

*Department of Social Work
Honors-In-Major Program
2009-2010*



Admission criteria:

To be admitted in the Social Work Department Honors-in-Major option, students must have a 3.2 GPA, be entering their junior year and be a declared social work major.

Requirements:

The Honors-in-major program in the Department of Social Work requires students to complete three 600 level or higher Social Work courses, excluding field and field seminar, for honors, in addition to a six credit thesis over two semesters in the senior year. One of the 600 level courses must be Research Methods (SW 601W) in which the student will complete their senior thesis research proposal including IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval, if needed. This proposal will be reviewed by the Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Department Chair by April of the junior year. It must clearly identify the topic, research question, proposed research design and potential faculty mentor. Faculty mentors will be assigned by the end of April of the honor students' junior year. Every attempt is made to respect the students' request for choice of faculty mentor; however, the additional criterion of overall faculty workload is a consideration in this decision.

Benefits of Honors in Major Program Participation

Electing to participate in the Social Work Department Honors in Major program yields numerous benefits for students. Among these benefits are added distinction in the job market, cultivating a strength in a particular area of study/practice, showing project writing/development/implementation/analysis skills at a higher level than others, as well as offering additional distinction when applying for graduate school. In addition, it affords participating students an opportunity for those interested in research to ‘test the waters’ of that arena – writing a grant proposal, designing and implementing a research design and submitting/presenting a finished product. Lastly but perhaps most importantly, is the personal satisfaction and intrinsic reward of completing a significant piece of work of which you can be justly proud!

Honors in Major students will be honored at a lunch in the spring of their senior year, and recognized at the Graduation breakfast. Their name will also be put on a plaque in the Department commemorating their honors program participation.



Honors courses

*Courses elected to be taken for ‘honors’ must meet certain criteria. See following section entitled, “**What Does An Honors Designation Involve?**” Honors course contracts are required to be completed and signed by the faculty person teaching the course, the honors student and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. This honors contract will be placed in the students’ file. A copy of this contract is in the BS in Social Work Policy Manual. In addition, students are responsible for completing the *honors designation form* for the Registrar’s office.*

What Does An Honors Designation Involve?

The “Honors” designation permits both students and faculty to pursue the creativity, independence, and intellectual stimulation of honors in a regular classroom setting. It can facilitate close faculty-student contact, customize your overall academic plan, and help you choose an emphasis in a department, or prepare for your thesis in a specific area.

When you designate a course as “Honors,” you are in effect enrolling in a new course, designed for your individual needs, and subject to the same university-wide policies as any other course in which you are enrolled. Like any other course, the Honors Designated Course requires advance planning and clear expectations for both faculty and student. It is possible to terminate participation in the Honors in Major program but it is not possible to drop the honors designation of a single course once it has been elected.

If you are interested in this option, you should plan for it during the pre-registration period, so that you know whether the faculty member is able to accommodate your request, and what will be expected of you. You will then be able to make an informed decision about whether this is the right option for you. Please note that faculty members are not obligated to designate, and many have good reasons for feeling that their course might not be appropriate.

Work to satisfy the honors designation in 600 or above level courses must further the skills required to complete the honors thesis. These skills include:

- Writing skills
- Library research skills
- Proficient use of the APA method of citation
- Conceptualization and Critical Thinking Skills
- Quantitative and/or Qualitative research skills

All honors contracts must articulate the linkage between agreed upon honors assignments and the skills they should be furthering, broadening and deepening.

Page 4

The **Honors Designation** enriches a regular, non-honors course throughout the span of a semester by establishing a clear distinction in rigor, depth, intensity, cross- or interdisciplinary character, and/or innovative teaching/learning opportunities. The main purpose to keep in mind is that an **Honors Designation** should enrich a student's learning in a standard course. This may take the form of challenging her with more work; but it should certainly do so with deeper, more qualitatively substantive approaches to course content and assignments. As a general guideline, students may anticipate an investment of 1/4 to 1/3 more time, effort, and difficulty in earning honors credit, which is duly noted on the official transcript. The following suggestions might provide some guidance as students and faculty work towards a more specific "honors contract."

- 1) higher degree of student participation and involvement in the class
- 2) higher standards of performance than expected of regular students
- 3) more advanced supplemental reading, especially of primary sources
- 4) more opportunities for writing, and at a higher standard
- 5) more opportunities for student presentations to class or campus audiences
- 6) stronger enhancement of skills in critical thinking, analysis and interpretation
- 7) greater depth and/or breadth of subject matter, especially requiring synthesis of different perspectives or points of view
- 8) more opportunities for research, particularly when student-conceived
- 9) use of resources or consultants from beyond the campus itself, such as university libraries or interactions with business or industry personnel
- 10) opportunities for publication or public presentation of work
- 11) integration of concepts and information from a variety of sources and experiences, particularly in cross- or interdisciplinary contexts, or ones that come out of the student's major field of interest
- 12) community-based experiences: field trips, interviews, cultural events
- 13) leadership in the classroom: leading study groups, leading class discussion, assisting faculty in preparation and delivery of instructional material
- 14) investigating an area of the discipline not covered in depth in the regular course, either through a literature search, an annotated bibliography, or a conventional research paper

Page 5

- 15) applying the information/expertise learned in the course in a creative way
- 16) monitoring and analyzing current events associated with the course topic
- 17) Other: _____

Honors work will be assessed at 25% of the total grade for the course. All other required work being reduced proportionately.

Honors Thesis Guidelines

Advisor and Student responsibilities

All students in the Honors in Major Program will write a thesis in their senior year. What is a thesis?

Background: The 1984 Senate Motion establishing the University Honors Program gave the UHP oversight of Honors in Major programs throughout the university. Central to that mission were two expectations: one, that the faculty in the various departments and disciplines were charged with establishing curricula in the Honors in Major Programs that reflected disciplinary practices and pedagogies; two, that the UHP was charged with ensuring consistency across the university with regards to the central values of an “Honors experience.”

Those central values encompass the following:

- *a student will be expected to pursue opportunities in the discipline that demand greater depth and rigor than those normally required by the major;
- *they will be expected to complete the curriculum at a consistently high level of achievement;
- *they will be expected to engage in independent study and research (under the supervision of a faculty member) beyond the requirements of their course-work;
- *and they will be expected to present publicly a culminating project that synthesizes aspects of their study.

The thesis, therefore, should be a significant research project through which the student can demonstrate these values in ways that demonstrate, synthesize or elaborate on their expertise in their field of study.

Three copies of the thesis are required: One for the student completing the thesis, one for the University Honors Program and one for the Department library. *This is a student expense*, but it may be defrayed by possible research grants.

The Department of Social Work will inform the University Honors Programs of seniors enrolled in the Honors thesis.

Department of Social Work
Student Guidelines for the Senior Thesis

Social Work Thesis - It is expected that a thesis should be comprised of the following components:

- An introduction to the study
- The stated issue being researched
- A rationale for the study (relevance, why is this important?)
- The limitations of the work to be presented
- Definition of terms found in the study
- Review of the empirical literature
- Description of the study
- Methodology used
- Study results
- Discussion

The above components are typically organized into a **five chapter format of introduction, literature review, methodology, results and conclusion/discussion**. A minimum of 25 books/articles must be included in the literature review. Internet sites should be approved by the faculty mentor and are in addition to the 25 books/articles.

The APA format for citation must be utilized; therefore the presentation of the thesis would include this format:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Text or body of the paper
- Reference page (s)
- Tables/Charts/Figures
- Appendices

There is no page requirement, but generally speaking, this type of work would not be less than 40 pages.

Useful references to help with the thesis include but are not limited to the following:

Glatthor,A and Joyner,R. (2005) *Writing the winning thesis or dissertation: A step-by-step guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

Lipson, C. (2005) *How to write a BA thesis: a practical guide for your from your first ideas to your finished paper*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.

Teitelbaum,H. (1998). *How to write a thesis*. New York: MacMillan

*Thank you to Dr. Anne Broussard for these references.

To successfully complete the thesis, you must do the following:

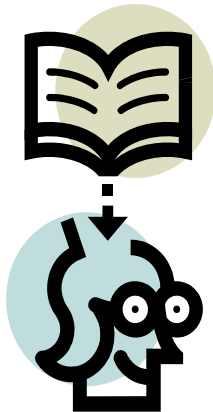
* pre-register for the thesis in the semester prior to the one in which you intend to earn thesis credits.

* in the semester that you pre-register for the thesis, you must confirm your faculty mentor with the undergraduate program coordinator (UPC). You will need an approved topic and an advisor to pre-register for the thesis which should be settled during SW 601H.

* complete the Honors Thesis Agreement and submit a copy to the UPC. This form can be obtained from the Department office.

* prior to graduation, you will publicly present your thesis, either at the annual Undergraduate Research Conference, or at another departmentally approved public event.

* when you complete your thesis, students must *submit copies both to the department and to the UHP*.



Student Timeline:

Sophomore year: Invitation to participate issued to all students with a 3.2 or higher GPA

Junior Year:

Fall: Take SW 601H Research methods (could be in the spring if necessary)–
develop thesis proposal

Take at least one other honors course (or take in the spring).

Spring: Take third honors course

By April 1: Submit thesis proposal to Department Chair and BASW
Program Coordinator

Explore financing alternatives to support thesis in consultations with the
faculty thesis mentor.

Senior Year:

Fall: Take SW 797H: Senior Honors thesis

Spring: Take SW 798H: Senior Honors thesis

May: Attend and present at the Undergraduate Research Conference.

Attend Honors luncheon!

The latest point of entry into the SW honors program is Fall of Junior year

*For further information, contact either your academic advisor or Martha
Byam, Undergraduate program coordinator and Honors program liaison.
mabyam@eisuniv.unh.edu or 862-1077*