

## Honors Project Guidelines

Updated Fall 2025

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## General Description

The Honors Project is the final academic requirement for the Degree with Honors, a designation listed on your graduation transcript and diploma. The Honors Project is the culmination of your St. Bonaventure University Honors experience. The Honors Project prepares you for the level of work expected of graduate students and professionals. Completing an Honors Project provides an opportunity to showcase your presentation skills, critical thinking, analysis, and creativity. The Honors Project is an original research or creative project requiring an investment of your time and effort that is equivalent to the investment that would be required in an advanced three-credit Honors courses. The Honors Project must include a final written document, a presentation of your work to your project committee, and a public display of your work (with a poster) at the Arts & Sciences Expo. Your Honors Project may be related to the capstone(s) in your major(s) but cannot be the same work. Honors Projects must take a minimum of 100 hours of work to complete, not including the preparation of the Proposal.

The general schedule for the Honors Project is outline below:\*



\*If you are an education major you may need to take HON 499 in the Fall!

## Learning Objectives for Honors Project

- Student creates a project that demonstrates inquiry of a governing question.
- Student develops a project that addresses a professional, scientific, social, cultural, historical, or artistic gap.
- Student uses research or creative methods appropriate to the discipline(s) in which the project is situated.
- Student creates a project of sufficient length and with narrow enough scope to fully realize stated goals and reach conclusions.

## Components of Honors Project

Your Honors Project is composed of **three steps**: selection of an Honors Project Advisor/Honors Project Committee, a Proposal for the Honors Project, and a Final Project for the Honors Project. HON 498 and HON 499 correspond to the work associated with the Final Project. The Proposal is the prerequisite for HON 498.

### ***Step 1: Selecting an Honors Project Advisor and Devising an Honors Project***

#### **Due 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in February in your Sophomore Year**

You are responsible for designing the content and form of your Honors Project in conjunction with a committee of faculty members currently teaching at St. Bonaventure. It is your responsibility to identify a project adviser whose scholarly and/or professional expertise is directly in your area of work, a field examiner who also has expertise in that area, and a third examiner whose area of expertise is typically in another but complementary area. You may also elect to have an optional fourth committee member. This person may or may not be a faculty member at the St. Bonaventure University. The Honors Project advisor form should be filled out and emailed to the Honors Director(s) by the **2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in February in your Sophomore Year**.

You should begin work on your Proposal as early as possible. Your project adviser and project committee members must read and provide comments on a draft before you submit it to the directors who will work with the Honors Council in the approval process.

### ***Step 2: Proposal***

#### **Due 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in April in your Sophomore Year**

Your Proposal should present a well-designed project that provides a clear statement and thorough explanation of the goals, procedures, and significance of your project. You should share a draft of your Proposal with your project adviser and project committee members and revise it based on your adviser's comments before submitting it to the Honors Director.

The Honors Council reviews and approves Proposals and provides feedback so that you can develop your Proposal. Once your Proposal has been approved, you will not be permitted to submit a new topic for the Proposal. You get **two** opportunities to get your Proposal approved by the Honors Council.

The Honors Council must approve any significant changes, including changes to committee membership, that you make after your Proposal is approved. It must be uploaded via Moodle by **First Tuesday in April of your sophomore year**.

### ***Step 3: Final Project***

Your Final Project will take the form of a written research paper, creative work, or other form recognized by the disciplinary area in which you are primarily working. You should work on multiple drafts or versions of the project, sharing and discussing these with your adviser and project committee members as you produce them. You will submit a rough draft of the project soon after spring break. You will submit the completed version of your Final Project to your adviser and other committee members (and to the Honors Directors) **by April 1, if you are enrolled in HON 499 if graduating in the spring and Dec 1 if graduating in the fall.**

Additionally, you will give a 20-30 minute presentation of your Project to your faculty adviser and project committee members. Your adviser and committee members will give you a grade;

the Honors Directors and Honors Council do not evaluate Final Projects. You must upload your Final Project to the HON 499 Moodle site to ensure that it is listed on your transcript.

Honors students will publicly share their Honors Project Research by participating the Arts & Sciences Expo held in April by designing a poster outlining and summarizing their Honors Project.

## Project Categories

The selection of a Project Category is required of the Proposal. **Only one Project Category can be selected.** The Project Category dictates how your Proposal will be assessed by the Honors Council and your Honors Project Committee. The Project Categories, along with descriptions of these categories, are:

1. Empirical
  - a. A scientific study where data is collected and analyzed.
  - b. Generally, a faculty member in the Sciences will be the project advisor.
2. Mathematical/Theoretical/Computational
  - a. A study where a mathematical model or computational code is developed or applied to a problem or to increase further understanding of mathematics/computations.
  - b. Generally, a faculty member in the Sciences will be the project advisor.
3. Service Oriented
  - a. An activity that improves the campus community, regional community, and/or global community.
  - b. This is open to any faculty member.
4. Arts/Humanities/Communication
  - a. Original composition of creative work.
  - b. Generally, a faculty member in the Arts/Humanities or from the School of Communications will be the project advisor.
5. Entrepreneurial
  - a. The development and execution of a business idea/plan.
  - b. Generally, a faculty member from the School of Business will be the project advisor.

## Selection of Honors Project Advisor

The selection of an Honors Project Advisor should be done via the Honors Project Advisor Selection Sheet, which can be found in the [Student Resources](#) page of the Honors Program. This form is due **in PDF format** to the Honors Director(s) **by 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in February in your Sophomore Year**. All appropriate signatures should be completed. **Not adhering to this date will result in expulsion from the Honors Program.**

Honors Project Advisors are a faculty mentor that will be guiding you through the Honors Project process. You will need to approach faculty with project idea in mind. Have these conversations well in advanced of the due date of the date mentioned above with potential advisors. You should also discuss the workload that is expected from you during the Honors Project process and the responsibilities that you/the faculty member will have.

Ways to select Honors Project Advisors include:

- The faculty member's area of expertise and your proposed project align.
- You get along well with the faculty member.
- You feel like you could learn from the faculty member.
- You feel like you could work with the faculty member.
- You and your prospective Honors Project Advisor share enthusiasm for your proposed project.

**Note:** Faculty members are not obligated to serve as Honors Project Advisors. It is additional work for them so be aware that some faculty members might not have the bandwidth to handle additional unpaid responsibilities.

## Proposal Directions

The Proposal must be completed by **First Tuesday in April of your sophomore year**. In order to move on to HON 498 & HON 499 and the completion of the Honors Project, the Proposal must be approved by the Honors Council. If your Proposal is not approved, you will not be able to complete the Honors Degree at St. Bonaventure University.

The Proposal should be a roadmap for the final stage of the Honors Project. It should convey the significance of the project to non-experts and satisfy the methodological questions that might be demanded by experts. The most common reason that proposals are returned for revision is a lack of connection to existing scholarly or creative work, the unclear stakes or impacts, or an absence of a clear set of procedures and timeline.

Each of the following sections must be addressed by the Proposal:

### **1. Title Page.**

Title, your name, faculty adviser, proposal category, and faculty committee members. You should have selected your Honors Project Committee before the submission of the proposal.

### **2. Abstract.**

Provide a brief, usually one paragraph, overview of the proposal. This should concisely explain what you plan to do and what you hope to accomplish. 100-300 words.

### **3. Background and rationale for project.**

Review the relevant scholarly literature that sets the context for the work. Begin the narrative so that someone who is not an expert in the area can understand the importance of the work. Include definitions and in-text citations to credit the work of others. This review is targeted to provide a rationale for the work proposed. 300-600 words.

### **4. Theses/Goals/Hypotheses.**

This should follow from and be justified by the preceding background and rationale. In combination with the previous section, it should be clear what is distinctive about this work as compared to the work that has come before it. A statement of why the project is honorific should be included. 100-500 words.

### **5. Methods.**

Provide discipline-specific procedures and processes that support the project. 300-600 words. If your project needs IRB approval, what steps have you taken to get this approved? Do you understand IRB requirements?

This Methods section should be completed based upon the project category.

1. Empirical\*: Science, Business, Education, or Communication
  - a. Describe the sample of human participants or nonhuman subjects.

- b. Design (*Why* have certain choices been made, such as test conditions, variables, and operational definitions as they relate to the hypotheses under investigation?)
- c. Procedures (*How* the plan will be executed?)
- d. Analysis (Provide a subsection of procedure detailing the anticipated statistical procedures including: descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, alpha levels, effect size, proportion of variance explained, confidence intervals. Power estimates may be particularly informative at the proposal stage.)
- e. IRB Approval Status (Does your project require IRB approval? What steps have you taken to achieve or plan on obtaining IRB approval?)
  - \* Empirical studies, unless using publicly-available information, should be reviewed by the appropriate on-campus body that evaluates ethical practices in research, either the IRB for human participants or the IACUC for nonhuman subjects. The Honors Program Director, as the instructor of record for HON 498 and HON 499 should be copied on all correspondence between the student and either the IRB or IACUC.

## 2. Mathematical/Theoretical/Computational

- a. Describe the purpose, object, or subject of analysis
- b. Identify the critical or theoretical frameworks in use
- c. Discuss anticipated materials and activities related to the analysis; in the case of legal analysis, identify the laws or judicial decisions to be analyzed
- d. Describe the procedures or methods of analysis
- e. Indicate what particular sources (primary, secondary, or other) are instrumental in the exploration; in the case of legal sources, distinguish “binding” from “persuasive” authority

## 3. Arts, Humanities, and Communication

- f. Describe the purpose, object, or subject of analysis
- g. Identify the critical or theoretical frameworks in use
- h. Discuss anticipated materials and activities related to the analysis; in the case of legal analysis, identify the laws or judicial decisions to be analyzed
- i. Describe the procedures or methods of analysis
- j. Indicate what particular sources (primary, secondary, or other) are instrumental in the exploration; in the case of legal sources, distinguish “binding” from “persuasive” authority

## 4. Entrepreneurial

- a. These projects use entrepreneurship as a lens to examine a problem in the world
- b. MGT-330 is useful to complete before undertaking this kind of project but not required

- c. Identify the need or problem to be addressed
- d. Identify concepts or findings from non-business areas that are critical
- e. Identify advisers from the business world who will provide feedback on iterations of the business ideas as they are refined
- f. Identify pitch competitions that will be entered
- g. Describe what the iterative process of revision is expected to be
- h. The goal is the process of testing assumptions, which may or may not result in the launch of a business

5. Service Orientated

- a. These projects use service based on our Franciscan identity and mission to examine and seek to address a problem or need in the local community or on campus
- b. Identify a need or problem within the community or campus that can be addressed
- c. Identify concepts or findings from different academic disciplines that are critical in understanding the cause of the problem
- d. Identify advisers from the campus or the community who will provide feedback on iterations of the possible ideas to solve the issue as they are refined
- e. Describe the process for analyzing the root causes of the problem and possible solutions
- f. The goal of this process is analyzing a need or problem within the community or on campus that could be addressed or helped with service

## 6. Possible components of Final Project

Articulate as specifically as possible what the Final Project will look like. If it will have the form of a written report or paper, provide a prospective table of contents. Otherwise provide an appropriate catalogue of its contents. The final product should be presented according to the accepted style for the discipline in which you are working. 100-300 words.

If you are proposing a creative project, you are required to submit pertinent samples of your creative work. As appropriate for the field, creative projects should contain something along the lines of a critical essay reflecting on relevant features of the creative work.

## 7. Explain how the Project exhibits critical thinking

The Association of American Colleges and Universities defines critical thinking as a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Critical thinking attempts to avoid confirmation bias, the tendency to seek only information that is consistent with our beliefs or expectations and ignore information that contradicts our beliefs or expectations.

Science, in particular, looks for ways that an idea under consideration could be wrong, one-sided, or oversimplified. This complements a confirmatory or positive test strategy. The

disconfirmatory approach to critical thinking attempts to address the phenomenon of confirmation bias through falsification of plausible alternative explanations. This rests on the primary logically sound argument used in inference, disconfirmation of the consequent.

In other areas of scholarship, critical thinking may take the form of explicitly evaluating the traditions and assumptions from which one works. This approach to critical thinking attempts to address the phenomenon of confirmation bias through evaluating multiple perspectives on, approaches to, or assumptions about a topic. By putting different texts, methods, and frameworks into conversation, this should yield a new and productive interpretation.

## 8. References

Throughout the proposal you should use citations to credit the work of others that have contributed to the formulation of your ideas. Such citations in the text and in the references page should be in the style characteristic of the disciplinary area in which you are working. These styles include (but are not limited to):

- *ACS Style (American Chemical Society)*
- *The Associated Press Stylebook*
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*
- *Harvard Blue Book* (legal citations)
- *MLA Style Manual*
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*
- *Style Manual for Biological Journals*
- *Style Manual for Political Science*

## 9. Timeline

Describe the components or stages of development of the project and the dates by which you will complete each of those stages across the two semesters of HON 498 and HON 499. You should include the number of weeks associated with each task and approximate dates on when milestones will be complete. **BE SPECIFIC HERE! Proposals will be returned or rejected without a detailed timeline.**

### Students Conducting Student Teaching

Education students will need to modify their proposal to include two semesters of work towards their projects. The schedule by which the Honors Project Proposal, and Honors Project will need to be planned out with the Honors Student, Honors Project Advisor, and the Honors Director(s). Typically, this occurs 1 semester sooner than Honors Students majoring in a non-education related field.

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*This is the semester-by-semester process to develop and create your honor project.*

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