



Honors Program Handbook

2024-2025

Dr. Michelle Vieyra, Director

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Mission Statement

Established in 1991 and expanded in 2005, USCA's Honors Program offers academically talented, highly motivated students opportunities for enriched learning experiences both in and outside the classroom. Honors students participate in a unique learning community that enjoys small classes and independent study under the direction of USCA's best teacher-scholars, in a program that cultivates critical thinking, analysis and creative expression. The Honors Program offers students experiences that are interdisciplinary in nature and involve active, engaged learning culminating in a capstone experience.

Honors Steering Committee

Michelle Vieyra, Biology

Professor Natalia Bowdoin, Library

Dr. Jeremy Culler, Department of Visual and Performing Arts

Dr. Andrew Geyer, Department of English

Dr. Gerard Rowe, Department of Chemistry and Physics

Professor Mary Gaffney, School of Nursing

Dr. Sanela Porca, School of Business Administration

Dr. Tom Reid, Department of Mathematical Sciences

Dr. Deborah McMurtrie, School of Education

Dr. Michelle Petrie, Department of Sociology

Honors Program Requirements

To graduate from the USCA Honors program, a student must earn 24-29 hours of Honors Program credits in the following categories:

- **HONS 101 Interdisciplinary Inquiry (3 credit hours): Humanities**
The theme of the introductory Honors course, taught by some of our best professors at USCA, varies by year. This course is by special permission only. Honors students will be able to sign up for this class with SSC once permission is given. **This course counts as 3 of the 9 credit hours required for the Humanities General Education requirement.**
- **HONS 201 Honors Colloquia (1 credit hour each)**
Three one-hour Honors short courses are required
These short courses are restricted to Honors student participation, and colloquia topics vary each semester. Typically, four colloquia are offered each academic year. Honors students will be able to sign up for these colloquia through SSC once special permission has been given.
- **Five Honors-Designated “Enriched” Courses**
 - Two honors-designated courses outside of the student’s major (6-8 credit hours)
 - Two honors-designated courses in the student’s major (6-8 credit hours)
 - One honors-designated course (3-4 credit hours) will be the student’s choice. Each Honors student can choose to do their fifth enrichment in their major, minor, cognate, or in a general education/elective course.

Students must discuss their enriched course preferences with the Honors Director BEFORE speaking with professors of these courses. Students will then prepare an enrichment project agreement form with the professor of the course and submit it to the Honors Director. The Honors Program will then enroll students in an Honors section of these courses. Students who do not submit an enrichment project agreement by the deadline established by the Honors Program Director may not receive honors credit for the class.

- **Capstone Experience/Project (3 credit hour independent study course or major capstone course)**
 - The Capstone Experience will be completed in the student’s senior year. All Capstones will be completed under the supervision of a faculty member selected by the student. Capstones will consist of one of the following: 1) a semester-long service learning project/course; 2) a scholarly project which involves research, data analysis, and communication of the results of the research; 3) a creative project which involves an approved medium, and communication of the resulting artwork. If an Honors student’s major already requires a capstone project, that experience may be enhanced and accepted as the Honors capstone project as well.
 - Students will submit a “Capstone Intent Form” notifying the Honors Director of their intent to complete the Capstone project the following academic year. Typically, this form will be completed and submitted in the second semester of the junior year. In the semester prior to the completion of the Capstone, Honors students must submit a “Capstone Proposal Form” that will be reviewed by the Honors Steering Committee (HSC). This form will provide a complete description of the proposed project for approval by the HSC by **mid-semester** of the semester **before** the student will conduct the project.
 - **Honors students will be expected to present the results of their projects to their peers and to the Honors Steering Committee members at the annual Scholar Showcase in April of each year. December graduates will present their work at a special presentation ceremony that will be held prior to the end of the fall semester.**

All HONS courses (101 and 201) must be passed with a grade of “C+” or better, otherwise no Honors credit will be given. Should a student earn a “C” or lower on the enrichment project in an Honors enriched course, the student will not receive Honors credit for that course.

To Remain in Good Standing....

- Students accepted into the Honors Program must enroll in HONS 101 during the first year that they are part of the program.
- Honors students **MUST** take at least 3 credit hours of Honors coursework per year to remain in the program.
 - Students who have gone 2 semesters without taking an honors course **MUST** enroll in one the following semester or they will be dismissed from the program.
- Honors students must maintain a USCA cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher during the first two semesters in the program, a 3.1 or higher the third and fourth semesters, a 3.2 or higher the fifth and sixth semesters, and a 3.3 or higher the seventh and eighth semesters.
 - Students who do not meet the grade requirements will be placed on Honors Program probationary status for one semester and will be dismissed from the program if standards have not been met by the end of the following semester.
 - Students may take Honors courses or Honors enriched courses during the semester they are on probation. Students may participate in Honors program graduation activities if they are on probation during their last semester, but all students must meet the Honors program requirements in order to graduate from the program. Honors Program completion is on the final transcript for students who successfully meet all of the requirements.
- The Honors Program has carefully selected students that represent the best and brightest of USCA. We expect that our students not only excel in the classroom, but also represent model student behavior by showing personal responsibility in all of their actions throughout their time in the Honors Program. If an Honors student is in violation of the USCA Academic or Non-Academic Code of Conduct, the Honors Steering Committee will consider sanctions/disciplinary actions and/or dismissal from the Honors Program. Any decisions made by the HSC are separate from any sanctions/disciplinary actions administered by the university. It is a privilege to be in the Honors Program; therefore, the Honors Steering Committee has the right, with approval from the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, to decide on disciplinary sanctions/penalties when instances occur that jeopardize the standards of the Honors Program and/or its resources.

Honors Program Perks

- Unique learning experiences exclusive to Honors students
- One-on-one classroom experiences with USCA faculty
- Close friendships and study opportunities with USCA's best students
- Undergraduate research, leadership, and shadowing opportunities
- Potential to receive an Honors scholarship
- Access to a private Honors lounge
- Free printing
- Priority Registration (You will sign up for classes first)
- Honors Housing
- Special ceremony each year recognizing Honors graduates
- Special events just for honors students
- Honors graduate designation on transcript
- Competitive edge when seeking employment or acceptance into graduate/professional schools

Important Dates to Remember (Academic Year 2024-2025)

Fall 2024

- **August 19: Honors Orientation Meeting (Pacer Commons 02B 3:00pm-4:00pm)**
- August 20: FALL CLASSES BEGIN
- **September 16: Last day to submit an Honors enrichment project agreement**
- October 1: Advisement period begins – Run your schedule by the Honors Director for enrichment ideas
- **October 28: Honors students can enroll in classes for Spring 2025**
- **November 29 – CAPSTONE PROPOSALS DUE for spring 2025 capstone projects**
- **First week of December (TBD): Capstone Presentations for Dec 2024 graduates***
- December 6: Last day of class
- December 9-13: Final Exams
- December 12: December Convocation (Graduation)

Spring 2025

- January 13: SPRING CLASSES BEGIN
- **February 3: Last day to submit an Honors enrichment project agreement**
- March 1: Advisement period begins – Run your schedule by the Honors Director for enrichment ideas
- **March 24: Honors students can enroll in classes for Summer & Fall 2023**
- **April 18: Capstone Intent Forms due for all Juniors & CAPSTONE PROPOSALS DUE for fall 2025 capstone projects**
- **April TBD: Scholar Showcase – Capstone Presentations for May 2025 graduates***
- **April TBD: Academic Awards Ceremony (Honors Awards bestowed to all honors graduates)**
- April 28: Last Day of Class
- April 30-May 6: Final Exams
- May 7: May Commencement (Graduation)

***All Honors students are encouraged to attend Honors Capstone Presentations at the end of the semesters. Please come to support your fellow Honors Students and get an idea of what your capstone experience might look like.**

Look for emails regarding important deadlines to enroll in Honors classes.

Take advantage of opportunities to come see me during the advisement period to discuss your progress.