

UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

www.honors.pdx.edu

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about the University Honors
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University Honors Program
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Unique, powerful, innovative

Established in 1969, the University Honors Program is the honors college at Portland State University and is specifically designed to aid students who plan to go on to graduate or professional school.

Unlike many other honors programs and colleges in the United States which allow students to take part in a small number of “enrichment” classes, the Honors Program offers its students a thoughtfully planned and carefully-designed path to the bachelor’s degree. That path includes work in a specific undergraduate major, in addition to participation in the rigorous core curriculum of the honors college—coursework distributed throughout a student’s four years, which provides substantial training in research, methodology and critical writing, as well as co-curricular opportunities including the internship project in Washington, D.C. Students fully admitted to the program also receive the extraordinary benefit of a release from general University requirements for the bachelor’s degree (to earn their degrees, they work instead toward the completion of courses of study they plan in consultation with faculty mentors in Honors and in their major departments).

Classes in the core curriculum of Honors are small and feature close collaboration with the program’s dedicated faculty; courses fall typically into two categories: either the coursework of the first- and second-year core, “Studies”, or the seminars of the upper-division range, which are typically seminars taught by the Honors program faculty in their special areas of expertise. The substantial preparation in research and writing—a core ingredient of all Honors coursework—culminates in the senior-year production of a baccalaureate thesis in the student’s major area of study.

The program also strives to offer an opportunity to participate in the Washington, D.C., internship project to as many of its students as possible. In that project, students spend an academic term in a clinical or research internship in Washington; internships are selected which correspond as closely as possible to the student’s anticipated career. Thus, for instance, our pre-medical students have worked in the clinics and research

laboratories of the National Institutes of Health since 1985; our history majors have worked in internship venues throughout the many sites and venues of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Archives; our pre-law students have worked in congressional offices and in carefully selected non-governmental organizations (to mention only a few of the many placements made since the project’s inauguration). We have dedicated ourselves, as a faculty, to the continuation of this project, knowing the force that such an experience can have in shaping a student’s intellectual life, as well as in adding significantly to a student’s portfolio of application to graduate or professional school.

The many distinguished graduates of the program suggest the value of our training: they are physicians, professors (in fields as diverse as film studies and arctic anthropology), attorneys, judges, painters, entrepreneurs, politicians. They have gone on to graduate or professional work at Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, Tübingen, Johns Hopkins, McGill, York University, Emory, the University of California, Princeton, Vanderbilt, the Rockefeller University, and a host of others.

For further information, admissions criteria and details of application, we strongly recommend that interested persons visit the honors college website, at www.honors.pdx.edu.

