



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

The University Honors Curriculum

OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

Instead of the core curriculum requirements (41 hours), students in the University Honors Program take 33 hours of Honors coursework and 3-6 hours in math. In addition, they participate in a variety of special events, most of which are centered in the Spencer Honors House. While in no way delaying progress toward a degree or interfering with commitment to a major, the University Honors Program provides a stimulating range and depth of scholarly pursuits within an interdisciplinary arts and sciences context. Students have frequent individual contact with the teaching faculty and have unusual opportunities for independent projects and research.

Honors students have two options for completing their 33 hours in honors:

1. two 9-hour fall-term interdisciplinary honors courses plus five 3-hour honors seminars (only two of which can be related to the student's major or minor), or
2. two 9-hour fall-term interdisciplinary honors courses, a minimum of three 3-hour honors seminars (not related to the student's major or minor), and up to six hours of departmental honors coursework within the student's major school (with the total number of hours adding up to 33)

INTERDISCIPLINARY HONORS COURSES

A major academic component of the University Honors Program is the team-taught interdisciplinary course taught in the fall. This 9 credit-hour course is open only to first and second year students in the University Honors Program. Each fall, a new interdisciplinary course is team-taught by five or six faculty members from different disciplines who are carefully selected from the UAB faculty based on their excellence in teaching and scholarship. On occasion, experts from the medical center, the business sector, and the community give guest lectures. Each interdisciplinary course is organized thematically and is designed to cover a broad range of material from a variety of disciplines. Themes alternate between those with an arts and humanities bias and those with a more social/natural science bias. Depending on the year, students complete either a major research paper or a research project related to the theme of the course. Students write a literary analysis in every interdisciplinary course. Recent interdisciplinary courses were: "Origins" (2002); "Sightings: What We See and Why We See It" (2003); "In Search of Human Nature" (2004), "It's About Time" (2005), "Minds and Realities" (2006), and "Bottom-up, Top-down" (2007).

HONORS SEMINARS

In addition to two 9 credit-hour interdisciplinary courses, students in the University Honors Program must take five 3 credit-hour Honors Seminars to complete the program. The seminars are offered during the fall, spring, and summer terms and are limited to 16 students. Each year new seminar topics are selected by the Honors Council (a committee composed of faculty from around the campus and honors student representatives) and are available in a variety of different fields. The seminars focus on issues of major and topical interest within a field as well as those having implications and applications beyond a specific field. The seminars typically cover topics not covered by courses offered in the regular undergraduate curriculum. Students can only take two honors seminars related to their major. The University Honors Program offers 18-20 honors seminars each academic year.