

THE HONORS PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

A GUIDE

Department of Political Science
East Carolina University

Prepared for the guidance of those majors and minors in Political Science who, through superior academic performance are invited to participate in POLS 4551 and 4552.

2006

THE HONORS PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

- I. **Overview.** The Honors Program in Political Science offers advanced students the opportunity to complete a senior thesis and graduate with honors in Political Science. During the first semester of a two-semester program, the student enrolls in POLS 4551, prepares a thesis prospectus under a faculty tutor, and defends it before the department's Honors Committee (see section V below). In the second semester, the student enrolls in POLS 4552, completes the thesis under the tutor's supervision, and defends the final version before the Honors Committee (see section VI below). If the student completes both courses with a minimum grade of "B", the designation "Honors in Political Science" is added to the student's academic record.
- II. **Eligibility.** The Honors Program is open only to students who:
 - A. Have completed at least 81 credit hours of undergraduate study and at least 21 credit hours of Political Science.
 - B. Have a declared major in Political Science
 - C. Have an overall grade point average of at least 3.50 at ECU and 3.50 in Political Science program.
 - D. Receive an invitation to participate from the Chairperson, Honors and Scholarship Committee, Department of Political Science.
- III. **Honors Program Objectives.** The Honors Program is designed to:
 - A. Provide a challenging opportunity to develop and complete a superior senior thesis in the field of political science,
 - B. Encourage and recognize undergraduates majors who have distinguished themselves academically and who are most likely to undertake advanced studies or follow career paths likely to bring honor and prestige to the Department and University, and
 - C. Identify and call attention to those students most deserving of the Department's support for significant achievements in scholarship.
- IV. **Program Administration.**
 - A. The Chairperson, Honors and Scholarship Committee, in consultation with the members of the Honors Committee, extends an invitation once each spring and fall for students to participate in the program. Self-nominations by qualified students are also acceptable. Each student is responsible for identifying and obtaining the consent of a

faculty member to serve as a tutor. The tutor should have expertise relevant to the stipulated research project. The student and tutor shall work together to establish a thematic subject, relevant literature, appropriate methodologies, and the outlines, drafts, and final version of the research paper. The Chairperson, Honors and Scholarships Committee shall make any reassignments requested by the tutor or student, shall receive information from the tutor regarding student progress, and shall establish the schedule of the meetings of the Honors Committee.

- B. The Honors Committee serves as an advisory body for matters relating to the Honors Program. At least one week prior to the prospectus and thesis defense presentations (usually on Reading Day or the last full week of the semester), the Honor's Committee evaluates the student's written work for that semester. The Committee will also evaluate the presentations.
- C. The faculty tutor is appointed by the Director after consultation with the student and after the designated faculty member has agreed to serve. The faculty tutor functions as an advisor and guide, making his/her services freely available and providing guidance in scheduling phases of work, developing effective research techniques, and giving suggestions on research designs, bibliographic forms, and writing skills. The faculty tutor reports to the Director of the Honors Program any evidence that a student is delinquent in the schedule of work established early in the semester. When each course is completed and the student's work has been evaluated by the Honors Committee, the Director records the grade earned on the appropriate university form.
- D. Orientation Meetings: An orientation meeting presided over by the Chairperson, Honors and Scholarships Committee will be held the second full week of each semester. Members of the Honors Committee, tutors, and honors students shall attend. The purpose of the meeting will be to clarify objectives and procedures for the Honors Prospectus and Honors Thesis.
- E. The student in the Honors Program has the heaviest responsibility. The student decides on the area in which to concentrate reading and research and finds a topic for study. It is the responsibility of the student to meet regularly with the faculty tutor and to complete each semester's work in a timely fashion. To remain in the Honors Program, a minimum grade of "B" must be earned in both courses. A "C" or lower grade in POLS 4551 will terminate the student's further participation in the honors experience. If a "C" or lower grade is earned, only credit hours and the grade will be recorded. Completion of the two-course sequence with a grade of "B" or better for each

course will earn students the special recognition “Honors in Political Science,” which is recorded on the permanent record, provided they have maintained a 3.50 overall grade point average and 3.50 in Political Science at the time of graduation.

F. Honors Courses and Calendar:

1. POLS 4551 involves preparation of an honors prospectus. The student and tutor will schedule specific dates for POLS 4551 for completion of the prospectus. Normally a substantial annotated bibliography should be completed by the seventh week of the semester. The first draft of the prospectus normally should be completed by the tenth week of the semester. Final copies of the prospectus are to be submitted to the Chairperson, Honors and Scholarships Committee, the Chair of the Department of Political Science, the faculty tutor, and members of the Honors Committee **at least fourteen days** before the scheduled presentation of the prospectus before the committee.
2. POLS 4552 involves completion of research, preparation of the final version of the thesis and a defense of the thesis before the faculty tutor, the Honors Committee, and the Chair of the Department of Political Science. The student and the tutor will schedule specific dates for POLS 4552 for completion of the thesis. Normally a detailed outline of the thesis should be completed by the fourth week of the semester. A first draft of the thesis normally should be completed by the seventh week of the semester. A second draft should be completed by the tenth week of the semester. Final copies of the thesis are to be submitted to the Chairperson, Honors and Scholarships Committee, members of the Honors Committee, the faculty advisor, and the Chair of the Department of Political Science **at least fourteen days** before the scheduled presentation of the thesis before the committee.

V. **The Honors Prospectus.** The purpose of the Honors Prospectus is primarily to assist the student in selecting a significant subject, delimiting its scope for the purposes of the honors thesis, determining an approach to the subject matter, establishing a logical organization as an aid to research, and assuring that adequate source material is available. The prospectus also enables the Honors Committee to evaluate the significance of the subject and the adequacy of the student’s approach to its composition. The outline below **should be followed:**

- A. Name of the student and the date on which the prospectus is submitted.
- B. The field of concentration

- C. Tentative title
- D. Statement of the substantive problem being investigated and the focus of the research
- E. Special research tools to be employed, if any
- F. Data to be used in the research described in general terms.
- G. Brief description of the methods to be followed in making the study, designed to demonstrate the student's awareness of:
 - 1. Any major difficulties in the research and
 - 2. The methods, which seem likely to be most useful
- H. Statement of probable value and importance of the study.
- I. Preliminary outline of the essay (detailed sentence outline is **not** required).
- J. Selective bibliography, indicating primary and secondary materials to be consulted.

Normally the prospectus will be fifteen to twenty pages in length. Students should consult with their faculty tutors to determine acceptability of substance and format of the proposal. The *Guidelines for Writing an Empirical Research Report*, a course document posted on the Honors Program Blackboard web site, gives more specific guidance.

VI. The Honors Thesis:

The student should prepare sufficient copies of their honors thesis for submission to their tutor, the Honors Committee, and the Chair of the Department of Political Science. The thesis should address the concerns that the Honors Committee raised during the prospectus presentation and defense. All copies must be double-spaced on white, 8.5 X 11 inch paper. Margins should be 1 inch on each edge. Typeface should be Times New Roman 12 point font. Each page of the thesis should be assigned a number. For the preliminary pages, please use small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc). For the remainder of the thesis, use continuous pagination for the text, appendices, and bibliography, using Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.). Remember to start numbering text pages with page 1, as this is not a continuation of Roman numeral numbering. Please follow the style of the *American Political Science Review* for your citations, bibliography, and footnotes or endnotes. An outline for the thesis is provided below:

A. Order and Content

- 1. Preliminary Pages
 - a. Title page
 - b. Abstract
 - c. Preface
 - d. Table of Contents
- 2. Text

- a. Introduction
 - b. Main body with appropriate headings for divisions and subdivisions
 - c. Conclusions
3. References
 - a. Appendices
 - b. Bibliography

*Note: Tables and Figures should be in the main body of the text

Examples of previously completed theses are available for review in the Department of Political Science office.

VII. **Student Presentations** (defenses of prospectus and thesis)

1. The student's faculty tutor is an *ex officio* member of the committee;
2. The student may invite other faculty members if he/she chooses;
3. Honors Committee members will not invite additional faculty members.

We typically schedule thirty minutes for each student. That block must suffice for the student presentation of the prospectus or thesis, questions from the faculty directed to the student, and discussion among committee members. To facilitate this process, the presentation should include:

A five to ten minute summary of the research question, the background and significance of the study, and the approach which the student will use to address the research question, including data. Honors thesis presentations should also discuss the findings and their implications for future research.

VIII. **Consultations**

Honors students are urged to consult regularly with their faculty tutors, especially if they have questions about requirements, deadlines, and expectations.