

Departmental Honors in Political Science

What is the departmental honors program?

In Departmental Honors, qualified students write an original research project, with guidance from a faculty mentor. Students completing departmental honors have that designation on their transcript. Employers, law schools and graduate schools value departmental honors for demonstrating advanced critical thinking, writing, and research skills. Students can receive research grants and present their findings at professional conferences and present their findings at our annual spring awards ceremony.

Examples of Recent Departmental Honors Theses:

- Cyprus, Multilingualism, and Nationalism
- Congress and Education Policy
- Gender and Gubernatorial Elections
- Youth Policy Attitudes
- Welfare Reform
- Gender and Leadership
- Abortion Politics & Sex Education
- Transgender Health Care Policy

How do I enroll in Departmental Honors?

- Begin in your junior year, or in some cases, the summer after your junior year.
- Maintain a minimum 3.5 cumulative and major gpa.
- Prerequisites: 12 credits of Political Science, including PLS 2033 (Research Methods in Political Science), or transfer equivalents.
- Apply through the Department Honors Coordinator (Dr. Kevin Anderson). He will help you identify a faculty mentor. The department chair enrolls you in your departmental honors courses.

Requirements:

- PLS 4444/Honors Independent Study (3 hours): Students may work on developing a thesis proposal and literature review for their project. Students meet regularly with their faculty mentor.
- PLS 4555/Honors Research (3 hours): Students may work on data collection, or the first 2-3 chapters of their thesis. Regular meetings with their faculty mentor are expected.
- PLS 4644/Honors Thesis (3 hours): Students complete their thesis, culminating in a thesis defense with their thesis committee. Regular meetings are expected throughout the semester.
- PLS Graduate Seminar (3 hours): Students complete one 5000-level PLS graduate course.

Can I fit this into my study plan?

- Usually yes! Departmental honors can be challenging for double-majors and double-degree students—but some students have completed even two honors theses. Transfer students are also eligible—talk to your advisor.
- The Honors Independent Study (PLS 4444) counts towards the Applied PLS Experience, and the other requirements may count towards major requirements or electives. Flexible options exist for transfer students and students involved in study abroad—speak with the Honors Coordinator, your Academic Advisor, and the Department Chair.