

# Elizabethtown College Honors Program Handbook



*Revised Fall 2005*

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## Preface

**The following handbook has been developed as a general framework for the Elizabethtown College Honors Program.** The handbook incorporates principles from the National Collegiate Honors Council and suggestions offered by directors of established honors programs that operate in institutions comparable to Elizabethtown College. This handbook should be seen as a project “in-process,” to be revised as new changes are made in the Program. Forms referred to in this document are available from the Honors Program network public folder.

## History of the Elizabethtown College Honors Program

The idea of an Honors Program at Elizabethtown College surfaced in 1997 at the President's annual fall retreat. One of the students in attendance asked if such a program could be developed at the college. The President charged the Office of the Provost to investigate the matter.

As a result, contact was made with the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). With information in hand from NCHC, the Provost brought the question to the Academic Council. The Academic Council appointed an *ad hoc* committee to investigate the feasibility of developing an honors program at Elizabethtown.

Their report, filed with the Academic Council in the spring 1998, recommended that a program be developed. The report found that an honors program at Elizabethtown College could help attract a higher quality student profile, improve college retention rates, contribute to a more dynamic curriculum and academic environment, and enhance faculty development and satisfaction.

Shortly thereafter, the idea of a college-wide honors program was defined as one of the twenty-two primary implementing objectives of the Strategic Plan approved by the Board of Trustees in October 1998.

The Academic Council once again took the initiative and appointed another *ad hoc* committee to write an honors program proposal. With this mandate clearly in place, two members of the Academic Council attended the NCHC's 1998 annual meeting in Chicago for the purposes of helping to develop the proposal.

In the spring of 1999, the Faculty Assembly unanimously approved the proposal drafted by the *ad hoc* committee. Shortly thereafter, the Provost asked Dr. Conrad L. Kanagy, Associate Professor of Sociology, to direct the newly named Hershey Foods Honors Program. The name reflected a major donation to the Honors Program's endowment by the Hershey Foods Corporation. In the spring of 2005, the Hershey Foods Company changed its name and subsequently, the program was renamed to the Elizabethtown College Honors Program. Dr. Kanagy stepped down from directing the program, and Dr. Dana Gulling Mead, Associate Professor of English, was named the new director of the program.

The first year (1999-2000) of the Program was spent developing curriculum and recruiting students for the 2000-2001 academic year. Subsequently, the program enrolled its first class of 42 Honors students in the fall of 2000, with an average SAT score of 1300.

The program has continued to grow with 50 students entering in 2001, 52 in 2002, and 61 in 2003. 2004 brought in the largest honors class with 84 students. The entering in 2005 is a class of 62 members.

## Program Personnel Job Descriptions

**Honors Director:** The Honors Program Director is responsible to the Provost of the College. The Provost serves on the Honors Committee and oversees the development of the annual budget. The Director provides the Provost with a Regular Report of the Honors Program activities. This report is summarized and included by the Provost in a periodic report to the Board of Trustees. The Director is also a member of the Provost's staff and meets with other members of the staff at the Provost's request.

The Director advises students throughout their four years of Honors involvement to ensure that they are receiving the quality of educational experiences they anticipated when coming to Elizabethtown College. The Director works with students to develop a satisfactory four-year plan for completing Honors requirements. The Director chairs a faculty committee also responsible for nurturing students for prestigious awards and scholarships (i.e., Truman, Rhodes, Marshall).

**Honors Committee:** The Honors Committee consists of twelve members including the Director who chairs the Committee. Other members include the Provost, an Admissions Office representative, two Honors student representatives selected by the Director, and faculty representatives from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, pre-professional disciplines, Core Committee, Academic Council, and one faculty member at large. Members serve a one year renewable term unless their service is limited by their Core Committee or Academic Council commitments. The Honors Committee assists the Director in overseeing the Honors Program including the selection and ongoing evaluation of Honors Program participants, determining criteria for Honors credits and courses, selecting and evaluating Honors courses, and making policy decisions.

**Administrative Assistant:** The administrative assistant will provide administrative support to the Director of the Honors Program. He or she will manage student records, assist students in processing forms, coordinate office activity, purchase office supplies, and supervise student assistants. The administrative assistant will also manage correspondence with current and prospective students and coordinate special events sponsored by the Honors Program. The administrative assistant should have experience with standard office equipment and computers. He or she should also be knowledgeable in the overall procedures and operations of the college.

**Student Assistants:** The Student Assistants will maintain the function of the Honors Center. They will also aid in the recruitment of the next class of Honors students. Student Assistants are good sources of information and should be knowledgeable about upcoming events and all aspects of an honors education.

## Honors Committee Members

**Dana Gulling Mead, Ph.D.**

Director of Honors Program  
Associate Professor of English  
Phone: x1359

Email: [meaddg@etown.edu](mailto:meaddg@etown.edu)

**Mahua Bhattacharya, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of Modern Languages  
Phone: x 1239

Email: [bhattacharm@etown.edu](mailto:bhattacharm@etown.edu)

**Terrie Riportella, CPA**

Lecturer in Business  
Phone: x 3753

Email: [gehmant@etown.edu](mailto:gehmant@etown.edu)

**Thomas Hagan, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Chemistry  
Phone: x 1125

Email: [hagan@etown.edu](mailto:hagan@etown.edu)

**Mark Harman, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of English  
Phone: x 1992

Email: [harmanm@etown.edu](mailto:harmanm@etown.edu)

**Jessica Hoagland**

Honors Club President  
Class of 2007  
Phone: x 6026

Email: [hoaglandj@etown.edu](mailto:hoaglandj@etown.edu)

**Anna Kent**

Student Representative  
Class of 2006

Phone: x3284

Email: [kenta@etown.edu](mailto:kenta@etown.edu)

**Catherine Lemley, Ph.D.**

Associate Professor of Psychology  
Phone: x 1330

Email: [lemleyce@etown.edu](mailto:lemleyce@etown.edu)

**E. Fletcher McClellan, Ph.D.**

Professor of Political Science  
Phone: x 1304

Email: [mccllelef@etown.edu](mailto:mccllelef@etown.edu)

**Debra Murray**

Director of Admissions  
Phone: x1164

Email: [murraydh@etown.edu](mailto:murraydh@etown.edu)

**Kevin Scott, Ph.D.**

Assistant Professor of English  
Phone: x 1232

Email: [scottk@etown.edu](mailto:scottk@etown.edu)

**David Parkyn, Ph.D.**

Provost and Senior Vice-President  
Professor of History

Phone: x1416

Email: [parkynd@etown.edu](mailto:parkynd@etown.edu)

## Honors Student Assistants

**Geoffrey Betz**

Biology, Class of 2007  
Phone: x 3278

Email: [betzg@etown.edu](mailto:betzg@etown.edu)

**Kyle Brady**

Computer Science, Class of 2007  
Phone: x3007

Email: [bradyk@etown.edu](mailto:bradyk@etown.edu)

**Anna Kent**

Elementary Education, Class of 2006  
Phone: x3284

Email: [kenta@etown.edu](mailto:kenta@etown.edu)

**Natasha Zabohonski**

English Education, Class of 2007  
Phone: x

[zabohonskin@etown.edu](mailto:zabohonskin@etown.edu)

## General Information

### ➤ Objectives

1. The Elizabethtown College Honors Program is a comprehensive **four-year experience** that is challenging, contains an ongoing co-curricular component and encourages scholarship and sustained academic activity at its highest level. Ideally, students participate in at least one Honors Program experience each semester.
2. The Elizabethtown College Honors Program encourages interdisciplinary work. The Program offers common experiences for the participants at the core and capstone levels and yet offers the flexibility for “handcrafting” throughout the student’s four-year experience.
3. The Elizabethtown College Honors Program enables students to work closely with faculty scholars.
4. Elizabethtown College officially recognizes Elizabethtown College Honors Program participants and provides them with tangible evidence of their participation in the program.
5. The Elizabethtown College Honors Program is supported and funded by the Hershey Company as well as by Elizabethtown College.
6. The Elizabethtown College Honors Program is integrated, where feasible, with existing academic programs and is structured and administered to mitigate concerns regarding elitism.

### ➤ Mission Statement

The mission of the Elizabethtown College Honors Program is to provide enhanced learning opportunities for students with excellent academic records, superior academic abilities, intellectual promise, and demonstrated initiative. Consistent with the mission of the college the Honors Program promotes high standards of scholarship and leadership among those students selected for the program. Academic excellence has been identified as a core value of the college and is a hallmark of the Honors Program.

### ➤ Honors Facilities

The Elizabethtown College Honors Program is located in the lower level of the Wenger Building. This facility includes a classroom, lounge, computer room, director’s office, and several study rooms for honors students to use.

➤ **Admission into the Program**

Incoming first-year students are considered for entrance into the Elizabethtown College Honors Program on the basis of merit. Transfer students from other honors programs may apply for admission and will generally be able to complete graduation requirements.

Several spots will also be held in each honors class for international students who qualify as honors students. One-year, non-degree international students may register for honors courses assuming that they are academically qualified since they cannot be admitted into the program.

➤ **Scholarships**

The Honors Program is not a scholarship program. Honors students do not receive additional resources apart from those already distributed through the College's comprehensive financial aid program. However, faculty assigned as honors advisees will work closely with the honors committee to ensure that students are "groomed" as candidates for prestigious scholarships and fellowships (Fulbright, Rhodes, Truman, Goldwater, Marshal, etc.)

➤ **Recognition and Graduation with Honors**

Honors Program participants will be recognized in special ways during the school year beginning with the annual College Convocation in the fall. Additionally, graduates will be recognized at the May Commencement. Honors courses will be recognized as such on the graduate's transcript both the transcript and the diploma will note that the student is a Elizabethtown College Honors Graduate.

Students are required to successfully complete six letter-graded honors courses, maintain an overall 3.50 cumulative grade point average, and complete an honors senior thesis to be recognized as honors scholars at graduation.

## Honors Curriculum Overview

The Elizabethtown College Honors Program curriculum is modeled in large part on our current core curriculum to ensure that the Program poses no complication to the timely completion of graduation requirements. There are several features that make the Honors experience unique.

The Honors Program is designed to facilitate interaction with other honors students at all levels of their education. It encourages students to handcraft their core education so that individual courses are meaningfully linked to one another. At the sophomore and junior year levels, it consists of a seminar/tutorial format that enables students to work closely with faculty members. The Honors Program helps to provide the college community at large with ideas for curricular changes that benefit all Elizabethtown College students. In addition, the classroom experiences of honors students are enhanced by visits from nationally prominent guest speakers and by having faculty scholars and leaders such as a President or Provost teach an honors course.

All students entering the Honors Program will complete a minimum of 24 letter-graded credit hours to fulfill the requirements and graduate as recognized honors students. However, students are encouraged to take more than 24-credits in honors. There is no limit to the number of honors courses per semester that a student may take or to the number they may take during their college career. Courses designated as honors courses will carry between one and four credits.

Honors courses are typically comprised only of honors students with the expectations that these students are capable of doing outstanding work. Both reading loads and expectations for scholarship will be higher than for traditional Elizabethtown College courses. Courses are limited to fifteen students. At the sophomore and junior year levels, courses will be open to non-Honors students after Honors students have been given ample time to register for the Honors courses. Every student who successfully completes an Honors course will receive an "Hnr" designation on their transcripts, regardless of whether they are or remain an Honors student.

Students not accepted into the program as entering first-year students can still petition for admittance into the program up to the end of the first semester of the sophomore year. Students who enter the Honors Program during the second semester of the first year or first semester sophomore year will also be required to take a minimum of 24 credits in letter-graded honors courses. Students may elect to take the interdisciplinary honors seminar offered during their first year, but they will have to substitute another honors course for the first-year honors seminar/colloquium.

## Description of Honors Course Objectives

While many college and university courses address technical and analytical learning skills, Honors courses are intended to strengthen synthesis and evaluation learning skills. With this in mind, the committee recommends that Honors courses at Elizabethtown College meet some--*but not necessarily all*--of the following criteria:

### 1. **Critical Thinking**

Faculty will present a discipline-specific perspective that helps students to understand how sociologists, biologists, psychologists, etc. see the subject of their investigation. Critical thinking will also encourage an appropriate level of objectivity, foster the ability to ask relevant questions and to develop hypotheses, and to encourage the integration of concepts and theories with applied learning experiences.

### 2. **Interdisciplinary Perspective**

Faculty will encourage an interdisciplinary perspective throughout the course, giving special attention to points of similarity between disciplines.

### 3. **Concern with Diversity**

Issues of diversity will be part of an honors course, whether the focus is ethnic, cultural, social, racial, religious, geographic, biological, historical, regional, etc.

### 4. **Comparative**

A comparative perspective will characterize honors courses, whether the comparison is of cultures, disciplines, theories, societies, historical periods, or methodologies.

### 5. **Primary Source Documents**

Primary sources (historical, empirical, archival, interviews, journals rather than textbooks, etc.) will be used extensively in the teaching of honors courses and in the assignment of honors projects.

### 6. **Values Sensitivity**

Honors courses will encourage sensitivity in differences in values, cultures, societies, historical periods, disciplines, religions, etc.

### 7. **Multiple Pedagogies**

Honors courses will exhibit a breadth of pedagogical methods used in instruction including field trips, lab experiences, films, the Internet, lectures, guest speakers, active-learning exercises, and cooperative-learning experiences.

### 8. **Evaluation**

Faculty will evaluate students by a variety of means. The focus is to be on learning and less upon "grade outcomes." Peer evaluation is encouraged as well as non-traditional methods of assigning course grades. Faculty members are encouraged to de-emphasize objective evaluation instruments (i.e. multiple choice) and to utilize written assignments and exams when possible. The evaluation of presentation and communication skills as well as experiential components of a course is encouraged.

## Sequence of Honors Courses

### First Year (8 credits):

- First-year Honors Seminar
- Inter-disciplinary Seminar

Students entering the Honors Program in their first year will take 1. an Honors Seminar focusing primarily on critical thinking and foundational skills and 2. an interdisciplinary seminar in the spring semester. This course will sometimes be team-taught and will always include perspectives from at least two different disciplines. The second course will satisfy a Core requirement. First-year students may take additional honors courses in the first or second semesters.

### Second Year (8 credits):

- Two honors courses

Students will be able to handcraft their honors experience through course selection. Students may elect to enroll in Honors courses that meet a core AU requirement, a major, minor requirement or an elective. Students may also elect an off-campus honors experience such as a seminar abroad or a semester participating in an honors program at another honors institution. All proposals for honors coursework must be approved by the Honors Program Committee.

### Third Year (4 credits):

- Leadership Development Seminar
- Thesis Preparation (1 credit if needed to fulfill thesis requirements in your dept.)

### Fourth Year (4 credits):

- Senior Thesis (3-4 credits)

As a requirement of the program, students must complete an honors senior thesis. Although the Elizabethtown College Honors Program is separate and distinct from Honors in the Discipline, it is likely that many Elizabethtown College Honors Program students will also be invited by their department to participate in Honors in the Discipline. The Honors Program Director will work closely with the student's major advisor(s) to ensure proper coordination of requirements. Thus, the Honors thesis may simultaneously fulfill a research/thesis requirement within a student's major, including Honors in the Discipline requirements. All honors students must publicly present their thesis. The evaluation committee for a thesis that satisfies both departmental and Honors Program requirements will include the Honors Program Director, a faculty member from the student's department, a third faculty member approved by the Honors Committee, and the department chair if the thesis is also fulfilling Honors in the Discipline.

## Special Programs

**Students in 2:2 and 3:2 Programs:** Students enrolled in 2:2 programs at the College must complete 16 credit hours but will not graduate from the Honors Program since they are not receiving their degree from Elizabethtown College. Students enrolled in 3:2 programs at the College must complete 24 credit hours in the Honors Program and will graduate from the Honors Program. The thesis requirement, however, is waived for these students.

**Students in Masters Programs:** Students are members of the Elizabethtown College Honors Program only during their undergraduate experience (generally the first four years).

In the Honors Public Folder on the college Network, you will find an Honors Program Curriculum Requirements check sheet to help you keep track of all honors courses you have taken. Official records of requirements taken are also kept in the Honors Center. All students are required to take 24 credits of honors courses, including those in 3:2 programs and those entering as sophomores.

### **Procedures for Contracting a Course**

Students may contract to take any 200-level or higher non-honors course if the course professor agrees and the Honors Director approves the contract. Contracting a course allows Honors students enrolled in a regular course to convert the course to an Honors course, allowing the student to receive honors credit for that non-honors course. The Honors work should not simply be added on; instead, the character and quality of the work should be strengthened, so that the contract results in greater learning and intellectual rigor.

Only students who currently have a **3.5 or higher GPA** will be allowed to contract a course. Contracts must be completed, signed and approved by the end of the **second week** of classes. Upon approval, a copy of the contract will be issued to the professor, the student, registration and records, and a copy will be placed in the student's file in the Honors Center. The contract form is available on line. Only one Honors Contract (with a maximum of 4 credits) may count toward the 24 credit hours required to complete the Honors Program. Students are encouraged to take additional Honors Contracts, but such courses will not count toward the program's graduation requirements.

### **Senior Thesis**

A senior thesis is designed to provide a challenging, rewarding, and educational experience. It includes the results of a substantial research project chosen by the student. Students may specialize in any area of their major or minor field of study for their thesis. The thesis may consist of primary research (laboratory or fieldwork), library-based research (a research paper presenting and supporting an original idea), a performance, or other creative work according to the expectations of the student's department. However, primary research, where possible, is preferred. An oral presentation of the thesis is required.

Each student in the Elizabethtown College Honors Program must complete a thesis requirement. If a department requires a Senior Thesis, the student should register for that course. The thesis that a student writes for his or her department (such as for Honors in the Discipline) may also serve as the Honors Thesis. Although students should check with their major advisor to learn specific thesis requirements within their department, they should also discuss the thesis proposal with the Honors Director. If a student's department does not offer a thesis course, the student should register for an Independent Study with an instructor of their choice with whom to complete the thesis. Each student will also have a secondary advisor who is either a member of the Honors Committee or an Honors Committee designate. The Senior Thesis should be written in one or both semesters of the senior year for a minimum of 4 credits.

The Honors Program offers a thesis preparation course intended to help students develop a proposal for their Honors Thesis in their junior year. This course is not required for Honors students, but students are encouraged to enroll in it. The class will meet one hour weekly, and the Honors Director will teach the course in the spring semester. This course is Pass/No Pass.

***Quick Reference for the Senior Thesis:***

- ❑ **Honors in the Discipline:** The Honors Program Senior Thesis may double count for Honors in the Discipline.
- ❑ **To receive credit:** The student should register for an independent study or research credits in their major or minor. They may work on the thesis over the course of one semester or two, depending upon their preference. They must receive a minimum of four credits for the thesis. Credit for the thesis comes from the student's respective department. These credits contribute to the 24 Honors credits required to graduate in the Honors Program.
- ❑ **Beginning the Process:** Students begin the thesis process by picking up a Thesis Contract Form in the Honors Office and return it completed by the end of their Junior year.
- ❑ **Presentation:** An oral presentation is required to the student's respective department faculty and peers.
- ❑ **Advisors:** A thesis must be directed by a primary thesis advisor in the student's department. The secondary thesis advisor must be a member of the Honors Committee or be approved by the committee. These advisors will work with and guide the student's progress in writing the thesis. The Honors Director is also on the thesis committee. The Director's role, however, is generally not to provide substantive input in those areas outside of his or her discipline, but rather to insure consistent quality across honors theses.
- ❑ More information can be found in the Honors Center specifically regarding writing the thesis.

## **Honors Academic Research Grants**

Elizabethtown College Honors students who have completed 16 credit hours of honors courses and **who maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.50** or higher are eligible to apply for academic research grants up to \$500 total to support research and scholarly activity. Students are particularly encouraged to apply for funds that support the writing of their honors senior thesis. The funds may NOT be used to cover standard tuition, fee, or textbook costs. To access these funds, students must complete an Honors Academic Grant Request form and submit it with receipts from a credit card, etc. Include a rationale supporting your request for these funds with the form, describing how the funds support your growth toward being a professional. All requests will be reviewed and approved by the Honors Committee. Forms are available on-line in the Honors Public folder.

## **Study Abroad**

All honors students are strongly encouraged to travel and study abroad while enrolled at Elizabethtown College. Students may do so through the highly successful Brethren Colleges Abroad Program or other study-abroad initiatives, some of which are offered annually through the National Organization of Honors Programs and Colleges. Study abroad will not affect one's ability to complete the Honors Program. In fact, a higher proportion of Honors students study abroad than is true for the student body as a whole.

## **Student Evaluation and Support Services**

Retention of students in the Honors Program is closely linked to advising, evaluation, and the mentoring process. Institutions with long-established honors programs have indicated that providing students with many opportunities to gather with each other and with faculty/mentors is the key to ensuring that they don't feel "lost" within the program. Structuring the program around the first-year seminars and senior-level capstone courses provides a mechanism for ensuring that honors students are in close touch with one another. Providing a social experience for honors students at least once a semester, and preferably once a month, further facilitates retention. Each honors student entering the program will be matched with a more senior student "mentor" in addition to having a mentor who is a member of the faculty affiliated with the honors program. Finally, the Honors Program Director will maintain ongoing contact with individual honors students.

Copies of important forms are available to download from the Honors Program public folder on the campus computer network. (T:\organizations\honors program\public\honorsfiles.)

Because retention of students will also be a function of the individual student's ability to maintain an acceptable cumulative grade point average in the College, advisors will work closely throughout the semesters to follow students' progress in courses. To stay in good standing in the program, students must remain within a progressive GPA scale. The minimum grade point average in order to remain in the Elizabethtown College Honors Program is as follows:

End of first semester:	2.75
End of first year (30 credits):	3.00
End of sophomore year (60 credits):	3.25
End of junior year (90 credits):	3.40
End of senior year (125+ credits):	3.50

In order to be recognized as an Honors Program graduate, all students must achieve an overall 3.5 cumulative grade point average by graduation. The Honors Program Committee and the Honors Director will monitor student performance. Students that fall below these minimums are no longer part of the program. Advisors will assist students who drop out of the program to mitigate any difficulties created by the transition. Any student who leaves the Honors Program because he or she fails to meet the required GPA must petition the Honors Committee for readmission into the Elizabethtown College Honors Program once the required GPA for the student's current class status has been re-attained.

**Advising:** Honors students will be advised initially by the faculty members teaching the first-year seminars designated for honors students. Honors students will work closely with this advisor to construct a meaningful program of study. After their first year, honors students will be advised by their major advisor. However, the Honors Director serves as a secondary advisor relative to questions regarding Honors Program requirements. The Honors Director also works closely with the Honors committee to ensure that students are "groomed" as candidates for scholarships and fellowships (Fulbright, Rhodes, Truman, Goldwater, Marshal, etc.) both for undergraduate education and for post-graduate training.

**Mentoring:** As indicated above, mentoring of honors students will take several forms. Like all Elizabethtown College students, honors students will have a first-year seminar advisor serve as their first faculty mentor. Entering students will be matched with an upper class honors student in a student-mentoring plan. Finally, depending upon what kind of off-campus experience the honors student chooses, mentors from business, industry, the scholarly community, etc. outside of Elizabethtown College may also become part of the mentoring process.

**Housing:** Honors students within the Elizabethtown College Honors Program and other academically driven students who have maintained the proper GPA are offered the option of living on the Academic Honors Floor. The Academic Honors Floor provides an environment where academically motivated students can interact with one another to supplement their Elizabethtown College education.

**Employment:** The Elizabethtown College Honors Center offers many opportunities for students to become involved in the workings of the program. Supervised by a part-time administrative assistant, the Honors Center maintains a staff of student assistants. These students are all members of the Elizabethtown College Honors Program in good academic standing. They function to help current students with questions regarding the program and help recruit the next incoming class of Honors Students. All student assistants also help maintain the program's efficiency. Other students can become involved in the Honors Center by becoming a volunteer. Volunteers help to keep the Honors Center open for student use. Volunteers are the first to be considered when a vacancy in a student assistant position becomes available.