

Honors Program



What is the Honors Program?

The Honors Program at UM-Dearborn is designed for qualified, highly-motivated students who want an extra level of challenge and stimulus in their college experience. Honors students take a special sequence of classes that satisfy basic requirements and at the same time provide a well-balanced undergraduate education. The program teaches students to think critically and independently, to perceive connections between diverse areas of knowledge, and to express their thoughts clearly and effectively.

What are the benefits of the Honors Program?

Because of the small size of the Honors classes and the emphasis on active participation, students in the program gain close personal contact with their professors from the beginning of the freshman year. The instructors in the Honors Program are highly dedicated teachers. Many have won UM-Dearborn's Distinguished Teaching Award. All are committed to the ideal of relaxed and collegial relations between students and professors. The Honors faculty members are readily available to Honors students for academic advising and for informal conversation.

The core of the Honors Program is a carefully planned sequence of courses. Instead of taking a smattering of classes in unrelated areas, students in the program complete their basic college requirements with courses that form an integrated and coherent curriculum.

Honors students have a special niche within the college community. They get to know each other and build close friendships because they take many of the same courses together. The Honors lounge provides a home-base on campus where students can come to talk, study, read, and relax between classes. The program regularly organizes group outings to concerts, plays and museums. Students and faculty in the program get to share valuable experiences outside the classroom.

What courses do Honors students take?

In the first semester of the freshman year, a topical methods seminar is offered to Honors students. In the second semester, students begin a sequence of four courses in Western Culture. The courses survey the development of Western Culture from the ancient world up to the present day. Students read original documents in literature, philosophy, religious thought, and social thought.

The classes combine some lecture and much discussion about the assigned readings for the day. By the end of the series, students will have gained a broad and critical perspective on the main values and themes of Western tradition.

Honors students also take two courses in non-Western culture, which they select from offerings in history, anthropology, political science, art history, or other approved areas.

In the junior or senior year, Honors students enroll in a tutorial. This is a small class, usually with six to eight students. They pursue intensive study of a given topic with a faculty member who is an expert in the field. The tutorial introduces students to timely and important areas of research, and it usually requires a major writing assignment.

How does the Honors Program fit into the college curriculum?

The Honors Program provides an alternate route for completing basic required courses. Honors classes satisfy general distribution requirements for the various units on campus. If a student leaves the program, the classes easily translate into a normal college program with no loss of time or credit. Honors courses are demanding, yet the atmosphere is supportive. Students generally maintain the same GPA in the program as they would taking ordinary courses.

Apart from their Honors requirements, students follow a normal course of study in their own area of concentration, together with the other students in their unit. They must maintain a 3.2 GPA to remain in the program.

How do students enter the Program?

The Honors Program at UM-Dearborn is open to all entering freshmen with a high school GPA of at least 3.5, or other evidence of superior academic ability. The program accepts students from all units on campus: the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the School of Education, the School of Management. Admission to the program is competitive and is based on the student's interests and experience as well as the high school record. As part of admission to the program, students will be interviewed by representatives from the Honors Program. There are no special charges or fees for participation in the program.

What are the educational goals of the Honors Program?

The Honors Program offers a carefully planned sequence of courses that form an integrated and coherent curriculum. The Honors curriculum follows a logical progression, beginning with discussion courses in the freshman year to independent research in the junior year. Discussion classes are open and convivial, providing an opportunity for students to express ideas and thoughts freely. Students gain insight from, as well as learn to respect, diverse points of view.

Honors courses offer a broad overview of Western culture. Students learn about the basic traditions, the essential beliefs, and the pivotal events that have shaped our society, always with a critical eye. At the same time, since some of the courses are team-taught by professors from different fields, students also come to understand how various strands in our history are linked with one another.

We recognize that our students will enter a multicultural society. Two required courses in non-Western culture help students develop a respect for cultural traditions that differ from their own.

The goal of the Honors program is to help students develop academic abilities that gradually build on one another focusing on self-reliance and competence. The skills and values fostered by the program will benefit students throughout their college education, professional careers, and personal lives.

For More Information

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