For 50 years, Gonzaga University has offered an Honors Program for intellectually gifted and highly motivated students to enhance 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 during 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.

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 studies the history of American Christianity, raising questions of how religion will need to adapt to contemporary society. 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.

The course also looks at how Christianity adapted to new communications media like radio, television, and the Internet.

In the Junior Colloquium we look at contemporary virtual technologies and explore their philosophical implications for relationship, identity and meaning. 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 Core Seminars offer small, highly interactive writing intensive sections of many of the humanities courses in the University Core. Faculty for Honors seminars are chosen from among the best teachers at the University. Currently there are 12 honors seminars that cover 12 of the 15 University core courses:

- Philosophy: Reasoning, Human Nature, Ethics and the Philosophy of Technology (as the program’s Core Integration Seminar).
- Religious Studies: Faith and Reason (as the program’s Freshman Seminar) and a Scripture course.
- English: Advanced Composition, a classical literature course and a modern world literature course.
- History: A history of modernity course.
In addition there is a two year foreign language requirement for those not in the School of Engineering & Applied Science. These requirements are further tailored to the needs and schedule of the individual student. Some schools have a somewhat abbreviated core due to their own heavy course requirements. You can check out the core for a particular college by consulting the Honors webpage on the Gonzaga website.

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 from language immersion programs to Oxford tutorials and everything in between including programs particularly tailored to engineering, pre-med, science, and business 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. Studying together in Honors colloquia and core seminars, Honors students get to know their own classmates quickly and well. 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 take a "gap year" to enter one of the many service programs available 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. Students with an SAT score of approximately 1380 (Evidence based Reading & Writing and Math combined) or 30 on the ACT and a GPA over 3.7 in a rigorous high school curriculum are encouraged to apply. Admission to the Honors Program is available only to incoming freshmen.

Honors applications should be submitted electronically 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 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.

For students who apply for admission by Gonzaga's non-binding Early Action deadline of November 15, there is an earlier Honors evaluation process available. Early Action applicants who apply for the Honors Program by January 3, may be invited to interview during February. For this group, decisions will be sent by the end of February.

All students who apply to the Honors Program must also submit a regular Gonzaga University Common Application for Admission by February 1. Acceptance to the Program presupposes a complete and successful application to the University itself.

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