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 personal appropriation. Each colloquium is a three-credit lecture course.

The Freshman Colloquium studies marginal populations in and around Spokane. Groups studied include the working poor, the homeless, refugees, American Indians, victims of domestic violence, the LGBT community, returning war veterans, the mentally ill, the developmentally disabled—a different population every week. The course includes a 20-hour service-learning component. Students typically work with one service agency over the course of the semester and may build on the service work they have already done or try something new. Every week the class discusses readings, brings in a local activist, and breaks into small groups to discuss how this population shows up in students’ placements and in their hometowns.

The Sophomore Colloquium is a study of the history of American Christianity. This course considers questions about just what religion is (and isn’t), how Christianity has adapted to the American context, and how American culture has been shaped by Christianity. The United States was the first country to establish religious freedom, which has, over time, created a rich and fascinating variety of sects and churches. It has also been a fertile ground for the emergence of new Christian movements, including Revivalism, Pentecostalism, Mormonism, and Christian Science, among many others. It has also seen the rise (and sometimes fall) of charismatic religious entrepreneurs. We will also be looking at how Christianity adapted to new communications media like radio, television, and the Internet.

The Junior Colloquium studies the philosophy of technology. It begins by exploring how orality, literacy, and now cyberspace and social media shape our reasoning, our relationships, and our identity. The course then looks at a variety of approaches to the relationship between technology and its users, from technological neutrality to technological determinism, with some other approaches in-between. It then turns to address these perspectives to several recent technological developments, especially virtual technologies.

Finally, the Senior Colloquium involves writing a 40-page interdisciplinary Honors thesis, relying on oral, verbal, and research skills developed in the earlier colloquia. Topics can come from a student’s major or involve something completely different. Thesis projects can also have a creative, performative component.

Honors Seminars build on the liberal arts core of the wider University. Classes are structured as small, highly interactive, writing-intensive seminars. The particular course requirements listed below are further tailored to the needs and schedule of the individual student. Faculty for Honors seminars are chosen from among the best teachers at the University. What follows is the full Honors Core Curriculum for students in the College of Arts & Sciences, School of Business Administration, and School of Education. Engineering, Nursing, and Human Physiology majors take a somewhat reduced Core due to the number of classes required for their major.

Philosophy: There are four Honors Philosophy seminars: Critical Thinking, Philosophy of Human Nature, Ethics, and Philosophy of Technology.

Literature: There are three Honors English literature seminars: a two-semester survey of world literature and a final literary seminar on a topic of special interest to a given professor.
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 departments: Psychology, Sociology & Criminal Justice, Economics, and Political Science.

History: Two history courses are required, including an Honors seminar on the rise of modernity.

Religious Studies: There are three Religious Studies courses in the Core. Two are Honors seminars: one in scripture and another in the history of American Christianity. The third is a Religious Studies elective course.

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

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 area of study, including the humanities, engineering, the sciences, and business. In addition to the wide array of study abroad programs available to all Gonzaga students, Honors students can study anywhere in the world for a semester with all of their financial aid following them.

STUDENT LIFE

One of the most popular features of the Honors Program is Hopkins House, a place where Honors students can rest and relax, as well as study in both individual and group settings. Hopkins is a residential home with a living room, a fully-equipped kitchen, several study rooms, and even a nice keyboard for the musically inclined. Hopkins is accessible for Honors students 24/7.

Students particularly value the small, face-to-face quality of Honors classes. With 20 to 25 students entering each year, Honors students get to know everyone else in their own class, and over time, they become well acquainted with students from other years as well. To that end, the Honors Program 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 a value for service. In addition to the service-learning component of the Freshman Colloquium, Honors students are usually involved in service programs at the University and in the wider Spokane community. Many Honors students have also been involved in theatre, choir, music ensembles, and the student newspaper. Others have played important roles in University Ministry retreat programs and New Student Orientation.

While most Honors students go on to pursue advanced degrees, a substantial number enter full-time service programs upon graduation like Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Peace Corps, and Teach for America.

ADMISSION

Admission to Gonzaga’s Honors Program is highly competitive. Acceptance is based on test scores, GPA, extracurricular interests and involvements, service work, letters of recommendation, a personal interview, and a brief, creative essay. Normally, students should have either a minimum SAT score of 1350 (CR+M) or 30 on the ACT and a GPA over 3.7 in a rigorous high school curriculum. Admission to the Honors Program is available only to incoming freshmen.

Honors applications should be submitted electronically or 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.