

THE MEDAILLE
COLLEGE HONORS
PROGRAM

*2018-2019
Handbook*

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I. Overview

The Medaille College Honors Program is a distinctive academic community that brings together talented and highly motivated undergraduate students, outstanding and enthusiastic faculty, and dedicated staff and administrators with the shared goal of promoting a rich, dynamic, intellectual environment within and beyond the classroom. The purpose of this innovative program is to enhance the educational experiences of honors students by combining a sequence of eight honors-level General Education courses with an array of co-curricular events and projects designed to nurture deep intellectual inquiry, develop academic integrity and leadership skills, and foster a sense of shared moral commitment within the communities of Buffalo, Western New York, and the world.

Benefits to students in the Honors Program include:

- A rigorous and conceptually-integrated curriculum of honors courses designed to introduce and reinforce important critical thinking tools, communication skills, and scholarly ideas;
- Participation in special honors receptions, presentations, symposia, and a suite of other academic activities, service projects, and social events;
- Unique opportunities for personal mentoring from honors faculty, administrators, and staff, as well as the chance to connect with other outstanding and passionate students;
- Flexible advisement and registration procedures to ensure enrollment in honors courses on schedule and in sequence;
- A unique housing grant for incoming freshman honors students choosing to live on campus;
- Preferred parking for freshman commuters;
- Official recognition at commencement and on the diploma.

Furthermore, since the curriculum of the Honors Program is structured around accelerated versions of Medaille's General Education courses, qualified students pursuing any undergraduate baccalaureate degree program are potentially eligible to participate.

II. Invitation Requirements

(A) Incoming First-Year Students

Incoming first-year baccalaureate students with strong records of academic and extracurricular achievement in high school will receive automatic consideration for the Honors Program through

Medaille’s Admissions Office. For further details on incoming first-year invitation requirements, prospective students are encouraged to contact Dr. Kush K. Bhardwaj, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Honors Program Liaison, at 716-880-2372 or Kushal.K.Bhardwaj@medaille.edu.

(B) Continuing Students

As space permits, the Honors Program may also solicit and review applications from first-year students during the second half of the Fall and/or Spring semesters. If this secondary application procedure is to be initiated during a given semester, the Program Director will facilitate its announcement in the appropriate first-year courses. Interested students will submit an application that includes a short personal statement, two academic letters of reference, and (if applicable) first semester grades. The Program Director and two additional members of the Advisory Committee will review each application and notify students of their decision before the end of the same semester. *It should be noted that continuing students are not eligible for the honors housing grant.*

III. Curriculum: The Integrated Honors Sequence

(A) Incoming First-Year Students¹

The heart of the Honors Program is a sequence of eight honors-level liberal arts and sciences courses developed and taught by our most dedicated and enthusiastic faculty members. As part of Medaille’s General Education core curriculum, these interdisciplinary courses satisfy important requirements for all baccalaureate degree programs.

Without question, the honors versions of these General Education courses are intellectually rigorous, as they are specifically tailored to students who possess the ability and motivation to thrive in challenging academic environments. This distinctive and richly integrated curricular sequence introduces and reinforces key concepts and skills from the freshman through senior year. The topics and content of each course are carefully selected to help students attain the highest proficiency in written literacy, ethical reasoning, and integrative, interdisciplinary thinking—the fundamental learning goals of Medaille’s General Education program. Students seeking entry into competitive professional fields or graduate study programs will find these critical thinking, writing, and communication skills crucial to their success.

The Honors Program’s curricular sequence is outlined in the following table:

Course & Credit Hours	Pre-requisite	Semester
HON 110: Honors Introduction to Critical Thinking (3.0 credits)	None	1st
HON 130: Honors Fundamentals of Public Speaking (3.0 credits)	None	1st
HON 200: Honors Advanced College	ENG 110	2nd

¹Continuing students who begin the Honors Program in their second or third semesters will not be required to retake honors versions of General Education courses they have already completed.

Writing (3.0 credits)		
HON 220: Honors Justice & Democracy (3.0 credits)	GEN 110 or HON 110 & ENG 110	2nd
HON 230: Honors Creative Expression (3.0 credits)	GEN 110 or HON 110 & ENG 110	3rd
HON 340: Honors Scientific Discovery ² (3.0 credits)	GEN 110 or HON 110 & ENG 110	4th
HON 410: Honors Baccalaureate Capstone I (3.0 credits)	Junior standing & all previous honors GEN ED requirements	6th or 7th
HON 411: Honors Baccalaureate Capstone II (3.0 credits)	HON 410	7th or 8th

(B) Honors Contracts

While all honors students are strongly encouraged to take each course in the above sequence, those unable to take an honors course due to an *unavoidable* scheduling conflict will instead pursue an Honors Contract in an equivalent non-honors course. The Honors Contract entails the production of an additional research paper, literature review, creative essay, or other such project that enriches the student’s academic experience. The nature and scope of this project will be determined collaboratively by the student and course instructor, and must be approved by the Honors Director within the first month of the semester (see Appendix B).

IV. Co-curricular Opportunities: Mentoring, Research, Experiential Learning

Medaille College is proud of its reputation for having small classes and a low student-to-faculty ratio, so students participating in the Honors Program will have close contact with their professors. Mentoring opportunities will also arise within a variety of special events and activities that bring together honors faculty members, administrators, staff, and students outside of the classroom. For instance, honors students are encouraged to participate in receptions, presentations, field trips, community-based and experiential learning projects, special internships, Study Abroad Programs, and other co-curricular activities throughout their academic careers.

V. Policies and Procedures

(A) Good Standing

All students in the Honors Program will have their grades reviewed by the Program Director at the conclusion of each semester. To remain in good standing with the program, students must continue to register in sequence for prescribed honors courses as part of a full-time schedule and maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.2, as well as a B- or above in honors courses. Note that receiving a grade of ‘F’ at any point in the honors sequence may result in dismissal from the program. In addition, honors students must actively participate in mentoring activities to maintain their good standing in the program.

²Honors students pursuing baccalaureate degrees in Biology or Veterinary Technology are not required to take HON 340.

Students whose honors or cumulative GPA falls below the minimum requirements will have their academic standing evaluated by the Program Directors in consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee. This evaluation may result in one semester of probation. Following the probationary semester, student records will be evaluated again. Earning a cumulative GPA of 3.2, a B- and above in honors courses, and active participation in mentoring activities will result in reinstatement of good academic standing. A GPA below the minimum requirements may result in dismissal from the program or a second and final semester of probation. A continued GPA below the minimum requirements after the second semester of probation will result in dismissal from the program. Note that any decisions made by the College Academic Standards Committee take precedence over those made by the Honors Program.

(B) Requirements for Graduation with Honors Distinction

To graduate with official honors recognition at commencement, students must meet the following requirements: (1) have successfully completed all courses in the honors sequence (or completed Honors Contracts in approved equivalent courses), (2) have achieved an overall cumulative GPA of at least 3.2, with a B- or above in honors courses, and (3) have successfully defended an honors capstone thesis written in HON 411.

(C) Voluntary Withdrawal

Any student considering a withdrawal from the Honors Program is encouraged to meet at the earliest opportunity with his or her academic advisor and/or the Program Director. In many cases, concerns that could motivate a withdrawal from the program can be addressed through such discussions.

VI. Program Administration

As Program Director, Dr. Bernadette Clabeaux mentors scholars and manages the Advisory Committee's work and the work of the Honors Student Council while reporting to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the appropriate academic dean on significant issues.

(A) Advisory Committee

The Honors Program's administration and development are led by the Honors Program Advisory Committee. Members of the Committee include:

- Matthew H. Bowker, Ph.D., Clinical Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Lesley Capuana, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Social Sciences
- Gerald J. Erion, Ph.D., Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Courtney Grim, M.F.A., Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Erika Hamann, M.A., Clinical Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies

- Daniel P. Kotzin, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Debra McLoughlin, M.S., Associate Dean for Student Success Center
- James Ramsey, Ph.D., Director of First-Year Experience; Clinical Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Bridgette Slavin, Ph.D., Clinical Assistant Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Lori Quigley, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Alice Villaseñor, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Andy Yeager, M.L.S., Associate Professor, Libraries

(B) *Ex Officio* Honors Directors

The following *ex officio* Honors Directors offer advice to the current Honors Director:

- Lesley Capuana, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Social Sciences
- Gerald J. Erion, Ph.D., Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Robert H. Johnson, Ph.D., Professor, Science, Math & Technology
- Daniel P. Kotzin, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies
- Lee Nisbet, Ph.D., Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies

(C) Honors Student Council

The Honors Student Council serves as the main vehicle for student leadership within the program. This Council, comprised of two representatives of each class (elected by the students of their respective classes) will work closely with the Program Director and Faculty Advisory Committee to develop new aspects of the program, assess program strengths and areas for improvement, and organize co-curricular activities throughout the year. Student representatives will normally be elected at the beginning of the Fall semester and serve for the remainder of the academic year.

Appendix A: Mission and Goals

(A) Mission Statement

The Medaille College Honors Program is an innovative honors program based on personalized, integrated, inquiry-based educational experiences. Through the program, students of demonstrated academic ability receive opportunities to develop the skills to think critically and creatively about challenging ideas. Student learning is guided by an honors faculty dedicated to helping students build a strong liberal arts and sciences foundation. Through close interaction with their peers and honors faculty mentors, students will explore connections among academic disciplines while refining their problem-solving and communication skills.

(B) Program Goals

The Honors Program at Medaille College will:

- Enable students to build a strong liberal arts and sciences foundation applicable to real-world problem solving;
- Enable students to integrate various areas of intellectual inquiry;
- Enable students to develop life-long inquiry skills, habits and attitudes;
- Foster superior communication skills;
- Encourage students to think clearly and creatively about moral and aesthetic values;
- Engender leadership skills while supporting the value of civic responsibility.

Appendix B: Honors Contract Form

Please fill out the following and return to the Program Director for approval by September 30 (fall semester) or February 15 (spring semester). See Section III.B for more details.

Student Name

Required Honors Course No. & Name

Equivalent "Replacement" Course No. & Name

Course Instructor

Brief Project Description (including approx. length):

PROJECT APPROVED

Student Signature and Date

Program Director Signature and Date

HONORS CONTRACT FULFILLED (due by end of same semester)

Instructor Endorsement (by signature, phone, or email)

Program Director Approval