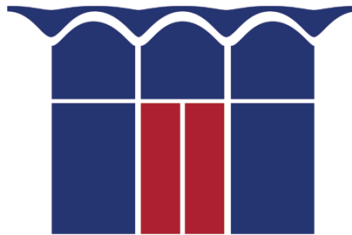


UNIVERSITY OF  
DETROIT MERCY



# UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK

UPDATED JULY 2024

# THE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

at the University of Detroit Mercy offers students a unique opportunity to challenge themselves and each other through deeper academic experiences and meaningful campus and community engagement.

This handbook is designed to introduce students to the graduation requirements, curriculum, and policies of the University Honors Program (UHP).

If you have any questions, please contact the Director(s) of the University Honors Program at [honors@udmercy.edu](mailto:honors@udmercy.edu).

More information can be found on our website: [www.udmercy.edu/honors](http://www.udmercy.edu/honors) [links to external site].

Honors students should refer to the Honors Thesis Handbook for further information about the Honors Thesis. Students entering the UHP in the 2024-2025 academic year or later should also refer to the Honors Portfolio Handbook for further information about the Honors Portfolio.

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## 1. CORE VALUES

**Curiosity:** UHP students explore big questions across a wide range of scholarly fields in the humanities and social sciences, including English, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Religious Studies, Theatre, African American Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies.

**Community:** The UHP is a community of engaged and motivated students. One of the distinct features of the UHP is the Gardella Honors House, a space available exclusively to UHP students. At Gardella, Honors students gather for study sessions and social events. The UHP is also committed to serving the larger university community and communities across the Detroit Metro area, as students complete at least 100 hours of community-engaged service throughout their time in the program.

**Critical Thinking:** Through readings, writing assignments, discussions, and scholarly events, students in the UHP learn to think critically about themselves and their world. Honors students push beyond common-sense understandings of fundamental issues such as justice, equality, and success through intensive study across a wide range of academic disciplines.

**Reflection:** Honors students regularly reflect upon both their fields of study and themselves, making connections across their courses and identifying their own evolving values in pursuit of scholarly, professional, and spiritual excellence.

**Diversity:** Honors students engage with diverse perspectives and cultures through coursework and community-engaged service, growing into global citizens who are engaged with their local communities. UHP students learn to understand themselves and their place in the world through a global framework steeped in questions of human difference and social justice.

**Service:** All Honors students complete at least 100 hours of community-engaged service. Throughout their time in the UHP, students reflect upon the meaning of community engagement for themselves and their world.

## 2. HONORS PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Upon completion of their degree requirements, all members of the University Honors Program will have demonstrated an ability to:

1. Practice intellectual curiosity across a range of academic disciplines and areas of human knowledge, pursuing big questions about themselves and their world.
2. Think critically and write cogently on complex topics, synthesizing information from diverse perspectives to arrive at their own conclusions.
3. Serve their communities through community-engaged service projects and reflect on the meaning of service, for both themselves and their communities.
4. Engage in self-reflection about their values and goals, a process that asks students to articulate the relationship between the self and the world, and to craft a vision of their future that aligns with their values.

### 3. HONORS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

#### FOR STUDENTS WHO ENTERED THE HONORS PROGRAM IN THE 2024–2025 ACADEMIC YEAR OR LATER

##### I. Honors Coursework (16 credits)

- HON 1000: First-Year Honors Seminar (one credit, completed in the first semester)
- At least five Honors courses (15+ credits). These courses fulfill requirements for the university's Core Curriculum.

##### II. Honors Curriculum Completion: Two Paths (choose one)

###### a) Honors Thesis Path (3 credits)

- Three credit hours devoted to writing an Honors Thesis under the guidance of a Faculty Thesis Advisor (ideally, one credit per semester over the course of three semesters)
- Successful defense and completion of an Honors Thesis (see the Thesis Handbook for details)

###### b) Honors Portfolio Path (3 credits)

- One additional three-credit course (for a total of 19 credits of coursework)
- Successful completion of an Honors Portfolio (see the Portfolio Handbook for details)

##### III. Community-Engaged Service (100+ hours)

These hours will be documented by the [Emerging Leaders Program](#) (ELP) [links to external site] and [Institute for Leadership and Service](#) (ILP) [links to external site]. For more information on how to document your service hours, please visit the [ILP's Service Learning page](#) [links to external site].

##### IV. Maintain a Cumulative 3.3 GPA

In order to graduate with the distinction of an Honors degree, e.g., Honors B.A., Honors B.S. (separate from university Latin honors), students must complete their degree requirements with a minimum 3.3 GPA. This minimum GPA should be established by the beginning of the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

If a student's overall GPA falls below the 3.3 requirement, the student may be placed on UHP probation. Failure to raise the overall GPA to 3.3 or higher may result in removal from the program. Students must demonstrate that they are progressing toward the fulfillment of the program's requirements, or they risk removal from the program and loss of the Honors scholarship.

# HONORS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

## FOR STUDENTS WHO ENTERED THE HONORS PROGRAM BEFORE THE 2024–2025 ACADEMIC YEAR

### I. Honors Coursework (19 credits)

- HON 1000: First-Year Honors Seminar (one credit, completed in students' first semester)
- At least six Honors courses (18+ credits). These courses fulfill requirements for the university's Core Curriculum.

### II. Honors Thesis (3 credits)

- Three credit hours devoted to writing an Honors Thesis under the guidance of a Faculty Thesis Advisor (ideally, one credit per semester over the course of three semesters)
- Successful defense and completion of an Honors Thesis (see the Thesis Handbook for details)

### III. Community-Engaged Service (100+ hours)

These hours will be documented by the [Emerging Leaders Program \(ELP\)](#) [links to external site] and [Institute for Leadership and Service \(ILP\)](#) [links to external site]. For more information on how to document your service hours, please visit the [ILP's Service Learning page](#) [links to external site].

### IV. Maintain a Cumulative 3.3 GPA

In order to graduate with the distinction of an Honors degree, e.g., Honors B.A., Honors B.S. (separate from university Latin honors), students must complete their degree requirements with a minimum 3.3 GPA. This minimum GPA should be established by the beginning of the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

If a student's overall GPA falls below the 3.3 requirement, the student may be placed on UHP probation. Failure to raise the overall GPA to 3.3 or higher may result in removal from the program. Students must demonstrate that they are progressing toward the fulfillment of the program's requirements, or they risk removal from the program and loss of the Honors scholarship.

## 4. HONORS ADVISING

The Honors student, the Honors Director(s), and the student's major advisor work together to ensure the student is moving through the Honors program efficiently. It is the responsibility of Honors students to discuss incorporating Honors courses into their schedules with their academic advisors when planning classes for each new semester. *It is the responsibility of the Honors student and their academic advisor to ensure the student fulfills the Honors Program requirements.*

### Course Sequence

The program does not prescribe a course sequence for the Honors curriculum. This allows students the flexibility necessary to complete their Honors coursework within the structures of their majors. The only exception to this is HON 1000, which should be completed in the Fall semester of the student's first year. Students should take note that not all Honors courses are offered each semester. See the section below titled "Honors Coursework" for more.

## Course Registration

Students should register for Honors courses in a timely fashion each semester. Honors students and major advisors must ensure that the student registers for Honors sections of the required courses, designated with "HON" as the section number.

### **Honors Thesis Defense (required for students who entered before 2024-2025; recommended for all)**

Honors students who complete an Honors Thesis are required to successfully defend their Honors thesis before the last week of classes in the semester they plan to graduate. Typically, Honors students begin their thesis no later than the second term of their third year, although it can be started earlier. Students should consult their major advisor to determine when they should begin working on their thesis. For a more detailed timetable for the Honors thesis, see the Honors Thesis Handbook.

### **Portfolio Option (option available only for students who entered in 2024-2025 or later)**

For students who choose to complete an additional Honors course and an Honors Portfolio instead of an Honors Thesis, the Honors Portfolio must be submitted by the end of week 8 of the semester in which they plan to graduate. Students must maintain records of their Honors assignment prompts, completed work, and professors' feedback. These documents make up the core of the Honors Portfolio. See the Honors Portfolio Handbook for more details.

## 5. HONORS COURSEWORK

Honors courses are taught by some of Detroit Mercy's most talented and accomplished faculty. The UHP Curriculum is structured through four categories of coursework:

I. HON 1000: Honors First-Year Seminar (1 credit) [required] (offered every Fall semester)

II. ENL 1310: Honors Academic Writing (3 credits) [Core A2; recommended] (offered every Fall)

III. Foundations [D1, D2, E1, E2, E3] (3 credits each) [recommended: complete three or more]

The UHP's Foundations courses cover fundamental categories of human knowledge in the humanities and social sciences: Philosophical Knowledge (D1), Religious Knowledge (D2), Historical Experiences (E1), Literary Experiences (E2), and Aesthetic Experiences (E3). Below is a selection of Honors Foundations courses:

D1: PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE (offered every Fall semester)

PHIL 1000: Honors Introduction to Philosophy

D2: RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE (one offered every Winter semester)

RELS 2020: Honors Asian Religions (counts also for IT3)

RELS 2180: Honors Black Religion in America (counts also for IT4)

RELS 2240: Honors Jesus and the Gospels (counts also for IT6)

E1: HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES (one offered every Fall semester)

HIS 2000: Honors Ancient Mediterranean World

HIS 2510: Honors United States History Since 1877 (counts also for IT2)

E2: LITERARY EXPERIENCES (offered every Winter semester)

ENL 2350: Honors Study of Fiction

E3: AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES (one offered every Winter semester)

TRE 1500: Honors Fundamentals of Human Expression

TRE 1610: Honors Fundamentals of Acting

ENL 2550: Honors Study of Film

#### IV. Diverse Experiences [IT3, IT4, IT6] (3 credits each) [recommended: complete one or more]

Diversity is one of the UHP's core values. The UHP's Diverse Experiences courses cover a wide range of subjects centered on questions of identity, culture, difference, belonging, and social justice. Below is a selection of Honors Diverse Experiences courses:

IT3: CULTURAL DIVERSITY (offered occasionally)

RELS 2020: Honors Asian Religions (counts also for D2)

IT4: HUMAN DIFFERENCE (one offered every Fall semester and occasionally in Winter)

ENL 2750: Honors Diverse Voices in Literature (counts also for IT6)

RELS 2180: Honors Black Religion in America (counts also for D2)

AAS 3100: Honors Science, Technology, and Race (counts also for C2 and IT6)

IT6: SPIRITUALITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE (one offered every Fall semester and occasionally in Winter)

ENL 2750: Honors Diverse Voices in Literature (counts also for IT4)

RELS 2240: Honors Jesus and the Gospels (counts also for D2)

AAS 3100: Honors Science, Technology, and Race (counts also for C2 and IT4)

*\*N.B. If you are interested in registering for the non-Honors equivalent of any of the above courses, consult the Honors Director(s) before registering for the course. The Honors Program may occasionally offer other courses than those listed above, including courses in other Core Curriculum categories such as F1: Ethics and IT2: Critical Thinking.*

## 6. HONORS THESIS

All UHP students are required to complete an Honors thesis to graduate from the University Honors Program. (The exception to this rule is students who entered the UHP in the 2024-2025 or later and who opt to complete an extra Honors course and an Honors Portfolio instead of an Honors Thesis.)

As the capstone for the University Honors academic experience, the thesis represents the culmination of UHP students' undergraduate work at the University of Detroit Mercy. The thesis provides students a unique opportunity to apply the knowledge, skills, and talents they have cultivated at the university to create an original scholarly or creative work grounded in academic research.

Under the supervision of a faculty mentor, students undertake a major research or creative project. Past Honors students have completed scholarly theses on a wide range of topics, including, for example, women's representation in the US judiciary (Political Science major), the interaction

between *Veillonella parvula* and *Streptococcus* in biofilm formation (Biology major), the history of US adoption literature (English major), the universal oxidation method for 2' and 5' positions of uridine (Biochemistry major), and the future of sustainability in Jesuit education (Business Administration major). Others have completed creative projects such as documentaries, plays, collections of poetry, and short story sequences. Truly, the possibilities are endless.

### **Getting Started**

Students are encouraged to devise the project themselves but develop it in close collaboration with a faculty mentor (the Faculty Thesis Advisor) who will supervise the various stages of the project, from research, data collection, writing, and revision, to a defense of the work before the student's Honors Thesis Committee and, if they choose, the wider Honors community. In addition to the Faculty Thesis Advisor, students should also plan to work with at least one other faculty member to serve on their Thesis Committee. The thesis may derive from the student's major academic field or from another academic area of interest.

Students may begin the process of producing their thesis at any point after a topic is chosen; however, most of the work is typically completed in the final three semesters of the student's academic career. Thesis students register for a series of three one-credit courses, usually beginning in the Winter semester of their third year and continuing through their fourth year (HON 4997, HON 4998, and HON 4999).

### **Registering for the Honors Thesis Sections (HON 4997, HON 4998, and HON 4999)**

In order to register for the thesis sections (HON 4997, HON 4998, and HON 4999), students complete the [University Honors Program Thesis Sections Form](#) [links to external site] to request that these sections be individually created for them. Before completing the form, students must arrange for a faculty mentor to serve as their Faculty Thesis Advisor. The Faculty Thesis Advisor will serve as the instructor of record for HON 4997, HON 4998, and HON 4999.

These course sections are one credit each, and they represent the work students will complete under the guidance of their Faculty Thesis Advisor. The sections have no regular class meeting time. The nature and frequency of the collaboration between the student and the Faculty Thesis Advisor will be determined by the Faculty Thesis Advisor, in collaboration with the student.

### **Completing the Thesis: Defense and Final Submission**

The Honors Thesis must be completed and defended before or during the semester the student intends to graduate. Once completed, students submit their thesis to their Faculty Thesis Advisor for final approval. This is followed by a public oral defense of the thesis in the Gardella Honors House. Students must schedule their defense with their Faculty Thesis Advisor, the Honors Director(s), and any additional Thesis Committee members (each Honors Thesis committee should consist of at least one faculty member in addition to the Faculty Thesis Advisor). Once the student completes the oral defense, a final, signed copy of the thesis is submitted to Honors Director(s), who submits the thesis to the University Library for cataloging.



## 7. HONORS PORTFOLIO

### OPTION AVAILABLE ONLY FOR STUDENTS WHO ENTERED THE HONORS PROGRAM IN THE 2024–2025 ACADEMIC YEAR OR LATER

Graduating Honors students who entered the UHP in the 2024–2025 academic year or later have the option of submitting an Honors Portfolio instead of writing and defending an Honors Thesis. Students pursuing the portfolio option must complete at least one additional three-credit Honors course (totaling six Honors courses, in addition to HON 1000).

The portfolio must include selected materials reflecting the student’s intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and social development at UDM. Portfolio evaluation allows the Honors Program to assess whether individual students are fulfilling the UHP’s stated program outcomes. Each portfolio is evaluated by two or more Honors faculty.

#### Timeline

Students must submit their portfolio by the end of week 8 of the semester in which they plan to graduate. The portfolio must be submitted via a OneDrive folder, which will be created for each student upon declaring their intent to complete the portfolio. Two Honors faculty will review the portfolio and evaluate how well the student has satisfied the portfolio requirements and Honors Program outcomes. Students will be notified by week 12 whether their portfolio been approved.

#### Collecting Material

Upon entering the UHP, students should begin to keep all their work completed in the Honors Program, including the prompts/assignments from their instructors and the instructors’ comments on final drafts. Students may also collect photographs and other documentation of community-engaged service and UHP-sponsored programming (such as guest lectures, visits to museums, and film screenings) that they took part in throughout their time in the UHP.

#### Selecting Representative Work

Students should select projects that most strongly fulfill the UHP’s six core values: Curiosity, Community, Critical Thinking, Reflection, Diversity, and Service. In addition to coursework, students may reflect on community-engaged service and UHP-sponsored programming. The portfolio must contain a minimum of six artifacts, with a minimum of four written artifacts (two or more of the artifacts may be photographs or other visual works with captions).

For more information about requirements for the Honors Portfolio, see the Portfolio Handbook.

## 8. COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SERVICE

The UHP requires students complete 100 hours of community-engaged service in accordance with the policies and procedures stipulated by the Institute for Leadership and Service (ILS) and the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP). Students may fulfill the service requirement in several ways: through service-learning courses within the university, service undertaken by UHP as a group, individually arranged service through ILS approved programs or organizations, or service performed through sources external to the ILS (e.g., volunteer work through a student’s place of worship, Greek

organization, etc.). The Institute for Leadership and Service can help connect students with service opportunities. Visit the [ILS here](#) [links to external site].

UHP students should track their service hours using [this service verification form](#) [links to PDF] and submit their service verification forms to the Institute of Leadership and Service electronically ([theinstitute@udmercy.edu](mailto:theinstitute@udmercy.edu)) or in person at Briggs 212 (these forms can also be picked up from the ILS office or downloaded from the Honors Blackboard page). Each time students perform service hours, they should have the service verification form signed by the coordinator of the service site.

Additionally, students should record their service hours with the ELP so that they can be eligible for the Leadership Pin (100 hours plus other duties, outlined on the [ELP site](#) [links to external site]) or Leadership Medallion (200 hours plus other duties, outlined on the ELP site).

**Students must also maintain their own records of their service. Each student's University Honors Program service requirements (100+ hours) must be completed by the fifth week of the semester in which they plan to graduate.**

## **9. EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM**

All University Honors Program students are automatically enrolled in the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) at the University Detroit Mercy. This co-curricular program offers students the opportunity to develop their leadership potential and abilities through community-engaged service and involvement in programs, events, and activities that focus on learning, leadership, and spirituality. As part of their involvement in the ELP, Honors students will have the opportunity to earn either the Leadership Pin or Leadership Medallion during their Detroit Mercy academic career. See the [ELP site](#) [links to external site] for more information.

## **10. PETITION FOR NON-HONORS COURSE SUBSTITUTION**

A maximum of three non-Honors credits may be substituted for Honors requirements. In special circumstances (outlined below), students may petition to substitute up to six non-Honors credits for Honors requirements. There are three types of non-Honors courses eligible for Honors credit: (1) Advanced Placement and Transfer Credits (2) Non-Honors UDM Courses (3) Study Abroad courses.

**\*N.B. All students who entered the UHP before the 2024–2025 academic year may petition to substitute up to six non-Honors credits to fulfill Honors requirements.**

### **I. Advanced Placement and Transfer Credits**

Incoming students may petition for a maximum of three Honors credits if they have earned Advance Placement (AP) scores of 4 or 5 in select subject areas. In rare cases, incoming first-year students may also petition for transfer credit to count toward Honors requirements; decisions on transfer credits will be made by the UHP Director(s) on a case-by-case basis. Students who are not in their first year will not be issued Honors credit for transfer courses. Non-Honors sections of courses taken at Detroit Mercy will not count for Honors credit unless permission has been granted by the UHP Director(s) prior to registration for the course.

## II. Taking a Non-Honors Course for Honors Credit

Students may petition to take one non-Honors course for Honors credit. (Note: students who petition to have an Advance Placement [AP] score of 4 or 5 counted for Honors credit may *not* take a non-Honors course for Honors credit. The UHP Director[s] may approve additional non-Honors credit transfers in extenuating circumstances.)

Non-Honors courses taken for Honors credit will require additional work above and beyond what is required of other students in the course. Students must submit a signed and completed "Adapting a Class for Honors Credit" form (available on the Honors Blackboard site) to the UHP Director(s) via email ([honors@udmercy.edu](mailto:honors@udmercy.edu)) no later than noon on Friday of the first week of the relevant semester. The form must be signed by the student and the instructor and approved by the UHP Director(s).

## III. Study Abroad

To encourage students to study abroad and to support students in programs that require study abroad, the UHP invites students to petition for Honors credit for UDM coursework completed in a country outside of the U.S. Students may petition to substitute up to six study abroad credits for Honors requirements, or they may convert three study abroad credits for Honors requirements in addition to another three non-Honors credits, totaling six credits. See more details below.

## 11. STUDY ABROAD OPTION

The University Honors Program recognizes the value of global learning experiences and, in keeping with its commitments to curiosity and diversity, makes it possible for students to complete a portion of the Honors curriculum through study abroad coursework. To pursue this option, Honors students may apply for the Honors Study Abroad Option, which allows students to substitute up to two courses in a Detroit Mercy-affiliated study abroad program for the same number of required Honors courses. University of Detroit Mercy offers several study abroad programs in places such as Italy, Poland, France, Greece, Spain, Cuba, Brazil, Ireland, and India. Students participating in non-Detroit Mercy-affiliated study abroad courses may petition the Honors Director(s) for Honors credit; this must happen before the study abroad takes place and may require submitting a course syllabus. Interested students should consult with [UDM's Study Abroad Programs](#) [links to external site] for more information and consult with the UHP Director(s) about applying for the Study Abroad Option.

## 12. HONORS PROGRAM EXECUTIVE BOARD

Members of the Honors Program Executive Board lead the development and execution of Honors Program initiatives. Each Fall semester, the Executive Board members shall be appointed by the Honors Director(s), Honors Faculty Advisory Council, and the outgoing Honors Executive Board. To be eligible, students must be in good academic standing with the Honors Program, commit to attending regular board meetings, and complete a term of one academic year.

### **13. HONORS SYMPOSIUM**

The University Honors Program Symposium is the UHP's major annual event. The Honors Symposium is an opportunity for the Honors community to share in food, intellectual conversation, and camaraderie. Though the format changes year to year, the Honors Symposium features a guest speaker (or two) and a discussion of important topics. **Held each April, the Honors Symposium is the only event outside of class that is mandatory for each Honors student.**

### **14. GARDELLA HONORS HOUSE**

Use of the Gardella Honors House is a privilege offered to UHP students and is governed by a strictly enforced Code of Conduct (available on the UHP Blackboard site). Students are issued a key granting access to Gardella at the beginning of their college career and are required to return the key to the Director(s) upon graduation or upon leaving the program. Students must sign the Gardella House Code of Conduct form prior to receiving their key. Any violation of the Code of Conduct will result in the forfeiture of Gardella Honors House usage and possible expulsion from the Honors Program. Access to and usage of the Gardella Honors House is monitored by University of Detroit Mercy Campus Safety.

### **15. HONORS CONVOCATION AWARDS**

UHP students who have completed the Honors Program Curriculum, completed 100+ hours of community-engaged service, and attained a minimum GPA of 3.75 will receive the Presidential Scholar award. UHP students who have completed the Honors Program Curriculum, completed 100+ hours of community-engaged service, and attained a minimum GPA of 3.5 will receive the Honors Cum Laude award. All awardees will be recognized at Honors Convocation, held annually in March.

### **16. HONORS RECOGNITION UPON GRADUATION**

Members of the University Honors Program who complete all the graduation requirements for the program will:

- Receive an Honors degree, with "Honors" printed on their diplomas
- Be announced as an Honors graduate at Commencement
- Wear golden Honors Stoles at Commencement
- Receive the University Honors Program Certificate
- Receive transcripts that bear the Honors designation
- Those with a GPA of 3.5 or above will be recognized at Honors Convocation.

### **17. LATIN HONORS**

UHP students will graduate with Latin honors if they have earned a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher. Students will be awarded cum laude honors with a GPA of 3.5 or higher, magna cum laude honors with a GPA of 3.7 or higher, and summa cum laude honors with a GPA of 3.9 or higher.



[udmercy.edu/honors](https://udmercy.edu/honors)