

# Honors Program



## The Passion

For fifty years, Gonzaga University has offered intellectually gifted and highly motivated students an Honors Program to supercharge their Gonzaga education with small, dynamic seminars across the liberal arts curriculum. In addition, annual Honors colloquia address issues of contemporary society, religion, and culture where the focus is on personal application of classroom learning to real-world problems. Study abroad opportunities in the junior year further broaden students' horizons and immerse them in the emergent global village. Students complete the program in their senior year by writing an interdisciplinary research thesis. In short, the Honors Program offers bright students the opportunity to discover their world and learn their own calling within it.

“Education is not like the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” -*William Butler Yeats*

## Academics

The academic component of the Honors Program consists of colloquia and seminars designed to challenge the mind and engage the soul.

**Honors Colloquia** examine the social, religious, and cultural dimensions of contemporary life.

The emphasis in the colloquia is less on learning information than on existential appropriation and engagement.

**The Freshman Colloquium** introduces students to issues of class, race, gender, and sexual orientation in their new home of Spokane. The course includes a twenty-hour service learning component in one of the four social categories studied. Placements range from working with homeless men in an overnight shelter, to babysitting children in a home for battered women, to helping out in a gay teenage drop-in center, to working with the developmentally disabled. In class, students are taught the historical genesis of each social category, hear from local activists, and watch and discuss movies that tackle the issues involved.

**The Sophomore Colloquium** offers a multimedia study of the history of American Christianity. This colloquium runs in tandem with the Honors religion seminar. It is team-taught by the Honors Director and a member of the Religious Studies Department.

**The Junior Colloquium** studies how electronic technology has transformed understandings of self and society, nature, and even God. This course is likewise team-taught in tandem with an Honors seminar on Philosophy of Technology. Through books, essays, and movies, students explore how inventions from the telegraph to the Internet have created both new ways of life and new threats to

life, new modes of understanding and new forms of coercion. The course studies how electronic technology is both accelerating and fragmenting, as well as expanding and re-integrating our lives, creating new senses of both space and time, and altering the character of both freedom and reason.

**The Senior Colloquium** guides students in writing an interdisciplinary honors thesis in which they explore an issue germane to their future work. Students choose a mentor to direct them through research and rough drafts to the final production of a 40-page paper. A public presentation of the paper in April culminates the students' four years of work in the program.

## Honors Seminars

The seminar component of the academic program builds on the liberal arts core of the wider University. Classes emphasize lively face-to-face dialogue. The particular course requirements listed below are further tailored to the needs and schedule flexibility of the individual student. Faculty for Honors seminars are chosen from among the best teachers at the University.

**Philosophy:** There are four Honors philosophy seminars mirroring the general philosophy core: Introduction to Critical Thinking, Philosophy of Human Nature, Ethics, and Philosophy of Technology.

**Literature:** The three Honors literature seminars include a two-semester survey of world literature and a final literary seminar on a topic of special interest.

**Math and Science:** Students are expected to take a calculus course, a lab science, and one additional math or science course.

**Social Science:** Students choose two courses from the following fields of study: psychology, sociology,



economics, political science, and criminal justice.

**History:** An Honors seminar in American History fulfills one of the two history requirements in the core.

**Religious Studies:** The Honors seminars in Scripture and American Catholicism fulfill two of a student's three Religious Studies core requirements.

**Fine Arts:** Honors students are required to take six credits in Music, Art, or Drama. Credits can be in theory, history, or performance.

**Speech:** An Honors Rhetoric seminar introduces students to communication strategies in oral, print, and electronic media.

**Foreign Language:** Students are expected to take the equivalent of two years in a modern language or one year of ancient Greek or Latin.

Finally, Honors students are also strongly encouraged to study abroad for at least a semester during their junior year. The Honors Program offers a number of study abroad options catering to every possible field of interest, including not only the humanities but also engineering, the physical sciences, and business. We regularly place three to four students at Oxford. Over the last couple of years, Honors students have also studied in London, Paris, Florence, Toledo, Nairobi, Baja California, and Auckland, New Zealand.

### Student Life

One of the most popular features of the Honors Program is Hopkins House, where students can rest and relax, do homework away from dorm distractions, and gather together in small study groups. Hopkins has a living room, a fully-equipped kitchen, and the Director's office on the first floor. On the second floor, there is an electronic seminar room and two computer-equipped and Internet-wired study rooms. The third floor includes an additional study area with two more computers and a TV room with a home theater system. Altogether, Hopkins has six computers available to students, all equipped with high-speed Internet access, as well as a network printer, scanner, and high-speed copier. The building includes wireless high-speed Internet access for students with laptops. Hopkins facilities are accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Students particularly value the small face-to-face quality of Honors classes. With twenty to twenty-five students entering each year, everyone comes to know everyone else in their class and eventually everyone in the Program. To that end, the Honors Program also sponsors a number of social gatherings and weekend outings. This begins with a weekend getaway in early September, followed by seasonal parties, and a second weekend away in the spring.

The Honors Program also cultivates a sense of civic responsibility and service to those less fortunate. In addition to the service-learning component of the Freshman Colloquium, Honors students are usually involved in a wide array of service work in the University and the wider community. Many Honors students have also been involved in theatre, choir, music ensembles, and the student newspaper. Others have played important roles in retreat programs through University Ministry and in Freshman Orientation through the Department of Student Life.

A number of upperclassmen are also chosen by Student Life to work as Residence Hall Assistants. All Honors students are expected to have some involvement in wider University or community activities.

While most Honors students go on to pursue advanced degrees, a substantial number take a break after graduation to enter the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, or other service programs. Honors students are recognized as such at graduation, receiving degrees of either B.A. or B.S. Honors.

### Admission

Admission to Gonzaga's Honors Program is highly competitive. Acceptance is based on test scores, high school GPA, extracurricular interests and involvements, service work, letters of recommendation, a personal interview, and a brief, creative essay. Normally, students should have a minimum SAT score of 1350 (Math and Critical Reading) or 30 on the ACT and an unweighted GPA over 3.7. Admission to the Honors Program is available only to incoming freshmen.

Honors Applications should be postmarked no later than February 1. A student with a completed Honors Application may be invited to the second phase of the admission process: an interview in person or by phone with the Program Director and three current Honors students. Interviews are conducted in the last half of March. Notification of acceptance into the Program is sent at the beginning of April.

All students who apply to the Honors Program must also submit a regular Gonzaga University Application for Admission by February 1.

Acceptance to the Program presupposes a complete and successful application to the University itself. Deadlines for all documentation must be strictly observed.

*Photo Credits: Alan Bisson, Dean Davis, Eric Galey, Craig Hill, Lauren Intinarelli, Jennifer Raudebaugh, Amy Sinisterra, and Allen Hubbard.*

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