



**The Honors College**  
Interdisciplinary Program Guide

**VSYOU** VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

# What is Honors?

The University Honors College offers special courses and activities designed to help qualified students realize their full intellectual potential and to provide them the best possible preparation for their major degree programs. It does so through a wide range of special classes, activities, and interdisciplinary seminars supported by departments and faculty across campus. The University Honors College is an interdisciplinary program with courses leading to a certificate of completion in University Honors.

## WHAT DOES 'INTERDISCIPLINARY' MEAN?

Put simply, interdisciplinary means 'combining subjects together in new ways.' Literally, interdisciplinary means 'working between different academic disciplines.' (UCL, 2016)

## WHY IS INTERDISCIPLINARY IMPORTANT?

Many of the world's great problems require an interdisciplinary approach in order to solve them. This is true of problems in the 'real world' – e.g. problems to do with health, politics, engineering or cities – but also important intellectual problems – e.g. the relation between reasoning and emotion, the study of culture and identity, the link between music and learning. (UCL, 2016)

## WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN INTERDISCIPLINARY & CREATIVE THINKING?

Much research has shown that the most creative thinkers are those people who can make links between different areas of study, thought, commerce, arts, etc. For example, Professor Sir Ken Robinson says, 'Creativity depends on interactions between feeling and thinking, and across different disciplinary boundaries and fields of ideas' (Robinson, Ken; 2011; *Out of Our Minds*; Capstone).



Below: Reade Hall Honors Residence







## **WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM?**

The Honors College encourages meaningful connections between disciplines, innovative and unusual approaches to subject matter, and reliance upon experiential learning and global awareness that are fully integrated into the course content and lead to opportunities for strong undergraduate research and creative endeavors.

The Honors College also provides extra-curricular opportunities for students to broaden themselves through lectures, service opportunities, and other forms of activity that relate to their education. Finally, the mission of the Honors College is to attract the best students to Valdosta State, and to assist in retaining those students through all four years of their undergraduate experience. In this way Honors College students will make a visible and positive impact on the entire university community, thereby enriching the diversity of the Valdosta State University community as a whole.

## **WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS?**

Admission into the Honors College is based on the following criteria: high school GPA, SAT/ACT scores, an application essay, and a letter of recommendation from a teacher or academic advisor. All applicants are expected to have a minimum high school GPA of 3.5. Current VSU students who achieve a 3.5 GPA or better may be considered.

## WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM?

1. Students will learn the arts of inquiry and conversation, culminating in structured research and creative endeavors, academic writing, oral presentations, and creative production.
2. Students will practice the organizational skills of collaboration, planning, and assessment, and the personal skills of self-discipline and task management, culminating in the capacity to guide or direct group-based work.
3. Students will understand the importance of civic involvement and giving back to the larger community, culminating in occasions of service that draw upon scholarship, creativity, and leadership capacities.
4. Students will incorporate an understanding of diverse global and cultural perspectives in their scholarly or creative inquiry, culminating in an international exchange of ideas and activities.
5. Students will incorporate an understanding of diverse disciplinary perspectives in their scholarly/creative inquiry, culminating in a collaborative, interdisciplinary project.





# Program of Study

## Freshman Year

### OBJECTIVE

#### HONS 1990

#### Honors Introductory

*2 hours*

Intro to research including an understanding of inquiry, research design, formulating research questions, developing critical thinking skills and creating research presentations.

#### Two Core Honors Courses

*5 - 8 hours*

Core Honors seminars are designed to develop research concepts and interdisciplinary perspectives. The courses serve to engage students in important Honors ideals such as alternative pedagogy, critical discourse, and collaborative learning.

## Sophomore Year

### OBJECTIVE

#### HONS 2010

#### Honors Colloquium

*2 hours*

Prerequisite HONS 1990. Extended work in an area of academic research and exploration of the materials covered in HONS 1990. Course materials address the processes, protocols, and formats of academic research presentations.

#### One Core Honors Course *or*

#### One Honors Major Course

*3 - 4 hours*

Honors Option Contracts. The courses connect faculty and students in a mentoring relationship to enhance a major course. Honors Option Contracts are intended for upper-division courses where greater understanding of a discipline and/or research approach is required.

#### HONS 2990

#### Experiential Activity

*0 hours*

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience and is seen as learning through reflection and doing. The activities require academic justification and evidence of learning. Experiential activities include: internships, service learning, clinical education, student teaching, and cooperative research.

## REQUIREMENTS

## COMPLETED

There is no substitution for HONS 1990. All Honors students are expected to complete this important requirement.

Student who have completed most of their core in AP, dual enrollment, or transfer credit are allowed to substitute Honors core classes with Honors Option Contract courses and experiential activities.

## REQUIREMENTS

## COMPLETED

Students must take HONS 2010 as part of their Honors certificate. Only in extreme exceptions can students substitute this requirement with an Honors Option Contract that includes a research presentation requirement.

Students may choose to do Honors Option Contracts in place of core classes but these substitutions may not be lower-division (1000-2000) courses. Honors Option Courses are intended to be more advanced in content focusing on higher quality work.

All Honors students are required to participate in, at least, one experiential learning activity. The activity can be a full year project in either the second or third year of study.

**Total Hours for the Certificate in University Honors 22-26 hours with a 3.5 GPA.**

# Program of Study

## Junior Year

### OBJECTIVE

**HONS 3999**  
**Capstone Seminar**

*or*

**HONS 3990**  
**Honors Research**

*3 hours*

HONS 3990 and 3999 builds on the interdisciplinary research foundations in HONS 1990 and 2010. The courses refine the application and understanding of interdisciplinary research. Students are expected to produce conference caliber materials. HONS 3990 is differentiated from HONS 3999 in that the research may be collaborative or project-based. HONS 3999 focuses on individual research activities in interdisciplinary subject areas.

**Two Core Honors Courses**

*5 - 8 hours*

Honors Option Contract courses

**Honors Global Experience**

*0 hours*

Student must complete the Global Experience requirement through an approved research activity, service learning assignment, or field experience. The semester-long commitment fosters understanding of global and cultural issues.

## Senior Year

### OBJECTIVE

**HONS 4990**  
**Honors Senior Portfolio**

*1 - 3 hours*

One-credit-hour portfolio course to develop, assemble, and present an interdisciplinary portfolio as a record of accomplishments in Honors focusing on research, service, leadership, and global experience. A three-credit hour option is available for students wishing to complete an interdisciplinary thesis in Honors. Both projects are considered evidence of learning and Honors educational outcomes.

## REQUIREMENTS

## COMPLETED

Student may substitute HONS 3990 or 3999 with a departmental capstone, research methods, or thesis course. The substitution must be approved by the Honors College using the Honors Option Contract submission process. Students must also ensure that their departmental work also conform to Honors interdisciplinary with the goal of submission to academic conferences.

Experiential Activities may be substituted for major course requirements under the requirements outlined for experiential learning.

In the spirit of the interdisciplinary approach of the Honors College, research, service, and minor degree program activities will be considered. These activities must be approved by the Honors College.

## REQUIREMENTS

## COMPLETED

Students may take a departmental senior portfolio course to fulfill the Honors portfolio requirement but it must be completed as part of an Honors Option Contract with additional requirements that fulfill the objectives and purpose of the Honors portfolio.

**Total Hours for the Certificate in University Honors 22-26 hours with a 3.5 GPA.**

## WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?

Examples of service learning activities include:

- Community outreach
- Study-abroad or semester exchanges
- Career shadowing and mentoring
- Internships
- Undergraduate research or professional scholarship
- Leadership activities
- Creative activities and performances

The Experiential Learning Program is designed to provide students with enhanced opportunities in applied research and problem solving in a practice setting. The requirements align with successful completion of certifications such as in Nursing and Education fields but also support practice-based disciplines. The outcomes for this program culminate in a series of service learning activities and community outreach.



Below: Honors House



## **WHAT IS THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE & UNDERSTANDING REQUIREMENT?**

All students in the Honors College must complete the Global Experience and Understanding requirement with an approved research activity, service learning assignment, or field experience.

In the spirit of Honors interdisciplinary approach, research, service, and minor program activities will be considered as fulfillment of the Global Experience and Understanding requirement. As a semester-long commitment, the requirement serves to foster faculty mentoring and an understanding of cultural and global issues. These activities must be approved by the Honors College.

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## WHAT IS THE HONORS OPTION CONTRACT?

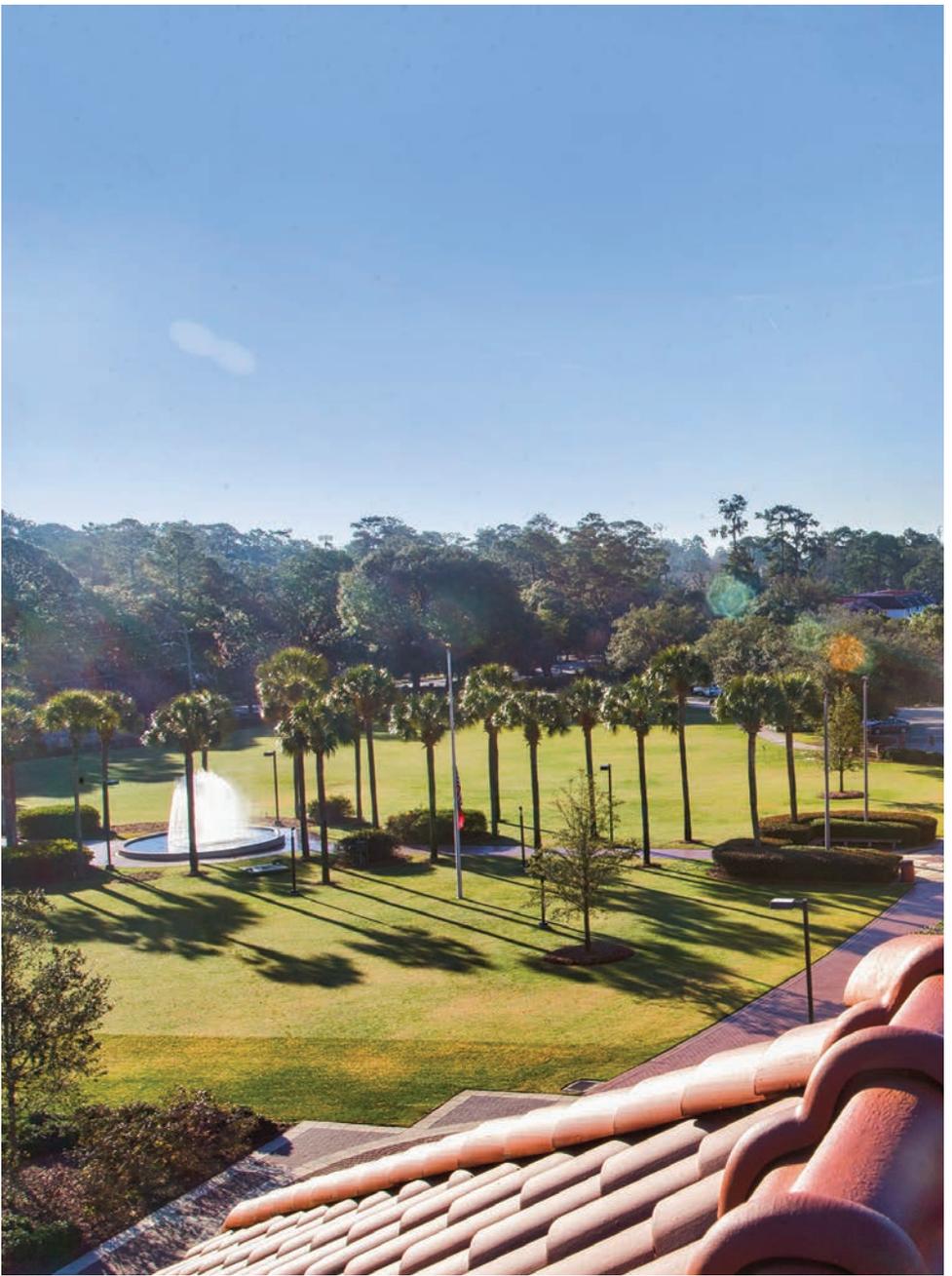
Courses not listed as Honors may also be available for Honors credit through the Honors Option. This option allows students to receive Honors credit while enrolled in regular courses by doing different types of assignments approved in advance by the instructor of the course and the Honors College Dean. The Dean of the Honors College must approve Honors Options.





## **WHO SHOULD ENROLL IN THE INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM?**

The Honors Interdisciplinary program serves students who wish to attend graduate school or profession programs. Students entering the program are advised to consider their career and long-term objectives in developing a program of study. The Honors College provides advisors to assist with these important decisions and to successfully guide students in completing the Honors certificate.



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