

# HON 498: The Honors Project

Congratulations on having accomplished the fine work that has brought you to a challenging point in your honors education! HON 498: The Honors Project is a process that engages students and directors in independent study and in critical dialogue about detailed work. As a process, the project develops into a finished product that grows out of careful planning and detailed goals, purposes, and criteria for evaluation. The project earns 3-4 semester hours, **taken preferably during the junior year**, for a much happier senior year!

 **WHERE DO I START?** First, make an appointment to speak with Dr. John Zubizarreta, Director of Honors. Dr. Z can assist you as you begin to think about project ideas, offering topics for research and suggesting a faculty mentor for you. Begin thinking about your topic of interest. Pick a topic that you find interesting and that will be relevant to your future plans for career or graduate study. Talk with faculty members in your area or related areas about your interests and ideas for a project. Ask a faculty member to serve as your mentor for the project.

 **WHAT SHOULD I THINK ABOUT WHEN DECIDING ON A TOPIC?** Consider the following questions:

- What are you trying to find out or learn through research, analysis, or creative endeavor?
- What are you proving, describing, comparing, defining, showcasing?
- How will the project increase your knowledge in the field and what will the project contribute to intellectual/creative inquiry in the field?
- Do you have a working hypothesis, perspective, and/or point of view?
- How will the project help you synthesize your honors/gen. ed./major academic experiences?
- How will the project challenge and engage you? Will it be fun?

 **OK. I HAVE AN IDEA FOR THE PROJECT. WHAT DO I DO NOW?** The next step in completing HON 498 is developing a written *Prospectus* for your honors project. The *Prospectus* is due to the honors office at the end of the semester *before completing* HON 498. The due date is very important. Students not submitting a prospectus will not be allowed to remain in HON 498. The *Prospectus* includes a cover sheet with essential information and signatures.

Steps to completing the *Prospectus*:

- Establish a relationship with a faculty mentor.
- Begin conducting library and other research.
- Make decisions about the details of your project's goals, methodologies, outcomes.
- Establish a realistic timetable for the project.
- Type a preliminary draft of the prospectus.
- Ask your mentor for comments and/or suggestions on improving the prospectus.
- Revise the prospectus based on the mentor's comments.
- Submit the prospectus to the honors office the semester before enrolling in the course.

The *Prospectus* should address the following areas:

1. Describe the goals of the project. Provide specific details about how the project will be conducted and state a specific hypothesis (if applicable). You may also want to provide some background information about your topic.
2. Describe how the project fits in with your educational background and experience and how the project is related to your post-graduation plans for career or graduate study. Describe how the project will enhance and synthesize your honors education as a challenging, meaningful capstone experience.
3. Detail how your director will assess your project. Include specific details about the assessment criteria. Describe in detail any product that you expect to generate. For example, if you are completing a written paper, provide information about the expected length of the paper, the number of resources to be used, and the citation style to be used (APA or MLA, etc.). If you are planning a creative performance or preparing a portfolio or some other product, you may include a checklist of items to be included and details about how the project will be judged.
4. Provide a preliminary bibliography. A list of references or resources is an appropriate sign that you know something about your field, that you are prepared for the project.

 **WHEW! The *Prospectus* is done. What else do I need to know about completing the project?**

**The project is due** to your mentor for evaluation about one month before the end of the semester. Typically, if you are taking HON 498 in the fall semester, your director should have your finished product by early November; in the spring semester, by early April. Remember that you will have spent at least an entire semester completing your research. Your mentor needs time to assess it fairly, leaving room for needed revisions.

<b>Title</b>
Author
Columbia College Honors Program
Date
Student
Faculty Mentor
Director of Honors

**The project should have a cover page** that includes title of project, your name, the program's name, date, and spaces for the signatures of the student author, the mentor, and the honors director. See sample.

**The project is bound** securely and professionally for the Honors Program project archives.

**One REQUIRED component of the honors project is a presentation** of the student's work. The project will be presented to students, faculty, family, and friends in a showcase during the Honors Medal Ceremony held shortly before graduation. Although students may complete their project during the junior year, graduates are expected to participate in the showcase at the Medal Ceremony. The showcase can be a poster, a display, a computer presentation, a video/audio tape; parents, faculty, and fellow students will have the opportunity to browse the projects and interact informally with presenters.



 **GOOD LUCK!** Do not hesitate to discuss your prospectus and/or project with someone from the honors office. We look forward to reading your proposal and are proud of your commitment to the project!