

# Honors College

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The first Honors classes were taught at the university in 1965. In 1971, the program was named in honor of George R. Olliphant and in 1976 an Honors College was established.

The college provides a stimulating education for high-ability students from all of the university's academic disciplines, rewarding and recognizing excellence through scholarship and other awards, and preparing undergraduates for entry to the most prestigious national and international graduate schools. From their freshman year, students are taught in small classes by experienced teachers and are introduced to the practical applications of knowledge as well as to its theoretical bases. In their junior and senior years, Honors College students focus on research projects, working closely with their professors, and are strongly encouraged to participate in study-abroad programs in order to widen their cultural horizons and experience environments outside the United States.

The curriculum of the Honors College consists of two phases: General Honors (for freshmen and sophomores) and Senior Honors (for juniors and seniors). To enter the college as freshmen, students compete with other applicants on the basis of high school grades, scores on the American College Test (or the Scholastic Aptitude Test), detailed evaluations by two high school teachers and a sample of written work. Students may also be asked to come to the campus for a personal interview. Successful completion of General Honors will be cited on the student's transcript and diploma. Senior Honors is described below.

The following is a brief description of the Honors College requirements and curriculum. For more specific details, students and advisers are urged to consult the *Honors College Handbook*, available on the Web at [www.usm.edu/honors](http://www.usm.edu/honors).

## General Honors

Freshmen admitted to General Honors complete the curriculum listed below. In satisfying the General Honors requirements, students also fulfill the University General Education requirements. For most students, completion of General Honors will also fulfill the core requirements of their major. Some students, however, may have to take additional core courses required specifically for their major. Students undertaking General Honors are required to complete at least 26 hours in Honors sections, taking six or more hours of Honors course work each semester. Students are in good standing as long as they remain on track and maintain a minimum 3.25 overall average; they must graduate with at least a 3.25 average in order to receive General Honors recognition at graduation.

### Honors College General Education Requirements

	HOURS
<b>I. Writing and Oral Communication (9 hours)</b>	
<b>Composition</b>	
ENG 101, 102.....	6
Required: 6 hours, preferably in Honors sections.	
<b>II. Global History and Culture (14 hours)</b>	
<b>Humanities</b> .....	9
Required: 9 hours from Humanities list in General Education Curriculum, preferably in Honors sections.	
<b>University Forum</b>	
Honors 321, 322.....	2
Required: 2 hours in first year.	
<b>Social Science</b> .....	3
Required: 3 hours from Social Science list in General Education Curriculum, preferably in an Honors section.	

**III. Aesthetic Values (3 hours)**  
 Required: 3 hours.....3  
 from Aesthetic Values list in General Education Curriculum, preferably in an Honors section.

**IV. Basic Science and Mathematics (11 hours)**  
**Laboratory Sciences**.....8  
 Required: 8 hours, from list of laboratory sciences in General Education Curriculum, preferably in Honors sections.  
**Mathematics** .....3  
 Required: 3 hours in MAT 101 or higher-level course.

**V. Decision Making and Responsibility (3 hours)**  
 Required: 3 hours.....3  
 from Decision Making and Responsibility list in General Education Curriculum, preferably in an Honors section.

Note: The minimum core is 40 hours, 26 of which must be taken in Honors sections. Honors College students may also have to take additional core courses required specifically for their major. In addition, each student must take two writing intensive courses, normally in the major or minor field. Such courses are designated in the annual *Class Schedule Guide* with the course suffix WI.

**Requirements for Graduation with General Honors**

1. Completion of Honors College General Education minimum requirements
2. Completion of a minimum of 26 of the General Education hours in Honors sections
3. Overall minimal GPA of 3.25 at graduation

**Successful completion of General Honors will be cited on the student’s transcript and diploma.**

**Senior Honors**

To enter Senior Honors, the student must either complete General Honors with a minimum GPA of 3.25 or meet the following admission requirements: (1) a grade point average of 3.25 on at least 40 hours, (2) recommendations from two professors, (3) approval by the student’s major department. Students must maintain a GPA of 3.25 to remain in Senior Honors. Students completing Senior Honors with the required GPA will receive the special recognition denoted by the Latin designations *summa cum laude* (3.8 or higher overall average), *magna cum laude* (3.50-3.79), or *cum laude* (3.25-3.49). Students will typically apply for Senior Honors during their sophomore year and, if admitted, begin taking Honors classes in the first semester of their junior year. The Senior Honors curriculum offers students opportunities for independent study in their major, for study abroad, and for scholarship assistance.

**Senior Honors Curriculum**

The Seniors Honors Curriculum is designed to enhance students’ research skills through completion of a Senior Honors project. Working closely with an experienced professor, students learn to design a research study, collect information, analyze data and present clear reports in oral and written form. In addition, during their junior year and senior years, students are strongly encouraged to participate in at least one study-abroad program in order to deepen their knowledge of cultures and environments outside the United States. Students are also required to complete a senior capstone course in their major field of study.



**Honors College Senior Honors Requirements**

HON 301 (Prospectus Writing).....3  
 Senior Thesis (HON 492 or the 492 course in the department of the student’s major)\*.....3  
 Comprehensive Examination in the Major  
 Senior Capstone Experience

\*The senior project must be done in the area of the student’s major unless specific prior approval is given by the dean of the Honors College for a project in the area of the minor.

**Requirements for Graduation with Senior Honors**

1. Successful completion of 6 hours in Senior Honors courses, including senior project
2. Successful completion of comprehensive examination
3. Overall GPA of 3.25 or better at graduation

**Senior Honors Research**

The Senior Honors project involves two phases – the prospectus and the project itself. The prospectus must be presented two semesters prior to graduation; guidelines for the prospectus are available in the *Honors College Handbook* located on the Web at [www.usm.edu/honors](http://www.usm.edu/honors). The project should reflect significant individual effort that involves library research, laboratory research, or field research and must conform to accepted scholarly procedure within the discipline of the major field. It may be creative, but a creative project must be executed within the framework of accepted scholarly procedure (that is, a student who produces a creative effort must introduce that effort by adequate discussion of the nature of the creative form involved, including an indication of familiarity with other examples of that form). Any doubts as to the validity of a proposed project should be resolved in discussion among the project director, the chair of the student’s major department, and the Honors dean. Directions for the format of the senior project may be found in the *Honors College Handbook*, accessible at [www.usm.edu/honors](http://www.usm.edu/honors). Graduating students are expected to present their research in a public senior symposium during the semester of graduation.

The comprehensive examination must be taken no later than four weeks before the student is scheduled to graduate. The examination may be either written or oral, at the option of the major department. The exact nature of the examination is a matter for decision by the department involved, but there are general guidelines:

- (1) The examination should be designed so that it can be completed in a maximum of three hours.
- (2) The examination should test the candidate’s general knowledge of the field of the major rather than specialized information about some particular aspect of the major.
- (3) The examination should be uniform for all candidates within a particular semester.
- (4) It is the responsibility of the student to contact the department chair and request that the comprehensive examination be designed and administered. These arrangements should be made one semester in advance.
- (5) A student who does not pass the examination upon the first attempt may repeat it once.

**Graduation Recognition**

A student may graduate with General Honors or Senior Honors or both in the Honors College. Senior Honors will be denoted by the Latin designations, *cum laude* (GPA of 3.25-3.49), *magna cum laude* (GPA or 3.50-3.79), and *summa cum laude* (GPA of 3.80 or higher).

## Financial Assistance

Students enrolled in the Honors College may apply for financial aid through the Office of Financial Aid on the same basis as any other student. Scholarships available only to Honors students are listed below.

- (1) **Presidential Scholarships:** Each year, the Honors College will designate a select group of Honors freshmen as Presidential Scholars. Applicants are expected to have high ACT scores, superior grades, and proven leadership ability. The value of this award is equal to tuition, book support and room and board for a four-year period. (The recipient will receive university-mandated necessary increments each semester.) Presidential Scholars are required to maintain at least a 3.25 GPA. **The Schillig-Baird Scholarships, O. L. and Marie Sims Scholarship, the Pulley, Pulley, Pulley, and Gough Scholarship, The Middleberg Family Scholarship, the Lee Cornelius and Vera B. Burns Scholarship, the Olliphant Presidential Scholarship, the Drs. William G. and Hannelore Giles Scholarship, the J. Lloyd Milam Scholarship, the Cellular South Scholarship, and the USM Foundation Scholarship** and others are awarded from special endowments made available for Presidential Scholarships.
- (2) **George R. Olliphant Scholarships:** Available to a selected number of deserving students enrolled in the Honors College.
- (3) **Honors Scholarships:** Freshmen admitted to the Honors College are designated Honors College Scholars. Awards are based on an excellent record of achievement on the ACT (or SAT) and in high school classes, with attention to Honors, AP, and other rigorous courses successfully completed; high school and community activities; honors and achievements; counselor and teacher recommendations; and a writing sample. Freshman and sophomore **Honors Scholars** are required to maintain a GPA of at least 3.25. Students admitted to Senior Honors are also eligible for Honors College Scholarships. Juniors and seniors are required to maintain a GPA of at least 3.25. Honors scholarships are in the amount of \$150 per semester, amounting to a total of \$1,200 for students completing both General and Senior Honors.
- (4) **Travel Awards:** Special travel awards are available for the study-abroad programs sponsored by the university's Center for International and Continuing Education. Students should apply to the dean of the Honors College in late January.

## The University Forum

The University Forum is a special series of lectures and programs open to all students, faculty, and townspeople. It is sponsored each fall and spring by the University Honors College and features nationally known speakers in a variety of fields. Students who attend the forum lectures and designated films, concerts, plays, and other activities may receive an hour of credit on a pass/fail basis by enrolling in HON 321 or 322 and completing course requirements. This course may be repeated by any Southern Miss student for up to eight hours of credit.