

Frequently Asked Questions about the Department of Psychology Honors Program

STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

1. *When do students enter/apply for the honors program?*

Once they have declared their major, students are invited by e-mail to join the Psychology Department Honors Program. Beginning in Fall 2009, students can declare the major once they have completed 30 hours, including English 1000. Students must also have completed UCO 1200 or be currently enrolled in the course in order to declare the major.

2. *What are the requirements for admission into the honors program?*

Students must have a 3.45 cumulative GPA and a 3.50 Psychology GPA.

3. *What are the requirements for completion of the honors program?*

a. *Do students complete specific courses in the honors program?*

Students need a minimum of 3 semesters to complete the Psychology Department Honors Program. First they must take a Psychology Honors Colloquium course (PSY 3511 or 3512) as a prerequisite to begin their two-semester Senior Honors Thesis. A second Psychology Honors Colloquium is required before a student graduates.

b. *Do students complete an honors thesis? If yes, is there a committee? If yes, how large is the committee and who is eligible to be on it?*

Students must complete a two-semester senior Honors Thesis. The committee consists of 2 faculty members: a Thesis Director and a Second Reader. The second reader is usually from the Psychology Department, but can be from another department. If you are completing University Honors in addition to Psychology Honors, the reader **must** be from another department).

c. *What grades do I need to earn to graduate with honors?*

To remain in the honors program, you must maintain a 3.45 overall GPA and a 3.5 Psychology GPA. You also must receive a "B" or better in all honors courses and successfully complete and present your thesis.

4. *What is the nature of the honors curriculum?*

a. *Are there courses for honors students only? If yes, what are they?*

At least one honors colloquium class (PSY 3511 or 3512) is offered each Fall and Spring. The topics vary and change from semester to semester. Course topics are repeated approximately every 3-4 years. A list of previous seminars may be found on the honors website. Honors courses are not offered in the summer.

b. ***Are there sections of other courses designated as honors sections?***

PSY 1200 typically has at least one honors section, and honors sections of other courses may be added in the future. Other Honors students in the University are allowed to take these classes if they have the pre-requisite(s).

c. ***Who teaches the honors courses?***

The Honors Colloquia and Honors sections are taught by full-time tenure-track faculty members. We have a department of 30+ full-time faculty, so this responsibility is rotated frequently. Most faculty members volunteer to teach courses that are in their areas of expertise and typically not taught in our regular curriculum.

BENEFITS TO UNDERGRADUATES

1. ***Are there incentives/perks for being in an honors program (i.e. travel funds, research funds, permission to take graduate courses, computer lab, dedicated honors lounge, office space, scholarships/awards)?***

The primary incentives are opportunities to study advanced, diverse topics in a small group of other high achieving students and to complete a scholarly project under the direct supervision of a faculty mentor. These experiences are good preparation for future graduate study and/or your career path. Graduating with honors is challenging and provides a strong sense of accomplishment for students.

In addition, some opportunities to apply for funding exist. The Department of Psychology's website presents [some available scholarships](#). You may also apply for research and travel funds through the [Office of Student Research](#).

OTHER

1. ***How many honors students are in the honors program?***

In recent years, between 12 and 20 students graduate each year with Psychology Departmental Honors.

2. ***What percentage of psychology majors complete the honors program?***

Approximately 2.5% of our 500 declared majors graduate each year with departmental honors.

SENIOR THESIS

1. *What is a senior honors thesis?*

A senior honors thesis is an original piece of scholarship produced as a capstone experience to your degree. In the psychology department, this usually takes the form of either an original research project or a comprehensive literature review. The kind of project you chose will depend in part on the topic and expertise/theoretical orientation of your faculty mentor.

2. *When should I start thinking about my thesis?*

It's never too early! Although the project itself does not begin until your senior year, students are expected to secure a faculty mentor by the end of the semester prior to starting the thesis (e.g., second semester Junior year).

3. *How do I find a faculty mentor?*

Any full-time tenure track faculty member can chair an honors thesis. The faculty members on the psychology honors committee will work with you to define your interests and find an appropriate mentor. You may also approach faculty members on your own to see if they would be interested in chairing your thesis; we recommend looking through the faculty research interests on the departmental webpage to get an idea of faculty expertise. Keep in mind that some faculty would like to know you from the classroom or have you work in their lab before they agree to chair your thesis. Faculty also limit the number of students they are supervising, in order to give students enough individual attention. As such, you should be thinking about and talking with potential mentors well before your senior year.