

PHL 485: Honors Seminar



What is the Honors Seminar?

The Honors Seminar is a unique opportunity for students to gain experience completing a substantial research project with guidance from faculty mentors and peers, and for students to focus on their primary philosophical interest.

What can I expect?

For assessment, students will be expected to submit paper drafts, give two presentations, and produce a peer review commentary. The final draft of the paper will be due in Finals week. In addition, keep in mind that research is always a collective effort where members of a research community advance each other's work through close reading, charitable interpretation, and genuine feedback including suggestions for further directions. Thus, students are also expected to actively engage each other's work.

Who should take it?

- Students interested in producing an independent research paper to be shared with feedback from faculty and peers
- Students pursuing graduate studies in Philosophy or other disciplines
- Students pursuing medical school, law school, or other professional schools

When should I take it?

The Honors Seminar should generally be taken at the end of your junior or senior year, once you have completed a number of 400-level courses. If you are taking the Honors Seminar for the purpose of producing a writing sample for graduate or professional school, we recommend taking it during the Spring Term one year before you graduate.

Can it be used for 400-level Credit?

Yes, but only if you are not using it to count toward your Honors Requirements. You can also take the Honors Seminar more than once – the first completion will satisfy Honors credit, and the second will satisfy 400-level credit, or *vice versa*. Formal requests must go through the Department Chair, Professor Angela Coventry at coventry@pdx.edu.

What about the Honors Thesis?

The Honors Thesis class (PHL 403) can be great preparation for the Honors Seminar. This class is an independent study you sign up for with a Professor who is an expert in your area of interest. There may be research overlap between the papers written in these classes.

How does the Honors seminar relate to the Honors track?

Both the Honors Seminar (PHL 485) and Honors Thesis (PHL 403) are part of the Philosophy Department's Honors track. To receive Honors in Philosophy, you must apply for the Honors track. For more information on the Honors Track contact the Philosophy Department Office. Note: you can take the Honors seminar *without* applying for the Honors Track.

Is a faculty mentor required?

Yes. Start by identifying a Professor in the Department with expertise in your area of interest, discuss with them possible topics to write about and ask them if they would be willing to supervise your project.

How should I prepare?

- Find a faculty mentor (see above)
- With your faculty mentor, develop a 1-2 page proposal of your research project plus a bibliography.

How do I apply?

- Fill out an application form from Philosophy Department Office.
- Submit the application form and a 1-2 page research proposal plus a bibliography to Professor Tom Seppalainen at seppalt@pdx.edu.