Science as Knowledge	4	
HON 222 Science, Power & Diversity	4	
HON 231 Human Culture & Behavior	4	
HON 232 Data/Society/Decision-Making	4	
Total Hours for the Honors Certificate	**24**	

Honors College Seminars Across Departments/Programs

Honors College seminars do not satisfy major/minor requirements or prerequisites except when completed by an Honors College student in the following cases:

- HON 201 and 202 *Foundational Conversations I & II* may be substituted for the WCFAH and Writing Emphasis prerequisites required for LMW 222 and 223 in the Literature, Media, and Writing program.
- HON 201 and 202 *Foundational Conversations I & II* may be substituted for any two 200 Level PHIL courses (excepting PHIL 201-202), or PHIL 102 and one 200 Level course. HON 203 *Foundational Conversations III* may be substituted for any 200 level PHIL course (excepting PHIL 201-202) or PHIL 102.
- HON 211 *Global Welfare and Justice* may be substituted in place of PLSC 106 *Explorations in Politics* as a lower-division requirement for the Political Science program.
- HON 212 *Arts and Performance* may be substituted for THTR 101 *Devised Theatre* as a lower-division requirement for the Theatre program.
- HON 213 *Environment and the Space of Arts* may count as an elective for the Environmental Studies program.
- HON 222 *Science, Power, and Diversity* may be substituted for PHIL 216 *Ethical Issues in Health and Healthcare* as a required prerequisite for the Public Health major.
- HON 222 *Science, Power, and Diversity* or HON 231 *Human Culture and Behavior* may be substituted for a WCSBS course option and prerequisite required for the Public Health and Nursing majors, respectively.
- HON 201 or 202 *Foundational Conversations I* or *II*, respectively, may be substituted for the WCore Writing Emphasis and/or prerequisite required for Nursing majors.