

**SALLY McDONNELL BARKSDALE HONORS COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI**

FACULTY HANDBOOK



**JULY 2003
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The Honors College prepares citizen scholars who are fired by the life of the mind, committed to the public good, and driven to find solutions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	4
II. The Nature of Honors Courses	6
III. A Profile of Honors Students	7
IV. The Honors Curriculum: An Overview	8
Four-Year Program	8
Honors Scholars Program	9
V. The Honors Freshman Seminar Sequence	10
VI. Course Policies	12
VII. The Capstone Project and Senior Thesis	14
VIII. Selection of Faculty for the Honors Freshman Seminar	20
IX. Summer Faculty Development Workshop	20
X. Proposing an Honors Course	21
XI. A Few Reminders	23

I

INTRODUCTION

This Faculty Handbook describes the philosophy of honors courses and gives an overview of the honors curriculum. It also delineates SMBHC policies, and describes the role of the professor in advising an honors student on his/her capstone and thesis projects. Through it, faculty will learn of the many ways to be involved in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

The University of Mississippi has always attracted talented, creative, industrious students. The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College provides a home for these students, a shared curriculum, and a support structure through which they can seek various challenges. The SMBHC curriculum is designed to mesh with every undergraduate major offered on campus, in every school, and to work in concert with other prestigious University entities. In recent years, the SMBHC has included among its students Goldwater Scholars, Truman Scholars, Rhodes Scholars, Gates-Cambridge Scholars, Marshall Scholars, Rotary Scholars, and Fulbright Scholars. The creation of the SMBHC has enhanced the profile of the University in general. Indeed, the establishment of the Honors College was an essential element in the successful drive to house a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at the University of Mississippi.

The Honors College in its current configuration grew from the joint vision of Chancellor Robert Khayat and two University of Mississippi alumni, James L. Barksdale and Sally McDonnell Barksdale. In 1996, the Barksdales asked the Chancellor what they could do for the University that would make the most impact. Chancellor Khayat responded that the University could most benefit from having a solid honors college. That response led in 1997 to an initial endowment of \$5.4 million. Those funds bought and renovated the former ADPi house on Sorority Row, endowed 4 scholarships per year for SMBHC students, and established a \$2 million endowment for operating expenses. Other donors have endowed additional scholarships for SMBHC students—the Harold Parker Memorial Scholarship, the Everett-Williams Scholarship, the Excellence in STEM Scholarship, and (in association with the Women’s Council for Philanthropy) the Lynda M. Shea Council Scholarship for study abroad. In addition, the Honors College also awards Doris Raymond Scholarships to six students in each class. Through the years, the enormous generosity of the Barksdales has allowed the SMBHC to provide funding to departments to offer Honors courses and to help staff interdisciplinary Honors courses, as well as to fund faculty development experiences. They and other donors also have funded fellowships for study abroad or internship experiences for students, resources for student field experiences, funds for student research, faculty stipends for the supervision of honors theses, and staffing of the SMBHC. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2014, the University has assumed more of the Honors College budget, while Jim Barksdale continues to support our endeavors. In February 2004 the college was renamed to honor Sally McDonnell Barksdale, who passed away in December 2003.

The Honors College building is perhaps the most visible and widely appreciated resource offered the students. The recently-expanded SMBHC building is located close to the

academic center of campus, just off the Grove behind Farley Hall. The Honors College building provides seminar rooms for honors courses, a lounge/kitchen area, study rooms, a computer lab, and a courtyard. SMBHC students have 24-hour access to the building and all its resources. All SMBHC classrooms have a computer with internet access and a large monitor, and an additional connection for a laptop.

As the SMBHC grows and develops, the Honors College administration will endeavor to keep faculty, and this handbook, up-to-date. Please know that the SMBHC staff is always eager to help you or your students. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at 915-7294, or at the contact information below:

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II

THE NATURE OF HONORS COURSES

Honors courses at the University of Mississippi offer an alternative, multidisciplinary undergraduate curriculum to outstanding students interested in engaging in critical readings of texts, in-depth discussions, significant research projects, analytical writing, and community action. These courses differ qualitatively rather than quantitatively from the standard course offerings. That is, honors students will not be expected to do more work than non-honors students; rather, they will be expected to be more critically engaged in order to come to a greater understanding of a given issue or topic than would be achieved in a standard course.

In comparison to other classes, honors classes are small (usually 15-20 students). They are usually taught by tenured or tenure-track professors, with some exceptions made for permanent full-time instructors who hold a terminal degree or visiting professors with expertise in their field. Typically, the SMBHC staff works with department chairs or deans in selecting faculty for honors courses, but interested faculty may contact us directly to discuss course ideas.

The ideal honors class has a seminar format in which students are expected to actively participate in the presentation and discussion of topics and texts under consideration. In an honors course, students examine primary texts that have historical or literary value—books that put forward ideas that have shaped our world—or more recent works that present controversial ideas or challenge accepted modes of thinking. Typically, the class will read these texts in their entirety rather than focus on selected excerpts, as may be the case with standard courses. Honors students can usually grapple with more complex or sophisticated topics than what you may expect in a regular section.

The SMBHC expects grading in honors courses to follow that generally used throughout the University. Although the curriculum includes components that may be more rigorous academically than standard University curricula, grading policies in honors courses should not be more severe. Because honors courses carry no additional weight in the students' GPAs, honors students should not receive a lower grade than they would for similar work in a regular class. Instead, student performance is evaluated in a variety of ways, including class presentations and leading class discussions, journals, papers, focused research projects, or other assignments.

Honors courses can take many different forms. Most common are honors sections of established departmental courses. In some instances, when a department cannot release a professor to teach a stand-alone honors section, we arrange to offer an honors recitation to accompany a regular, established course. Faculty should also see the Honors College as an avenue to develop new courses, to experiment and stretch their own pedagogical boundaries using the University's brightest students, and the Honors College puts out a call for course proposals every spring. The SMBHC also is keen on developing experiential courses that

grapple with regional issues in education, health care, business, etc. Further details on developing a course can be found under the section on proposing a course.

III

A PROFILE OF HONORS STUDENTS

To be accepted into the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, a high school senior will apply to the SMBHC through the University's Special Programs and Scholarships application. Generally, students with at least a 3.50 unweighted GPA are considered. However, the application calls for much more than numbers. Students submit a résumé, two short essays, three letters of recommendation, and a transcript. Each application is reviewed by three members of the admissions committee and is evaluated based on the student's involvement in their school and community (with consideration given for what resources are available), the rigor of courses taken at their school, and the topics and quality of their essays. ACT and SAT scores are not considered by the admissions committee but may be reviewed by the dean.

The average freshman honors student has a 31 ACT score and a 3.97 high school GPA. Over fifty percent are from Mississippi, but honors students come from all over the country and some foreign countries. Most of our students were heavily involved in extracurricular activities in high school, especially in student government; community service; and athletics, theatre, journalism or music (or a combination of these). They continue to be involved in college. Honors students write for or are editors of the *Daily Mississippian*; they are ASB senators, cabinet members, or the president; they are varsity athletes and band members; they are involved in Greek societies and religious organizations. Being an honors student does not prevent students from being involved on campus; in fact, honors students are often more involved than other students.

Just because honors students are bright, highly-motivated, creative, and independent individuals, faculty should not assume that these young scholars are meeting all program requirements in a timely fashion. In the case of freshmen, they are young adults eighteen years of age (in some instances, younger); for some, it is their first experience being away from home and family for an extended period of time. They will need guidance, a friendly suggestion now and then, and most of all some visible sign that faculty are concerned about their welfare and interested in seeing them mature intellectually and socially. Faculty members serve as unofficial mentors to these students and develop working relationships that may extend throughout the students' four years on campus and beyond. It can be a privilege to interact with such a select group, and they are privileged to have you as one of their mentors. Faculty should remind our students that if they have a problem concerning the course or any other matter on which we could provide assistance, they should always feel free to consult with you or the SMBHC staff.

IV

THE HONORS CURRICULUM: AN OVERVIEW

Four-Year Program

The curriculum of the Honors College requires a minimum of 30 hours of honors credit. Hon 101 and 102 are required in the freshman year. Most students will earn 1-6 hours of honors credit for the capstone project, work leading up to the thesis. For the remaining hours, honors students choose honors sections of regular courses or enroll in recitations that accompany regular courses. Because many honors courses are special sections of courses that meet general education requirements, the Honors College curricular requirements are easily achievable in any school or college that grants an undergraduate degree.

Honors 101 and 102 ordinarily will satisfy the six-hour Freshman composition requirement. Alternatively, a student may apply the credits toward humanities or social science requirements, especially if the student has AP, IB, or other college composition credit. If used as humanities and social science credit, Honors 101 and 102 function differently in the various colleges and schools:

Business, Accountancy and Pharmacy: 6 hours of humanities

Engineering: 3 hours of humanities and 3 hours of social science

Education, Applied Sciences and Journalism: 3 hours of humanities and 3 hours of electives

Liberal Arts: 3 hours of humanities and 3 hours of social science

In addition to the Freshman Seminar (Hon 101 and 102), honors students will choose honors sections of departmental courses, especially during the first two years. The honors sections of these courses are similar in design, focus and goal to Honors 101/102; that is, they provide students with an opportunity to delve more deeply into issues and subject matter than in regular sections of the same courses. To see what courses the Honors College offers, visit <https://www.honors.olemiss.edu/honors-courses/>. Honors students should have at least 12 hours of honors credit (including Hon 101 and 102) by the end of the freshman year and 18 hours of honors credit by the end of the sophomore year. Often, they have much more, and sophomores typically average 24.5 hours by the end of their fourth semesters.

Also, as part of their requirements, honors students complete a capstone experience that leads to an honors thesis. More about that in the section about the capstone and the thesis.

Students must have a minimum of a 3.50 grade point average in order to graduate as a Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors Scholar. In the service of accomplishing this goal, Honors students must attain a minimum GPA of 3.20 at the end of the freshman year, a 3.40 at the end of the sophomore year, and a 3.50 by the end of the junior year. During the senior year, students must have at least a 3.50 cumulative GPA. The Honors College does not use a probationary period; however, students dismissed because of a poor GPA can re-enter the SMBHC if they bring their GPA up to the minimum for their year.

Community Action

Honors students are expected to participate in the Community Action Challenge each semester. The College accepts a wide variety of experiences from churches, clubs and campus organizations as fulfilling this requirement; visit <https://www.honors.olemiss.edu/students/community-action/> for more information and a list of many organizations in the Oxford/Lafayette County area. Also, courses that address a community issue (such as healthcare, education, social welfare) may fulfill the CAC requirement. Students report their CAC through GivePulse, olemiss.givepulse.com.

Honors Scholar Program

The SMBHC invites students who did not enter the College as freshmen to join through the Honors Scholar Program. This program welcomes both transfer students and current UM students. Through the Honors Scholar Program, students will become involved in capstone work in their majors, take Honors courses, and contribute to the larger society through the Community Action Challenge. Students can enter this program when they have earned at least 45 hours of college credit.

Students in the Honors Scholar Program complete the capstone experience and senior thesis, and take at least one other honors course of at least 3 credit hours. They also fulfill the Community Action Challenge for the semesters they are active in the SMBHC. Students who successfully complete these requirements receive the designation of Honors Scholar in their major (e.g., Honors Scholar in English), rather than Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors Scholar (the designation for those who complete the full four-year program).

Students interested in the Honors Scholar Program should complete and submit the Honors Scholar application, which can be found on the Honors College website under the Admissions tab. If you know of students whom you think should participate in the Honors Scholar program, please have them contact the Coordinator of Recruitment and Admissions for the SMBHC.

Study Abroad

Although not a requirement, studying abroad is highly encouraged. Studying abroad for at least a semester excuses the student from community action for the term(s) involved. In

addition, the SMBHC awards Honors Fellowships to help with the expense of studying abroad.

Honors College Welcome Week

The honors experience at Ole Miss begins the week prior to the opening of the fall semester with the Honors College Welcome Week. Honors freshmen move in a week before school starts and have a mixture of evening events that we expect them to attend and optional sessions during the day Monday through Thursday. Welcome week serves to create a sense of community among incoming freshmen as well as introduce them to the kinds of topics and discussions that routinely occur in an honors setting.

V

THE HONORS FRESHMAN SEMINAR SEQUENCE

During the freshman year students will examine through the Honors Freshman Seminar crucial questions regarding individual identity and the individual's place and role in society, as well as humankind's interaction with physical nature and the environment and ultimate human destiny.

Honors 101 and 102

Honors 101 introduces students to influential texts that address fundamental aspects of the human condition. Topics under consideration deal with concepts of the self and of the individual and society. To this end, questions such as the following can be considered: Who am I? What makes me who I am? Do I have free will? Am I essentially a product of my genetic code or of my social environment? Is my essence determined mainly by gender, race, class, or some other factor? Other typical questions include: How are societies organized? What is the proper relationship between the society and the individual? What is the nature of a just society? What is the ideal state?

In Honors 102 students continue their examination of the human experience. Core texts are selected around the themes of "self and cosmos" and "experience and the natural world." The former theme treats the nature and importance of religious experience and focuses on vital concerns such as What is ultimate reality? and How do we as individuals fit into the universe as a whole? The latter theme examines various ways we perceive the physical universe and deals with questions such as What is science? What are its methods? How does it develop?

Writing Requirements in Honors 101 and 102

Honors 101 and 102 are writing-intensive courses that include among their goals the development of precise, critical thinking and mature writing skills. To these ends, all sections of these two courses will observe as a common writing requirement a minimum of 20 pages of formal writing as well as shorter responses or journals. Take-home examinations or in-class examinations would be in addition to these minimum page requirements.

Selection of Texts in Honors 101 and 102

For the Honors Freshman Seminar, faculty select four common texts to be read by students in all sections of the course. Individual faculty members then supplement these common texts with additional readings of their own choosing, based on the specific themes and topics covered by the course. Common texts have included:

Honors 101

Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*
Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*
Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*
Morrison, *Beloved*
Thompson, "Ghosts of Mississippi"
McCarthy, *The Road*
Faulkner, *Light in August*
Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
Kafka, *The Trial*
Sierstad, *The Bookseller of Kabul*
Rousseau, *The Social Contract*

Honors 102

Frayn, *Copenhagen*
Russell, *Religion and Science*
Collins, *The Language of God*
Unamuno, "San Manuel Bueno, Martyr"
Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*
Deutscher, *Through the Language Glass*
McPhee, *The Control of Nature*
Silko, *Ceremony*
Shelley, *Frankenstein*
Krakauer, *Into the Wild*
Martel, *The Life of Pi*

VI

COURSE POLICIES

The following policies have been established in order to provide consistency in practice among honors courses. The Attendance Policy and the Honor Code should be included in syllabi for honors courses, and will be e-mailed to faculty teaching honors courses prior to the beginning of each semester.

Attendance Policy

Honors courses are small classes, usually taught in seminar style with no more than fifteen students. They are reading, writing and discussion intensive. Student participation is therefore essential. In addition, the university commits extensive resources, especially in terms of faculty time, to these small classes. For these reasons, the Honors College has an attendance policy for all honors courses, both required and departmental. Students are entitled to two absences in Tuesday/Thursday classes and to three absences in Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes. Consequences of additional absences will be determined by the individual faculty member.

The Honor Code

The Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College employs an Honor Code centered on honesty, sincerity, and justice. The purpose of this Honor Code is to strengthen the sense of community in which the Honors College takes great pride. Its strength depends on the personal honor and integrity of each Honors College member. Honors students are required to write the following statement on any assignment submitted for grading in Honors classes, thereby reinforcing the atmosphere of trust within the Honors College community:

“On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given, received, nor witnessed any unauthorized help on this _____”

Signature: _____

In addition to this pledge, the Honors College has instituted the following policy that is in effect in all honors classes:

In addition to this pledge, the Honors Council created a five-member Academic Integrity Committee in August 2012 to assess all formal Academic Discipline cases against SMB Honors students. The Honors Council appoints two faculty members who have taught Honors courses, the SMBHC Student Senate appoints two Honors students in good standing, and the Dean appoints an Associate Dean to the committee. This Committee, chaired by the SMBHC Associate Dean, will examine the evidence available in the Academic Discipline case and make a recommendation to the Dean for any action concerning the standing of the student in question. Recommendations can include (1) No Action, if the offense appears to be minor; (2) Probation, possibly for a first offense; or (3) Dismissal from the Honors College, usually for a second offense or for an offense of a serious nature.

The University Creed—All students should uphold the University Creed and the regulations in the University's *M-Book*.

Grading Policy

The SMBHC expects grading in honors courses to follow that generally used throughout the University. Although the curriculum includes components that may be academically more rigorous than standard University curricula, grading policies in honors courses should not be more severe. Because honors courses carry no additional weight in the students' GPAs, honors students should not receive a lower grade than they would for similar work in a regular class. Instead, student performance is evaluated in a variety of ways, including class presentations and leading class discussions, journals, papers, focused research projects, or other assignments.

Enrolling Non-Honors Students in Honors Courses

The SMBHC welcomes non-honors students into honors courses when space is available and when the student has at least a 3.00 GPA. Preference will be given to a student who is majoring in the discipline in which the course is offered. Professors are encouraged to recruit academically-strong, non-honors students for an honors course when they see that the enrollment for the course is unusually low. Non-honors students can be enrolled in honors courses by contacting John Samonds, Associate Dean of the SMBHC. In some instances, a non-honors student with lower than a 3.00 may be allowed to take an honors course, when he/she shows an expertise in the area in which the course is being offered. The student will have to have the professor's recommendation and the approval of both the chair of the department that houses the course and the SMBHC administration.

Cancelling an Honors Course Offering

The SMBHC values small, seminar-style courses of no more than 15 students. In order for a course to have enough energy and diversity of engagement, however, at least 7 honors students must be enrolled for the class to run. In rare exceptions, classes with fewer than 7 honors students may continue to be offered, at the discretion of the SMBHC staff in consultation with the professor and department chair. These exceptions would be when the course relates to a larger initiative of the SMBHC.

VII

THE HONORS CAPSTONE AND SENIOR THESIS

The curriculum of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College allows students to engage more deeply in their education and to develop their areas of interest. After earning most of their honors hours in honors sections of general education courses or sometimes in courses in their major—as well as engaging in the special topics and experiential courses offered by the Honors College—in the third and fourth years, honors students complete a capstone project and write a senior thesis. These requirements exist in order to encourage students to undertake projects appropriate to their disciplines, and put into practice the theory and methodologies professionals in the field understand and practice themselves. To this end, students may work one-on-one with a professor on a research project, participate in a practicum experience with other students working as part of a research team under the guidance of a professor, or explore the complexities and issues related to an internship, study abroad, shadowing, or co-op experience.

Honors students need to be ready for the advanced work of the capstone, which is why it most often is in their major field (or a minor, if they have adequate training in it and seek the Dean’s permission). Beyond that, there are a broad range of opportunities. Consider the following examples:

- Undertake traditional research in a library or archive and write a near-graduate level paper that contributes to the academic discourse on the subject.
- Work in a lab as part of a professor’s research group.
- Seek an internship or unpaid volunteer experience that gives a real-world basis for testing theoretical solutions, perhaps writing a policy to address an unmet or insufficiently managed public concern, and explain why other efforts have fallen short.
- Prepare for student teaching by developing a semester’s worth of lesson plans, and show academic mentors that the student has mastered current theories of education and classroom management.
- Write a collection of short stories, and include a critical reflection on the work.
- Complete whatever senior design or capstone is required or encouraged by the student’s major or minor, e.g., various engineering programs, the Center for Manufacturing Excellence, or the accountancy alternate route. The thesis will typically delve more deeply into the issues that arise in the capstone experience.

Incorporating the Capstone into Honors Coursework and Requirements

The Capstone will contribute to the honors hours a student earns. How many of those honors hours are earned through the Capstone, when the coursework occurs, and how the

work appears on the transcript varies not just by discipline but by individual timelines and goals.

Some elements are common in all Capstone experiences:

- There is an accepted curricular structure to accommodate academic growth outside the classroom. Most majors and minors have appropriate coursework and, if they do not, the SMBHC has HON courses to grant you credit.
- The Capstone work (including the thesis) can receive a maximum of 9 honors hours.
- Students are expected to be enrolled in a thesis-writing course during the semester in which they defend the thesis, although there may be exceptions if a student already has a full schedule. A departmental course or an HON course will accommodate this work.
- When earning course credit for the capstone/thesis work, **the student and advisor should discuss grading criteria and how frequently you will meet.** Be sure you are clear about the work required throughout the semester and the final product for the semester.

For more on the curricular structure, visit the list of [commonly-used courses](#) for the Capstone. **Usually, but not always, a course taken for Capstone work will also count toward major hours.** The department chair or academic advisor can address concerns about using the Honors Capstone to satisfy requirements in the major. The academic coursework that houses your Capstone will receive honors credit whatever the departmental designation.

The Honors Thesis Track—The Capstone culminates in the Honors thesis. Regardless of the nature of the Capstone work, the thesis is an academic product, written according to the standards of your major. As such, the thesis always involves research. The amount of research and when it is conducted will vary by field and by the individual Capstone efforts. Even when the Capstone experience has followed a nontraditional path (e.g., an internship, a series of lesson plans, a collection of artwork), the thesis requires a lesser but still appropriate degree of traditional academic research. Some of this research may occur while wrestling with the work itself, in the effort to perform that work at the highest and most current level. Some of it might occur during the thesis-writing semester(s) as the student becomes an active participant in the professional discourse about your topic.

The Honors thesis is ultimately a demonstration of the “scholar” in “citizen scholar”:

- the work often begins in the third year with preliminary research or exploration under the guidance of your thesis advisor;
- the thesis (obviously, like the Capstone) must be in your major, unless approved by the Dean of the Honors College;
- if your major requires a thesis (for example, in International Studies), the SMBHC accepts that thesis as satisfying our honors thesis requirement;
- in some majors (English and History, for example) your individual thesis can fulfill the capstone/research experience required of the major;

Occasionally, students complete the thesis requirements in the summer after graduation, but only with prior approval of the thesis adviser and the Honors College. Students who finish in the summer are not eligible to participate in the commissioning ceremony.

The Honors Practicum Track—A student can fulfill the capstone through an Honors practicum. Whereas the Honors thesis usually entails a one-on-one experience between a student and the thesis advisor, the Honors practicum track embodies a group of your honors students engaging in a research question with one another and overseen by a practicum advisor. Many disciplines (such as chemical engineering, civil engineering, the Center for Manufacturing Excellence) require a concerted team effort. In other cases, students may engage with a research question raised by a professor or a project developed by a group of honors students.

Students pursuing a practicum track still complete a thesis, and up to three students can co-author the thesis. They also have a thesis defense. The practicum team may present at some public forum in lieu of defending the practicum before a committee of three people. This option is at the discretion of each individual practicum advisor and his or her department.

The Honors Project Track—the Honors Project Track allows students to explore more deeply an experience they had while studying abroad, shadowing a health care provider, interning with an organization or co-oping with a company. All students wishing to embark on the Honors Project Track must complete a project proposal. The aim of the proposal process is (1) to ensure that students have fully thought through the marriage of their questions and their experiences; (2) to be prepared to approach a faculty member with a concrete plan; and (3) to check that the work is indeed broader, deeper, and more complex than what the base experiences have demanded, especially for credit. This will be done in conjunction with the Associate Dean for Capstone Experience and can be done for zero, one, two, or three credits. Students can decide how many credits they would like to obtain from their proposal and the level of work and quality of the product will be commensurate with credit amount registered for. Students will be able to work on and register for the proposal course every semester.

The Project Track will lead to a deeper analysis than just a record of what the student did during the experience. Instead, the student will explore and analyze issues that may have arisen during their experience. For example, a student may witness health disparities while shadowing a physician and investigate the causes and possible solutions for this issue. After the initial work with the Associate Dean for the Capstone Experience, the student will work with a faculty member who has expertise in the area the student wants to explore. The Honors Project track allows students to complete a thesis that may not be related to their major.

Student Responsibilities for Establishing a Capstone Project

In most cases, an honors student will negotiate with a professor to establish an independent-study project or research plan prior to the semester in which the work begins. The student should then submit a Capstone form—with expected outcomes and the appropriate signatures—before beginning the work. It is to the student's benefit to submit a completed Capstone form as early as possible, so that he/she knows that the work being done will fulfill the requirement; the signatures on the form ensure that all concerned parties are in agreement. Juniors on a usual 8-semester plan must submit a Capstone form by November 1 of their junior year regardless of when they plan to begin their work.

As the capstone work progresses, the student may change or narrow his/her focus. On occasion, he/she may switch to a different thesis topic completely. But in most cases a student will work with the same professor on both the capstone and the thesis.

THE THESIS

Whatever the capstone experience, it culminates in an Honors thesis. The thesis is an academic product, written according to the academic standards of the discipline. As such, the thesis always involves research. The amount of research and when it is conducted will vary by field and by the individual Capstone efforts. Even when the Capstone core experience has followed a nontraditional path (e.g., an internship, a series of lesson plans, a recital), the thesis requires an appropriate degree of traditional academic research. Some of this research may occur while the student wrestles with the work itself, in the effort to perform that work at the highest and most current level. Some of it might occur during the thesis-writing semester(s) as the student becomes an active participant in the professional discourse about the topic.

The Honors thesis is ultimately a demonstration of the “scholar” in “citizen scholar”:

- the thesis (like the Capstone) must be in the student's major, unless approved by the Dean of the Honors College;
- if a major requires a thesis (e.g., International Studies), the SMBHC accepts that thesis as satisfying the honors thesis requirement;
- the student should expect to enroll in appropriate courses for thesis-writing; students will earn honors credit for this coursework, typically three to six hours depending on the field. A list of commonly-used courses can be found under the Student tab on the Honors College website;
- the length of the thesis will vary from 30 to 100 pages depending on the major. A student in the sciences, having spent much time in the laboratory, will write a thesis of about 30 pages; a student in the humanities or social sciences may write one of about 60 to 100 pages. **Please note: it is up to the thesis advisor and department chair to determine if the thesis merits three or six hours of credit;**

- if the core of the Capstone experience was a creation of some outcome appropriate to the student's field (e.g., a collection of short stories, a recital, a semester's lesson plans), the thesis provides the academic discourse that grounds that work in understanding the challenges and potentials of the field;
- the student must defend the thesis before a committee of three people; the thesis advisor, another faculty member from the student's major department (chosen by the student and the mentor), and another professor designated by the Honor's Dean; a final copy of the thesis should be provided to the committee members at least two weeks prior to the defense date and no later than April 1 to provide them time to read and respond to it before the thesis defense;
- after getting the permission of the faculty mentor, the student is responsible for scheduling with the committee the date and time of the defense; the Honors College can assist with a location;
- the thesis must be defended no later than the last day of classes in the semester the student expects to graduate. It is usually written during the student's last semester as an undergraduate but may be completed earlier.

While the academic level of an Honors Senior Thesis will not match that of a Master's Thesis (although in some cases it can), the student should strive to be as original as possible, given the academic expectations of the department. You should expect the quality of writing and the student's knowledge of the discipline to be at least as good as that of a first-year graduate student.

THE ADVISOR'S ROLE

The role of the thesis advisor in these projects is much like the role one would have with students working on master's theses:

- guiding the student to a manageable research question,
- pointing out complexities they do not realize,
- pointing them toward resources or literature in the field that they should consider,
- helping them understand the conventions of writing in their discipline,
- helping obtain IRB approval when human subjects are used (interviews, surveys, lab experiments, etc.).

Oftentimes, the advisor will need to encourage a student to complete the work. You should establish regular meetings with your honors student (i.e., once a week, once every two weeks) to keep him/her on task given the other courses and obligations they have. Regular meetings could ensure that the student successfully completes the work before graduation. Early in the thesis process, the student should submit a prospectus to the thesis advisor and second reader, and holding a meeting with the student and second reader could help the student with the direction he/she needs to take in the coming months.

For a student to participate in the Honors College Commissioning Ceremony (the Friday before the University Commencement), **he/she must defend the thesis by the last day of class in the spring.**

Thesis Defense

The **thesis defense** is an important requirement. Honors students defend their theses before committees of three faculty: (1) you, the advisor, (2) another professor from the student's major (or an area related to the thesis) chosen by the student in consultation with you, and (3) a representative chosen by the Honors College. While the student is responsible for scheduling the defense (working with the faculty members' schedules), **the advisor should not allow a student to defend the thesis if it is not ready.** Some defenses are held in the Honors College building, but given the number of honors graduates, most are held in the buildings that house the student's major department. Any help you and your department can provide in scheduling a room will be appreciated.

The SMBHC requires that students give final drafts of the thesis to their readers by **April 1** and that the readers have two weeks to read the thesis before the defense. This deadline also allows students to make any major revisions if a reader raises any serious concerns before the defense. Depending on the work you have seen from the student during the course of the thesis, you may want to set an earlier deadline for you to review the thesis before it is distributed to the other readers (we recommend the week before Spring Break).

On occasion, students registered in the spring will defend in the summer, but this should occur only when the advisor feels comfortable that the student will be able to finish, and the faculty are willing to participate in a summer defense. In these cases, we strongly encourage the advisor to assign the grade of Incomplete until the work is completed. **Students defending in the summer will not participate in the Honors College commissioning ceremony.**

As soon as possible after the student has submitted the final draft of the thesis, the advisor should contact the other committee members in order to determine if there are any problems that need to be addressed prior to the thesis defense. The advisor and readers will complete an evaluation of the thesis through a Qualtrics survey. As part of those evaluations, the readers will approve whether the student should proceed to the defense.

At the defense, it is the role of the committee to decide whether a student has successfully defended the thesis. Although a staff member from the Honors College is usually present at the defense, the committee alone evaluates the thesis, and you, as the advisor, and the other committee members must sign or decline to sign the thesis. The committee members will also complete a brief thesis defense evaluation.

Honors Senior Thesis defenses are open to the public. At the beginning of the defense, the advisor may choose to introduce the student. The student then gives a presentation of about 10-15 minutes that highlights the key questions and answers discovered

in the production of the thesis. The presentation is followed by questions from the committee and others present. After the Question and Answer period, the advisor should invite the student and other non-committee members to leave so that the committee can make their final decision. Then, the student is brought back into the room to be told the outcome. With the committee evaluation of the thesis described above, we expect that a student will not defend a thesis that is not passable.

Reporting of Grades

As the professor of record, the advisor has the sole authority to assign the grade for the student's work (for international studies majors, the grade is based on Croft guidelines). If a student has not completed the thesis and the defense requirements in the semester in which the student planned to finish, it is our recommendation that a grade of "I" be given until all the requirements are fulfilled. **Students should know that if they choose to quit the thesis after the deadline to drop a course, they likely will receive an F for the thesis course.**

Faculty Compensation

Because of the work the advisor has to do in meeting regularly with students, commenting on early drafts of the thesis, and directing the work of the student, the Honors College will either pay \$500 in additional salary to the professor or transfer \$600 to the professor's department for each student with whom the professor is working at the beginning of the final semester of the student's work. If funds are transferred to the department, the advisor or other faculty may petition the chair to use funds for research expenses, conference travel, or other academic expenses. These funds are a tangible symbol of our appreciation for the extra effort that you will put forth in mentoring honors students through the senior thesis.

Commissioning Ceremony

When students have successfully completed the requirements of the Honors College and defended the thesis by the last day of classes in the Spring, we honor them and their thesis advisors at a commissioning ceremony the Friday before the University's Commencement. During the ceremony, the Chancellor bestows upon the student an Honors College medallion and the thesis advisor gives the student a stole. The ceremony is usually at 4:00 and is over in plenty of time for faculty who need to attend other ceremonies that evening.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

The senior thesis involves other requirements beyond the writing of an extensive paper. All of the requirements are listed below:

Thesis Defense

After getting the permission of the thesis advisor, the student will schedule the defense with the assistance of the Honors College staff. The student will coordinate with the

committee members the time of the defense. The Honors College will help in finding the location, but given the number of honors graduates any help you and your department can provide in scheduling a room is appreciated. **Please note:** we expect the student to give the committee a “final” draft of the thesis no later than April 1 and at least two weeks before the defense.

Submission of Thesis

Students submit an electronic version of their thesis to the Honors College through eGrove.olemiss.edu. The thesis should be formatted according to the Honors College guidelines (which are based on the Graduate School guidelines for Master’s theses). Instructions for submitting the thesis can be found under the Student tab of the Honors College website.

We anticipate that the Honors College capstone and thesis experience will be rewarding for both the student and the professor.

VIII

SELECTION OF FACULTY FOR THE HONORS FRESHMAN SEMINAR

Honors College faculty are selected from the professorial ranks of the University of Mississippi by the Dean of the SMBHC in consultation with University administrators, department chairs, and other faculty. Several SMBHC faculty members have been recognized as outstanding teachers by receiving University-wide teaching awards. All are scholars committed to excellence in their teaching and individual areas of research. Faculty in the Honors 101/102 sequence represent a wide variety of academic disciplines, among them: Biology, Engineering, English, History, Law, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Music, Pharmacy, Theatre, and Political Science.

Faculty interested in teaching one of the required honors courses or in proposing an honors departmental course should begin by obtaining approval from their department chair or dean.

IX

SUMMER FACULTY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

In the week just after May graduation and the week just prior to the beginning of the fall semester Honors 101/102 faculty meet to exchange ideas on a variety of topics. These are planning sessions in which faculty select common texts for the coming year, possibly meet with experts on works to be taught or teaching pedagogy, and discuss such matters as course requirements or ways to improve instruction and student writing, etc. Compensation for

participation in these workshop sessions is currently \$900 for each week as additional salary. In addition, the faculty will meet in January to choose the common texts for Hon 101 for the upcoming fall.

X

PROPOSING AN HONORS COURSE

In proposing an honors section of an existing departmental course or in developing a new course, the faculty person should first consult with his/her department chair or dean. After getting departmental approval, the faculty person should contact the Dean of the SMBHC explaining the purpose of the proposed honors course and how it differs from a regular course in pedagogy and student involvement. If the course is part of a sequence, explain how honors sections of the sequence would work. A sample syllabus for the proposed course should be included.

Because the Honors College serves students in every undergraduate major, one goal is to have courses that will work with students from various disciplines. When applicable, explain how this course could work for students in different majors or schools.

Approval to run an honors course will be made in consultation with the professor's chair or dean in order to coordinate faculty courseloads. The SMBHC strongly encourages faculty and departments to run honors courses as part of the professor's regular courseload to ensure that the professor is not over-extended. When part of a regular courseload, the SMBHC transfers funds to the department. In those cases where an honors course is taught as an overload, the professor is paid additional salary.

Summer Stipends for Course Development

The SMBHC prepares citizen scholars who are

fired by the life of the mind,

committed to the public good,

driven to find solutions.

Among other things, our mission implies that honors courses should be rich, lively, and challenging. To that end, each spring the Honors College will announce a call for course development proposals through UM Today. Faculty whose proposals are selected will receive a summer stipend to develop the course with the intention of offering the course as an honors section within the next two academic years. The Honors College is interested in offering courses related to an upcoming focus in the Honors College (which will be announced in the

call for proposals). We also stress exploring complex situations. We expect that experiential learning courses will explore questions in community-based contexts, whether local, regional, or abroad. We think “experiential learning” is particularly well suited to interdisciplinary approaches, and we welcome team-proposed and team-taught courses.

Developing New Courses: If you would like to try out an innovative pedagogy, or look intently at a narrow subject in your field or at an interdisciplinary topic (subjects not always covered by departmental offerings, in other words), please give us a course proposal to consider.

Proposal: We would ask that in your brief proposal you tell us

- what you would like to teach (a working title)
- something of how you would teach it, e.g.,
 - How will you ensure that students engage in active learning at an honors level?
 - If you are thinking of “experiential learning,” what is the question that will guide your course? How will you combine rigorous academics with student exploration of that question?
- when you would like to or *have* to teach it (year and term), and whether you will be able to teach it as part of your regular course load (consult with your chair),
- how the course would fulfill departmental or core curriculum requirements, if applicable,
- important indications of extra budget needs, e.g.,
 - Does the course need the additional expertise of a co-team teacher?
 - Will it involve field work or travel of some sort?
 - Do you anticipate bringing in guest speakers from off-campus?

Selection: In selecting proposals to fund, we can only commit to courses we think will attract a sufficient number of honors students. That is partly a matter of timing; we could not put too many special courses into one semester and expect to fill them all. In addition, we will have to think about budget for course offerings, but do not let “budget” stop you from dreaming big. Finally, it helps if the pedagogy makes effective use of technology (to keep budget lower, for example). Most important, it helps if you are thinking of something with “wow” factors – the “Make us jealous” component.

Academic FAQs:

- It would be ideal but not a requirement for your course to bear a departmental number.
- If your topic is interdisciplinary, look around campus for a co-teacher, but, if expertise is not available here, *your co- teacher might be someone who teaches for another university. Your class might even be jointly offered on another campus, with shared sessions taught on-line or via distance learning technology.*

- We would not rule out summer or intersession courses if the proposed course required that timing, but we are looking specifically for courses that would run during fall or spring semesters.
- If Honors students do not fill the class, it would be opened to non-Honors students with at least a 3.0. If the class involves student travel, however, the SMBHC would subsidize travel only for the honors students.

XII

A FEW REMINDERS

The classrooms in the SMBHC have a computer station connect to a large monitor (with room 107 having a projection screen). Each room has a cable if you would rather connect your laptop.

Faculty have 24-hour access to the building (with their UM ID card). Sometimes, you may want to schedule a viewing of a movie in the evening. We ask that you have this viewing in a classroom, particularly room 107. Will Wilkins (of the MS Law Research Center) says that films can be shown for a class as long as the movie is purchased legally (and not illegally copied). However, any public showing – including watching a movie with a class in a lounge where others have access, or inviting people outside of a class to a screening – **is not legal**. Any public screening (even with free admission) would require a public performance license. To reserve a classroom outside of your regularly-scheduled class, contact Penny Leeton at 915-7294 or pleeton@olemiss.edu.