Honors Core Courses

Honors students will generally take one or two Honors core courses per quarter in the first two years, and one or two Honors core courses per year in the junior and senior years. In addition to Honors core courses, Honors students will also complete requirements in language, science, mathematics, and fine arts, which are explained later in this handbook. Following is a list of Honors core courses and a recommendation for the year they should be completed. Please note that this is only a guide. The Honors curriculum should be completed according to the academic plan of the individual student.

First Year

HON 110/111—Discover or Explore Chicago
HON 100 —Rhetoric and Critical Inquiry

First or Second Year

HON 101—World Literature
HON 102—History in Global Contexts
HON 104—Religious Worldviews and Ethical Perspectives
HON 105—Philosophical Inquiry
HON 180—Data Analysis and Statistics

Second or Third Year

HON 201—States, Markets, and Societies
HON 203—Seminar in Multiculturalism (for students entering after Spring 2021)
HON 205—Interdisciplinary Arts
HON 225—Honors Lab Science Topics

Third Year

Hon 302—Junior Seminar in Social Justice (for students entering after Spring 2021)

Fourth Year

Honors Capstone: HON 350 or 351 (Senior Seminar) or HON 395 (Senior Thesis)
Course Descriptions for 100-Level Honors Core Courses

HON 100: Rhetoric and Critical Inquiry – This course provides students with intensive writing experience and knowledge to create effective academic discourse, develop critical thinking skills, explore issues of form and style, examine arguments, and complete a research paper. A grade of C- or better is required to pass HON100 and remain in the Honors Program.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Demonstrate proficiency in several genres of written discourse.
- Communicate ideas, facts, theories, and arguments effectively.
- Demonstrate a conception of writing as an interaction between writer and reader; analyze audience knowledge, assumptions, and disposition.
- Demonstrate an ability to read and evaluate the writing of others with accuracy and insight.
- Demonstrate strategies of effective research, including locating material, note taking, summarizing, and paraphrasing.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop and support a thesis using evidence from research.
- Incorporate quotations and paraphrased passages into their writing and document this material using the standard scholarly apparatus.
- Increase skill in using the language of academic writing, including an accurate, versatile vocabulary and correct syntax and usage.
- Complete a research paper making use of a variety of sources and incorporating material using a standard form of documentation.

HON 101: World Literature – This course uses literary texts from a range of cultures to explore the many ways in which authors represent the human experience. Texts will be drawn from a variety of cultural traditions, including from outside Europe and the US, and reflect diverse perspectives, including those of women writers and writers of color.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Perform a close reading of specific passages from a text.
- Identify particular literary techniques at work in a text.
- Produce a written argument offering an interpretation of a text.
- Compare and contrast the ways authors address a particular theme across multiple texts.
- Explain the significance of historical and cultural contexts to the meaning of each text.

HON 102: History in Global Contexts – With the goal of enhancing historical literacy and critical thinking, this course invites students to explore how the interdisciplinary tools of historical inquiry aid them in their encounter with the multicultural past through study of a particular society or societies. Topics vary depending on the section and professor.
Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Demonstrate an understanding of the complexities, diversities, and changes over time of the societies they study, and a nuanced awareness of how the interactions of culture and geography shape important events.
- Demonstrate familiarity with chronologies, narratives, and repositories for historical information, and an awareness of how the knowledge of the past was – and is – constructed.
- Differentiate between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, and demonstrate the literacies necessary to analyze them.
- Differentiate between evidence and interpretation in a work of historical writing.
- Accurately summarize and critically analyze historians’ arguments.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize historical evidence and communicate historical knowledge, both orally and in writing, and to cite researched material in an acceptable format.

**HON 104: Religious Worldviews and Ethical Perspectives** – By examining individual religious traditions within a comparative framework, students gain knowledge of the nature and function of religion in a broad spectrum of human experience and cultivate an awareness of the different ways of being religious.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Analyze and reflect on the meaning of religious beliefs and practices.
- Describe and compare multiple ethical perspectives, and evaluate the underlying assumptions and implications of these perspectives.
- Reflect on the sources of their own values and how these formative influences affect the choices they make.
- Demonstrate a respect for human diversity, and a critical awareness of their own assumptions, stereotypes, and biases when confronting difference.
- Identify and assess the personal, social, scientific, and/or historical influences that contribute to their perspectives on issues important to them.
- Demonstrate knowledge of religious elements as they are manifested in particular traditions and cultures, past and present.
- Make critical comparisons among religious traditions, experiences, and practices across culture, time, ethnicity, race or gender.

**HON 105: Philosophical Inquiry** – Providing an introduction to philosophy as a mode of inquiry, this course explores, from a variety of perspectives, the questions central to the human condition, placing philosophical positions within the context of human values.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Gain an understanding of what constitutes a philosophical argument; identify, analyze, and evaluate philosophical arguments.
- Reflect critically on a variety of philosophical texts.
- Construct sound philosophical arguments in written and oral formats.
• Articulate multiple perspectives on questions central to the human condition that are treated by one or more of the principal fields of philosophy.
• Uncover and reflect on the student’s own philosophical positions and assumptions.
• Place philosophical positions within the context of human values.

HON 180: Data Analysis and Statistics – Using real-world data and open-ended investigations from a variety of disciplines, students apply quantitative and statistical reasoning skills to focus on outcomes of analysis and become confident, critical, and capable users of quantitative information.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –
• Use mathematical and statistical reasoning skills to understand, interpret, critique, challenge, and solve quantitative arguments in numeric, graphic, or written form.
• Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally.
• Use technology to generate, analyze, retrieve, record, and summarize data.
• Measure the strength of a correlation between quantitative variables, with awareness of confounding variables and their effect on the interpretation of a correlation.
• Design and carry out an investigation test in both written and oral form; generate a new data set and hypothesis of their choosing based on the observation and results.
• Understand the strengths and limits of inferences drawn using statistical tools.

Guidelines for Written Work in 100-level Honors Courses
(With the exception of HON 180)

• Students will complete a total of at least 10 pages of formal writing (i.e. excluding journals and in-class exercises), distributed over several assignments.
• One written assignment should be a sustained essay of about 7 pages.
• Students should gain some experience in revising their written work.
• Written work should be returned with comments to help guide students in revision and in future written assignments.
All sections of HON 100 introduce students to Digication, provide instruction in research assignments, and include a documented essay.

Course Descriptions for 200-Level Honors Core Courses

HON 201: States, Markets, and Societies – Focusing on the organization of economic, political, and social relationships within a global system, this course explores the distribution of power, resources, well-being, and cultural capital in different societies.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –
• Compare theoretical and ethical frameworks that articulate power relationships on global and local levels.
• Understand the roles of international organizations, nation-states, multinational economic agents, technological forces, and/or religious, social and arts movements in shaping an emerging global society.
• Apply theories to particular cultural or national contexts and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the theories.
• Analyze and reflect critically on social scientific texts and arguments to evaluate and weigh evidence, and assess biases and assumptions.
• Gain an understanding of the opportunities and constraints that shape people’s lives in varied economic, political, social and cultural settings.
• Discuss the ethical dimensions of the organization of and power relations within the global system.
• Construct and defend a well-formulated set of ideas about how states, societies and economies are interwoven.

**HON 203: Seminar in Multiculturalism** (replaces HON 301 for students entering Honors beginning AQ 2021) — Students will choose from a variety of seminar offerings, each focusing on a specific complex issue related to issues of identity. The seminar will develop students’ understanding of various dimensions of identity, such as race, nationality, ethnicity, class, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, and disability.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

• Demonstrate a respect for human diversity and cultural differences.
• Articulate a critical awareness of their own assumptions, stereotypes, and biases when confronting difference.
• Develop a critical perspective about the meaning of multiculturalism and understand the historical and/or contemporary manifestations of inequality.

**HON 205: Interdisciplinary Arts** – This course asks students to become perceptive and informed audiences of artistic works, helping them to examine and analyze works of art both as formal structures and as elements of a cultural and historical setting. Sections of the course focus on Theatre, Music, or Visual Arts. (Not required for students in the School of Music or the Theatre School.)

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

• Experience one or more forms of art with pleasure and critical insight, exploring the historical and cultural contexts that shape and are shaped by works of art.
• Develop a sophisticated critical vocabulary for writing about and discussing works of art from diverse cultures, and grasping the principles of formal analysis for the mediums studied.
• Demonstrate understanding of how an artistic style or movement develops and changes, and how art forms may influence one another.
• Understand relations among art forms, and interactions of art and society, at a given historical moment.
• Demonstrate understanding of the arts through research, writing, and oral presentation.
• Attend artistic events to become familiar with the art forms studied, and to develop the habits and knowledge of the engaged audience.
• Gain practical knowledge of the formal demands, choices, decisions, and imaginative processes of the artist at work.

HON 225: Honors Lab Science Topics – This course will develop student understanding of how the world works and how different scientific disciplines contribute to this knowledge. Honors Science courses are lab-based courses in Environmental Science, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Anthropology, Archaeology, and other science topics. The science requirement varies according to college and major. (Students with a lab science requirement for the major replace this requirement with an Approved Elective.)

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –
• Practice a variety of data-gathering methods; identify assumptions and address potential threats to validity; and articulate the strengths and limitations of the scientific process.
• Generate testable hypotheses; design and carry out experiments; analyze, interpret and present data; and communicate results both orally and in writing.
• Work collaboratively to solve scientific problems using quantitative tools and reasoning in the description and analysis of research results.
• Understand the provisional nature of scientific inquiry and the importance of uncertainty that is inherent in all scientific explorations. Demonstrate knowledge of the strengths, limitations, uses, and abuses of science and of the relationship between science and society in modern or historical times.
• Demonstrate the ability to apply scientific approaches to problem solving and decision-making in their own lives.

Guidelines for Written Work in 200-level Honors Courses (With the exception of HON225)

• Students will complete a total of at least 12 pages of formal writing, distributed over several assignments.
• One written assignment will be a sustained essay of at least 8 pages.
• Written work should be returned with comments that help guide students in the preparation of future written assignments.
• If possible, students should be offered the opportunity to revise their work for credit.
Course Descriptions for 300-Level Honors Core Courses

HON 302: Junior Seminar in Social Justice (Required for students beginning Honors in AQ 2021)

Students will choose from a variety of seminar offerings, each focusing on systems of power, oppression, and privilege through a social justice lens. Students will investigate the underlying structures that create injustice in contemporary society, and they will study the ways in which racism and the legacy of colonialism perpetuate inequality and oppression. They will develop their research skills by researching at least one complex issue in depth and evaluating approaches to redressing systemic injustice and creating a more equal society.

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Develop an understanding of the power structures that create injustice and oppression in contemporary America or in areas of the world impacted by American and European economic and foreign policy.
- Demonstrate knowledge of how racism and/or colonialism have contributed to systemic forms of injustice.
- Use research materials to critically explore a form of structural injustice that impacts people today, and present findings in a substantial paper based on analysis of that research.
- Evaluate particular actions, including antiracist and decolonial strategies, that might be taken to redress the injustice studied based on the knowledge gained from this research.

Honors Senior Capstone courses

Each student in the Honors Program will complete either an Honors Senior Seminar course (HON 350 or 351) or an Honors Senior Thesis (HON 395). Both capstone formats require students to use the research skills they developed in the Junior Seminar and to carry out projects independently.

HON 350 Honors Senior Capstone Seminar

The Senior Seminar is designed to engage students in discussion of meaning and values, and to foster skills in interdisciplinary research and writing. In a seminar setting, students explore a designated topic, develop related projects, and pursue advanced work under supervision of an honors faculty member. Note that HON 351 is a service-learning designated course and thus may be used to fulfill the Experiential Learning requirement. In both HON 350 and 351 students are invited to take stock and develop intellectual assessments and plans for the future. Senior status and HON 301 are prerequisites for enrollment in HON 350 or 351. A grade of C- or better is required to pass either course.
Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Synthesize work in their majors with knowledge and approaches drawn from their liberal studies education.
- Connect the course’s multidisciplinary content with their own interests and – possibly – with their post-graduation plans.
- Explain the effect of their liberal studies learning upon their intellectual development, research, or creative projects.
- Frame, plan, and carry out a substantial research project using the conventions of research and writing in their field while locating their work in the larger context of a liberal studies curriculum.
- Present findings of their research to a wider audience through oral, written, or visual means.

**HON 351: Honors Senior Capstone Seminar in Community Service**

Honors students who successfully complete this course will be able to –

- Exhibit an active dedication to the Vincentian mission and use their talents to improve the lives of others through a 25-hour service commitment.
- Connect global patterns, forces, and movements with local circumstances by reflecting on their own service experiences in the context of their increasing knowledge of events and issues across several cultures.
- Demonstrate that they can serve effectively and responsibly in the service environment.
- Reflect honestly on their service experience in writing and discussion.
- Demonstrate an informed understanding of the purpose, challenges, and value of community service.
- Frame, plan, and carry out a substantial research project using the conventions of research and writing in their field while locating their work in the larger context of a service learning experience.
- Present findings of their research to a wider audience through oral, written, or visual means.

**HON 395: Honors Senior Thesis**

The Honors Senior Thesis is a significant piece of in-depth research or a creative project in an area of interest to the student. It is conducted in close consultation with two faculty supervisors—a thesis director, who oversees the development and production of the thesis project and assigns the final grade, and a thesis reader, who reviews the final project and provides comments. The Honors Program supports five types of thesis projects (a conventional written thesis, a science or math project, an artistic work, a problem-solving project, and a model, design, game, or computer program), each with its own writing requirements. A summary of the thesis project is presented in poster format at the Honors Student Conference and displayed at the Senior Gala. Junior or Senior status and HON 301 are prerequisites for enrollment in HON 395. A grade of C- or better is required to pass HON 395.
In addition to the outcomes listed for HON 350, students completing the Honors Senior Thesis will be able to –

- Propose, plan, and execute a major research project, or a creative project with a research supplement, under the supervision of two faculty advisors, drawing on ideas, arguments, and theories that have emerged in two or more fields.
- Complete extensive research, locating and evaluating a variety of sources; situate their ideas, interpretations, designs, and findings in a broad field of study; analyze connections and disconnections between their work and existing scholarship on the topic.
- Develop a thesis statement to guide the research, adapting it as needed depending on the findings of the research process; support the thesis with substantial research from a variety of sources.
- Complete a display of the thesis findings to provide viewers with a visual representation of the project, detailing the topic, background information, research process, and findings of the thesis.
- Complete a written project that is “original” in the sense of bringing ideas together in a way that represents the student’s own contribution to the field of study.

**Guidelines for Written Work in 300-level Honors Courses**

(With the exception of HON395)

- Students in HON 301, 302, 350, and 351 will complete a sustained essay of at least eight pages involving research and documentation.
- Students in the junior seminar (HON 301 or 302) will review elements of the research paper, including evaluating and incorporating sources and providing accurate documentation.
- Writing requirements for HON 395 Senior Thesis vary with the type of thesis project. Detailed guidelines on expectations regarding honors thesis projects are available in our office and on our website.