



Honors Program

The OBU Honors Program Handbook

2025-2026 edition

“Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things.”

Philippians 4:8

“To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.”

Marcus Tullius Cicero

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WHAT IS HONORS?

CREDIMUS

As a Great Books program, the OBU Honors Program promotes the pursuit of wisdom and virtue through a form of study focused on the three “transcendentals”: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. Through a study of the Great Books of the Western world, we aim to enrich the lives of students through the acquisition of their cultural heritage. This heritage includes the political, intellectual, aesthetic, and—above all—spiritual resources of the great tradition of thought and expression in the Western world.

We believe that the Great Tradition and Western civilization are valuable and worth preserving for the sake of human flourishing.

We believe that practical education and career preparation are valuable and important but are far from the whole of a true education, that the Christian student especially is called by scripture to pursue wisdom and sanctification through his or her studies. (Philippians 4:8; Proverbs 4:1-13).

We believe that the best education is an education in which the student is actively engaged rather than passively acted upon.

We believe that the whole of education should be an act of worship of the one true God, and thus we encourage a sense of gratitude and wonder in our studies together.

We believe that the *Honor* in a proper *Honors Program* lies not in being better than other students but rather in learning to love what is best, and thus we see the shaping of the affections as a central aim in education.

We believe that knowledge of the past is essential for living wisely and well in the present.

We believe that the Great Books are inherently worthy of our attention and respect, even when we dissent from their views and conclusions, that works of philosophy, literature, history, art, and theology cherished for generations should be attended to with both reverence and discernment.

We believe in the “democracy of the dead” (as G.K Chesterton termed it) and the need to steward the “permanent things.”

We believe that the Great Tradition and the Great Books belong equally to all, regardless of nationality, origin, race, or class.

Through its core classes and colloquia, as well as through its options for study abroad, service, and thesis writing, the Honors Program equips and encourages students to pursue Truth, Goodness, and Beauty as they pursue an education appropriate for beings made in the image of God.

OBU Honors is education for wisdom and for the virtue that accompanies wisdom. It is a formative education, an education meant not just to convey information but also to shape the character of the student. The graduate of the OBU Honors Program should be a person who is in competent possession of his or her cultural heritage as a person living in the Western World, a person who loves what is excellent and praiseworthy, and a person who engages with culture as a thoughtful member of the body of Christ.

What is a Great Books Program?

As the name implies, a “Great Books” program is an education comprised primarily of reading and discussing those works deemed to have contributed most to the intellectual, political, artistic, and spiritual life of our culture. Although attempts have been made to generate definitive lists of these works, no such list is necessary for the establishment of a Great Books education, since all that is necessary is a working list of important and profound books, a list which can be tended and adjusted from semester to semester and year to year. Who, for instance, would doubt the value of reading the works of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare, even when there is room for variety and disagreement over the works that may accompany these giants on the Great Books syllabus?

It is possible to locate the origins of a particular “Great Books movement” in the early twentieth century, but that movement should be understood as an effort to restore to education the content and procedures that typified liberal arts education for centuries previous to that. Professor John Erskine at Columbia University is often credited with founding the first Great Books program. His student and then colleague, Mortimer Adler, went on to become the greatest proponent and popularizer of Great Books education in the twentieth century and contributed, along with Robert Maynard Hutchins, to the founding of Great Books education at the University of Chicago and at St. John’s College. Today there are a handful of colleges, like St. John’s, that have dedicated the entire curriculum to the study of the Great Books. Slightly more common is the study of the Great Books within an honors college or honors program, as at OBU.

Although there is a great variety of approaches and philosophies in Great Books education, Great Books programs tend to share an emphasis on heuristic learning and the Socratic seminar. Great Books education is generally understood to require active participation, and professors in Great Books seminars are often encouraged not to lecture but rather to guide a focused but free discussion of the work under consideration and the questions it raises. Most Great Books

programs also share a commitment to read whole works rather than anthologized excerpts, in as much as is possible.

Our Distinct Seminar/Lecture System

Through our unique combination of seminars and lectures, students in the OBU Honors Program, explore history, ideas, and the Great Books of the Western world in both breadth and depth. Students in our Honors core meet three days a week with their Honors house and their house professor for small group discussion of Honors core texts. Two days a week, they meet with their entire Honors cohort to hear lectures from OBU faculty experts, as well as from guests, on topics in history, philosophy, literature, theology, fine arts, and more. Thus, students dive deep both into discussion of important works and into the crucial context for understanding what they are reading. Students in the OBU Honors Program learn how to think *for* themselves while they learn the wisdom of not thinking *by* themselves.

The small Socratic discussion is not only literally the oldest form of pedagogy in the Western educational tradition but also the dominant technique used in Great Books programs. Behind the seminar discussion model is an ancient belief that has been borne out by many modern studies in learning science: a discovered truth adheres in the mind and soul more thoroughly than does a truth simply delivered. Experts refer to this as “heuristic learning.” The importance of an active mind in the pursuit of truth was clear to Socrates, and it is clear to us.

Thus, a great books seminar is more than a “book club” or typical class “group work.” It is, rather, a process of shared inquiry. We trust in the ability of Great Books to convey truth, goodness, and beauty without “expert” intervention. As Thomas Aquinas and Dante assure us, human reason, while limited, is a good and useful tool. “Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord” (Is. 1:18).

We believe expert guidance and factual knowledge are crucial, which is why we pair the seminars with the lectures. We, however, also believe that shared inquiry into the True, the Good, and the Beautiful will bear meaningful and deep results in the hearts, minds, and souls of students. By actively participating in their education, students gain not only a better memory and understanding of what they read but also a greater personal stake in the pursuit of wisdom.

In the seminar we learn to engage our own reason, the tools of civil discussion, and the greatest minds of the past in the pursuit of wisdom. We believe that shared inquiry is also a form of corporate worship. Again, “Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord.”

Because reasoning requires a foundation in fact, we pair the lecture courses with the seminar courses. In the lecture, students get the big picture of the social, intellectual, political, artistic, and spiritual development of Western culture. Not only does this help students contextualize the books they are reading in the

seminar but also it gives them a greater understanding of the relationship between the past and the present. Our goal is to help students receive their cultural inheritance as part of the human story.

The twentieth-century philosopher Michael Oakshott puts it this way: "Every human being is born an heir to an inheritance to which he can succeed only in a process of learning. . . What every man is born an heir to is an inheritance of human achievement; an inheritance of feelings, emotions, images, visions, thoughts, beliefs, ideas, understandings, intellectual and practical enterprises, languages, relationships, organizations, canons and maxims of conduct, procedures, rituals, skills, works of art, books, musical compositions, tools, artifacts and utensils -- in short, what Dilthey called a *geistige Welt* [spiritual world]." Of course, this wider perspective enables the student to think about contemporary problems with a greater perspective, but, perhaps more importantly, it also uncramps their souls. Knowledge of Western civilization—a true knowledge of its change and continuity over time—gives the student room to breathe intellectually, morally, spiritually, and emotionally. It frees the student from the tyranny of the moment, from merely fashionable, inevitably superficial ways of being in the world. Life in the fullness of time is a life more abundant than living in the confines of the moment.

The House System

All OBU Honors students are sorted into one of three houses: House Augustine, House Lewis, or House Luther. The primary purpose of these house groups is to serve as a cohesive and stable seminar group throughout the student's time in the core curriculum. Students are able to have deeper and more sustained conversations in the seminar when there is continuity in their seminar group from semester to semester. The house system makes this continuity possible.

The house system also facilitates the formation of study groups and social activities. We encourage students to take pride in their house.



Honors Program Requirements And Graduation Designation

Students in the Honors Program complete the Honors core, which consists of Great Books lectures and seminars as outlined on the degree sheet on the following page. Additionally, Honors students must complete a minimum of four colloquia. Students who complete the Honors core, pass at least four colloquia, and maintain a minimum G.P.A. of 3.25 will graduate **“With College Honors”** and be awarded with the Honors hood upon graduation.

Additionally, Honors students may elect to enrich their education through a contracted study project and/or through one of four Honors capstone experiences: Thesis, Service Practicum, Study Abroad, and the Great Books Reading List. Students who meet the requirements for College Honors and complete a thesis and one other capstone will graduate **“With University Honors.”**

Honors Program Degree Sheet

Requirements for Graduation with College Honors

Honors Program Core		24 Hours
FRESHMEN FALL		6
HON 1013	Great Books Lecture I: The Ancient World	3
HON 1113	Great Books Seminar I: The Ancient World	3
FRESHMEN SPRING		6
HON 2043	Great Books Lecture II: The Classical World	3
HON 2143	Great Books Seminar II: The Classical World	3
SOPHOMORE FALL		6
HON 2543	Great Books Lecture III: Medieval, Renaissance, Reformation	3
HON 2643	Great Books Seminar III: Medieval, Renaissance, Reformation	3
SOPHOMORE SPRING		6
HON 3013	Great Books Lecture IV: The Modern World	3
HON 3113	Great Books Seminar IV: The Modern World	3
COLLOQUIA - SELECT FOUR COURSES		0-4
HON 2119	Colloquia in Humanities	0-1
HON 2219	Colloquia in Fine Arts	0-1
HON 2319	Colloquia in Business	0-1
HON 2419	Colloquia in Life Sciences	0-1
HON 2519	Colloquia in Social Sciences	0-1
HON 2619	Colloquia in Mathematics/Physical Sciences	0-1
HON 2719	Colloquia in Theology/Ministry	0-1
HONORS ELECTIVES - SELECT UP TO FIVE COURSES		0-11
HON 4770	Honors Service Practicum	0
HON 4889	Honors Study Abroad	0-3
HON 3779	Contracted Study	1-2
HON/XXX 4993	Honors Thesis	3
HON 4609	Great Books Capstone	0-3
Total Hours		
Freshmen Fall		6
Freshmen Spring		6
Sophomore Fall		6
Sophomore Spring		6
Colloquia		0-4
Honors Electives		0-11
Total hours required for Honors Program		24-39

Summary Descriptions of Honors Core Class Content

HON 1013 and HON 1113 Great Books (Lecture and Seminar) I: The Ancient World

Only students who have applied and been admitted to the OBU Honors Program may enroll in HON 1013 and HON 1113.

Students enrolled in HON 1013 fulfill OBU's BIBL 1013 (Introduction to Christian Scripture) Common Core requirement, and students enrolled in HON 1113 fulfill OBU's ENGL 1163 (Composition II) Common Core requirement. All students beginning in Honors, even those who have received AP, CLEP, or dual enrollment credit for REL 1013 or ENGL 1163, must enroll in HON 1013 and 1113 in the fall semester of their freshman year (or the fall semester immediately following admission to the Honors Program).

The 6 hours of courses focused on The Ancient World encompass a study of the foundations of Western civilization in the ancient near eastern and Mediterranean cultures, with particular emphasis on the Old Testament; the Homeric epics; and the politics, literature, and philosophy of the Athenians.

Upon completion of the first semester of the OBU Honors core, students will be able to:

1. Describe the historical and literary context of Ancient Near Eastern civilizations.
2. Explain the narrative contours and content of the Old Testament Scriptures.
3. Articulate the rise of classical Greek culture and politics, particularly through the lenses of Greek playwrights, mathematicians, and philosophers.
4. Demonstrate competence in oral and written communication

HON 2043 and HON 2143 Great Books (Lecture and Seminar) II: The Classical World

Students must complete HON 1013 and HON 1113 before enrolling in HON 2043 and HON 2143.

Students enrolled in HON 2043 fulfill OBU's HIST 2013 (European Civ: History) Common Core requirement, and students enrolled in HON 2143 fulfill OBU's ENGL 2013 (European Civ: Literature) Common Core requirement. All students in Honors, even those who have received AP, CLEP, or dual enrollment credit for HIST 2013 or ENGL 2013, must take HON 2043 and 2143. While there is flexibility, Honors students will normally enroll in HON 2043 and 2143 in the spring semester following completion of HON 1013 and 1113.

The 6 hours of courses focused on The Classical World encompass study of the Roman world from the early Republic through the collapse of the Empire, including emphasis on the life of Christ, the ministry of the apostles, and the early church. Key texts include Virgil's *Aeneid*, the New Testament, and the writings of Augustine.

Upon completion of the second semester of the OBU Honors Core, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the rise, spread, dominance, decay, and fall of the classical Roman Empire.
2. Grasp and outline the narrative contours and content of the New Testament Scriptures, with particular emphasis upon the rise and spread of the early Christian Church.
3. Appreciate and analyze the major literary and philosophical works of the classical world.
4. Demonstrate competence in oral and written communication.

HON 2543 and HON 2643 Great Books (Lecture and Seminar) III: Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation

Students must complete HON 2043 and HON 2143 before enrolling in HON 2543 and HON 2643.

Students enrolled in HON 2543 fulfill OBU's FNAR 2063 (Arts and Western Culture) Common Core requirement, and students enrolled in HON 2643 fulfill OBU's HIST 2023 (Modern West: History) Common Core requirement. All students in Honors, even those who have received AP, CLEP, or dual enrollment credit for FNAR 2063 or HIST 2023, must enroll in HON 2543 and 2643.

The 6 hours of courses focused on The Medieval World & Early Modernity encompass a study of medieval Christendom, the Renaissance, and the Reformation. Key texts include Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, along with the works of Luther, Calvin, and Shakespeare.

Upon completion of the third semester of the OBU Honors Core, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate the historical contours of medieval Christendom, the Renaissance, and the Reformation.
2. Assimilate and synthesize classic theological, philosophical, and historical literature from the time periods.
3. Articulate the reciprocal relationship between the fine arts (architecture, music, painting, and sculpture) and the developing Christian intellectual tradition.
4. Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication.

HON 3013 and HON 3113 Great Books (Lecture and Seminar) IV: The Modern World

Students must complete HON 2543 and HON 2643 before enrolling in HON 3013 and HON 3113.

Students enrolled in HON 3013 fulfill OBU's BIBL 1023 (Christian Theology and Ethics) Common Core requirement, and students enrolled in HON 3113 fulfill OBU's ENGL 2023 (Modern West: Literature) Common Core requirement. All students in Honors, even those who have received AP, CLEP, or dual enrollment credit for REL 3073 or ENGL 2023, must enroll in HON 3013 and 3113.

The 6 hours of courses focused on The Modern World encompass a study of the distinctively modern conception of reason arising in the eighteenth century and of the subsequent challenges to that conception. Topics include developments in literary modernism, positivist and existentialist philosophies, international conflict, post-colonialism, postmodern thought, and Christian responses.

Upon completion of the fourth semester of the OBU Honors Core, students will be able to:

1. Assess the complexities of the historical forces at work in the rise of modernism and postmodernism, with particular attention to political, economic, social, and philosophical influences.
2. Critically and creatively engage post-Christian culture from a faithful Christian worldview.
3. Articulate an application of biblical ethics to modern and post-modern moral questions.
4. Demonstrate excellence in oral and written communication.

Works Commonly Read in the Core

Freshman Fall

Old Testament; *The Epic of Gilgamesh*; Hesiod, *Theogony & Works and Days*; Homer, *Iliad & Odyssey*; Herodotus, *The Persian War*; Xenophon, *Memorabilia*; Plato, *Euthyphro & Apology & Crito & Phaedo & Republic*; Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound & Oresteia*; Aristophanes, *Clouds*; Sophocles, *Oedipus & Antigone*; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*; Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*; excerpts from Hellenistic philosophy

Freshman Spring

New Testament; Livy, *History of Rome*; Plutarch, *Roman Lives*; Cicero, *On Obligations* or “On Old Age” and “On Friendship”; Suetonius, *Twelve Caesars*; Virgil, *Aeneid*; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*; Seneca, essays & *Thyestes*; Selections from the Apostolic Fathers; Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*; Tacitus, *Germania*; Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*; Augustine, *Confessions & City of God*; Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*

Sophomore Fall

Beowulf; *Song of Roland*; Chretien, *Perceval*; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*; Dante, *Divine Comedy*; Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*; Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*; Montaigne, *Essays*; Erasmus, *On Free Will*; Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*; Cervantes, *Don Quixote*; Shakespeare, *Hamlet*; Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*; Milton, *Paradise Lost*; Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*

Sophomore Spring

Voltaire, *Candide*; Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*; Austen, *Persuasion*; Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Douglas, *Narrative of the Life*; Tolstoy, *Death of Ivan Ilych*; Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*; Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*; Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folks*; ten Boom, *Hiding Place*; Borowski, *This Way for the Gas*; Orwell, *Animal Farm*; Camus, *The Stranger*; Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*; Lewis, *Abolition of Man*; O'Connor, *A Good Man is Hard to Find*; Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*; Rodriguez, *The Hunger for Memory*; McCarthy, *The Road*.

Honors Colloquia: HON 2119-2719

Students cannot take colloquia until their second semester in Honors.

In order to graduate in the Honors Program, students must complete at least four Honors Colloquia. No student can enroll in more than two colloquia in the same semester. It is possible to enroll more than once in colloquia with the same course number, so long as the course content is different each time.

The general aim of a colloquium is to provide opportunity for a closely focused study of topics, texts, or ideas not available in the normal curriculum. Each colloquium aims to use a seminar format to allow students to do some collaborative investigation, regardless of the direct relation of the specific topic to the student's chosen major.

Colloquia may be taken for zero or one hour credit. Requirements for completion include regular attendance and participation in addition to whatever reading and/or writing requirements the instructor may impose; these requirements will not exceed the expectations for a typical one-hour course. Students are expected to complete the same assignments whether enrolled for 0 or 1 credit hour. Whether taken for 0 or 1 credit hour, colloquia will always be graded on a Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory scale.

By the arrangement of the instructor and the Honors Program Director, colloquia may be scheduled like normal courses, through the semester, or according to a variant calendar (e.g., through only part of a semester or in an intensive series of weekend meetings).

The Honors Program attempts to offer a choice of colloquium topics each semester, and a broader range of topics choices over time. The course numbers – HON 2119, 2219, 2319, 2419, 2519, 2619, and 2719 – designate topics in different curricular areas (Humanities, Fine Arts, Business, Life Sciences, Social Studies, Mathematics/Physical Science, and Theology/Ministry respectively). *Students must take at least two Colloquia that are outside of their major area of study.*

Some past Colloquia include:

HON 2119: 20th-Century British Mystery Authors (on location in London); Faith & Science Fiction; C. S. Lewis's Space Trilogy

HON 2219: The Musical Setting of the Psalms; Bach as Hidden Theology; Music and Shakespeare; Jesus in Film; Veggie Tales: Theological Animation

HON 2419: Science & God; Plagues, Pandemics, and Biowarfare; Musings on the Multiverse

HON 2519: Alexander Hamilton; The Roaring Twenties; The Seven Capital Vices; The Myth of the American West

HON 2619: Logical Paradoxes; Zero/Infinity; The Shape of Space; Math & Social Justice

HON 2719: Use & Abuse of Scripture; Muslim Christians?; God & Violence; Knowing the Gnostic Gospels; Spiritual Disciplines

Honors Elective Capstones

In addition to completing the core and the colloquia, Honors students may elect to further enrich their education through a contracted study and/or one of four elective Honors capstones. There are a number of reasons students may wish to engage in these optional academic opportunities. One purpose to complete a contracted study or capstone is the great personal growth and fulfillment these experiences offer. Students will also find that capstone experiences can substantially enhance their transcripts, resumes, and applications for employment and graduate school.

While we recommend all capstone experiences for all Honors students, the contracted study and thesis are especially recommended for those students intending on or considering applying for graduate or professional school after graduation. The Great Books Reading List capstone is especially recommended for students considering a career teaching in a classical school, though any student desiring further exploration of the Great Books will find it a rewarding experience.

Honors students who complete one capstone or more capstones (but not the thesis) or no capstones will graduate “With College Honors.” Students who complete the thesis and one other capstone will graduate “With University Honors.”

HON 3779 Contracted Study

The Contracted Study application form can be found on the Honors webpage and must be completed before enrolling.

Honors Contracted Study plays a crucial role in the Honors Program mission and vision by (a) extending the range of study an honors student may pursue in his/her major area, and (b) encouraging the student to think about ways to arrange, plan, and complete a limited-scope independent study project. In its most successful forms, contracted study allows for mentorship by faculty, an extension of study to areas not readily available in normal courses, collaborative learning processes, and student initiated reading/writing. The ways to satisfy the requirement are almost as diverse as the students in the program, and because of this, it is important for students to work with a faculty advisor and the Honors Director prior to completing the online application to clarify specific objectives for its completion.

A student enrolls in HON 3779 for either one (1) or two (2) hours of credit. The determination of credit is made by the student in collaboration with the faculty member overseeing the study project. In most cases, HON 3779 will carry only one (1) hour credit, and the study project proposed should fit into the normal load hour requirements for a one hour course. **It is expected that you will meet with the faculty supervisor of your Contracted Study each week of the semester.** The project should be completed within the semester in which the enrollment occurs; when this is not possible, a grade of IP may be temporarily assigned. A section of HON 3779 is created for each Honors student participating in Contracted Study in a given semester, with the supervising OBU faculty as the professor of record.

From time to time, opportunities for a special study related to the student's major field but not connected directly to an OBU faculty member in the student's major may be utilized for Contracted Study. For example, a student spending a summer as a research intern (e.g. a pre-med student doing research at OMRF) may arrange to count that experience for the HON 3779 completion, but such arrangements must be approved in advance by the Honors Program Director. It is not unusual that such study/internship arrangements may also provide the base for further work, culminating in an Honors Thesis project.

Here are some other narrative examples of contracted study projects: (1) An English major extends an interest in short story writing beyond what is available in the creative writing course, and arranges with a faculty member to mentor a writing project that includes the completion of a couple of short stories to be submitted to the campus journal for creative writing. (2) A psychology major arranges a special experimental project in collaboration with a faculty member and aims to present the results of the project at a regional conference. (3) A computer science major designs a special study plan in pursuit of a network maintenance certification and pursues that plan as an independent study overseen by a faculty member in CIS. (4) A biblical languages major completes a Greek or Hebrew translation project beyond the scope of regular course work.

HON 4770 Service Practicum

The Service Practicum application form can be found on the Honors webpage and must be completed before enrolling.

Enrollment is for zero hours, and the course may be taken any semester after freshman year.

Requirements:

- a) Pre-practicum completion of an analytical book review**
- b) Eighty hours volunteering with a mission/service organization in diverse positions**
- c) Maintenance of a volunteer log/journal, turned in to the Honors Director**
- d) Completion of a reflective essay (1000-1500 words) summarizing the experience**

Jesus says that, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.” Students who have been endowed with more innate capabilities will be exhorted to utilize their gifts, talents, time and energy in a life of service to Christ and His people—particularly the “orphan, widow, and foreigner” among us.

Though the term “Capstone” may imply an experience near the end of the undergraduate experience, the Service Practicum may be arranged at any time after freshman year.

In brief, the requirements for the Service Practicum are to plan, propose, perform, and report on a project of volunteer service consisting of at least eighty clock hours dedicated to the aid of one or more individuals, a community, or an organization or agency designed to provide assistance. Since meeting the physical needs of others is inherently linked to the Gospel, it is hoped that this experience will demonstrate the value of specifically addressing economic and social needs of fellow humans.

HON 4770 is a service-learning experience completed under the guidance of someone more experienced than the student, who can help the student see the service in a larger perspective. In the case of service provided through an organization or agency, this person may be a supervisor and/or trainer who must be identified in advance on the application form.

Prior to beginning their service hours, students will complete a book review to help prepare them for their capstone experience. Consult the Honors Director for details.

During the Service Practicum, the student will maintain a journal record that includes (a) a time record of the experience and (b) a reflective listing of duties performed and their impact on the student and the recipients of service. At the conclusion of the Practicum, the student will write a summative, reflective essay (1000-1500 words)

which provides a report on the overall experience (what was done, how, for whom, where, when) and some reflection on the lessons learned from the experience. The book review, journal, and essay must be presented to the Honors Director or assistant director before a grade (S) will be assigned, indicating completion of the capstone. The Honors office maintains an informal file of service opportunities in the area, but students are encouraged to identify opportunities that fit their own interests and time schedules. This may mean arranging volunteer service during the summer or another period when the student is taking classes.

Anecdotal Examples of Service Projects

A Biochemistry major spends the summer after sophomore year serving at the Salvation Army homeless shelter in her hometown. Her evenings are spent hearing the stories of workers and residents, learning to love and accept them as they are, while encouraging them to find fullness in Christ. She serves tea, cooks suppers, serves meals, sorts donations, and learns all that goes into facilitating a vital service ministry to the underprivileged in her community.

A Music Composition major spends the summer after his junior year serving an inner city steel drum band, writing original music, conducting the band, and mentoring young men and women from at-risk homes and communities.

A Digital Media Arts major spends her junior year spring semester at C-Bar Horsemanship in Shawnee. Along with serving at the ranch, she plans, scripts, and records several promotional videos for C-Bar.

A Biology major spends J-Term during sophomore year serving as the interim office manager at Norfolk Rescue Mission. She answers phones, handles incoming donations, writes receipts, picks up donated food from businesses, and interfaces with potential and actual donors. In the context of her service, she also finds significant opportunities for relationship-building with clients in the homeless shelter and discipleship programs.

A Bible major spends the spring semester of his senior year as a frontline officer with the City Rescue Mission, interviewing and mentoring men applying to enter a rehabilitation and discipleship program. He has opportunity to share the Gospel, see men come to Christ and be baptized, and experience victory over substance addictions.

A Family and Community Service major spends the summer after her junior year interning with Project Safe, a ministry advocating for victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse. She experiences all aspects of the ministry: office paperwork, grant-writing, interviewing incoming clients, interacting with court advocates, and mentoring women and children emerging from abusive environments.

An Elementary Education major spends her junior year serving with the Community Garden in Shawnee. She spends time cultivating a garden, not for her own benefit, but for the surrounding community – weeding, watering, building. She also has opportunity to interact with other community volunteers and members in the garden environment.

HON 4889 Study Abroad

The Study Abroad application form can be found on the Honors webpage and must be completed before enrollment and embarking on the study abroad experience. Honors students may enroll in HON 4889 during any semester. The Capstone course usually carries zero credit hours, but can be taken for up to three hours.

When engaging in a study abroad experience offered directly through the OBU Honors Program, the capstone requirements will be established by the professor teaching the class associated with the trip. Students engaging in a study abroad experience through another organization or an area of the university distinct from Honors must complete the following requirements:

- a) Pre-trip completion of an analytical book review**
- b) Four weeks abroad in a foreign cultural setting with a strong study component**
- c) Maintenance of a travel journal/diary, turned in to the Honors Director upon return**
- d) Completion of a reflective essay (1000-1500 words) summarizing the experience**

An extended period of exposure to and immersion in a significantly different culture provides the student a wider awareness of the conditions, values, and perspectives by which humans live. The experience may also give rise to a valuable reassessment of personal assumptions about one's own culture.

Satisfaction of the HON 4889 capstone does not require that the student be enrolled in a credit-bearing program of study while abroad, but such study is strongly encouraged, as it can prove a valuable part of the experience.

Study abroad in general, and especially enrollment in a study abroad program, requires early planning. In addition to passport and visa requirements involved, schedules for overseas institutions are frequently different, and scholarship aid available at OBU often does not follow students to study abroad institutions. Students are strongly advised to plan this capstone well in advance and to use the resources of the OBU Global Outreach Center and International Studies Office for assistance in planning. Students will also find information and assistance for travel planning at many online sites, and they should use these to project both schedule and expenses.

To satisfy the Study Abroad capstone, an acceptable experience must substantial time on the ground in the foreign culture, with numerous opportunities to explore cultural sites and experience cultural patterns in the country/region. Questions about whether specific courses and/or plans meet the program expectations for this capstone should be discussed with the Honors Program Director well in advance of travel.

The Honors Program sponsors regular corporate study abroad opportunities through “OBU Abroad,” wherein students enroll in OBU courses which will be completed on the ground in a foreign setting.

Anecdotal Examples of Recent Study Abroad Experiences

Two OBU Honors faculty couples lead a group of 15 students for a 4-week Study Abroad in London, England. Students take a class on British Authors as well as an Honors Colloquium on 20th-Century British Mystery. Students visit a plethora of museums, castles, cathedrals, palaces and parks in London, in addition to trips to Oxford, Cambridge, Canterbury, Dover, Stonehenge, Salisbury, Wells, and Bath.

An English major spends the summer after her junior year at the University of Roehampton (London, England), studying “Art in London Museums.”

A Philosophy major travels to Kazakhstan after his junior year, spending a month in cultural exchange with the students of Kazakh American Free University.

A Biblical Languages and Anthropology double major spends the summer after her junior year interning with the Institute of Field Research in Israel, helping with excavations and learning about and seeing relevant archaeological sites.

An International Business major spends eight months of her junior year studying in Spain and Wales, and exploring nine European countries.

A Cross-Cultural Ministry and History double major travels to the U.S. Virgin Islands for the summer following her junior year, studying (via primary documents) the history of the Moravian Church in providing slave education and shaping the current island community.

A Nursing major spends Christmas and J-Term during his senior year volunteering at a medical clinic serving the slums outside Nairobi, Kenya.

An English major spends the spring semester of her junior year studying at Oxford University in England, taking 17 credits of English-oriented classes while living in dorm with British and international students.

A Journalism major spends the spring semester of her freshmen year living with a missionary family in Peru, engaging the local culture and learning the language. While in Peru, she takes 12 credits of OBU courses.

A Biochemistry major spends a month of the summer after her junior year in Kitale, Kenya, serving at Mercy Rescue Center and assisting local church pastors in their church and educational programs.

A Psychology/Pre-Counseling major spends a fall semester studying in Prague, the Czech Republic.

HON 4609 Great Books Capstone

The Great Books Capstone is an independent reading experience that culminates in an oral exam.

The Great Books Capstone is designed to be completed in a single semester. Students wishing to enroll in the Great Books Capstone must complete the course application found on the Honors webpage prior to enrollment.

Students enrolling in the Great Books Capstone will consult with the Honors director to determine a reading list, based on the four standard lists available from the director. Substitutions are allowed if approved by the Honors director.

Students are responsible for reading the books on the list and taking appropriate notes in preparation for an oral exam to be administered by the Honors director at the end of the semester. Students who pass the oral exam will receive a satisfactory grade for the capstone.

Students undertaking the Great Books Capstone should keep the Honors director advised of their progress toward the completion of the list throughout the semester. Grades of “Incomplete” will be given only when extenuating circumstances necessitate it.

The reading Lists for 2024-2025 academic year appears on the following page.

LIST 1	LIST 2	LIST 3	LIST 4
Plato, <i>Meno</i>	Plato, <i>Crito</i>	Plato, <i>Symposium</i>	<i>Upanishads</i>
Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i>	Aristotle, <i>Physics</i>	<i>The Bhagavad-Gita</i>
Aeschylus, <i>Seven Against Thebes</i>	Aristophanes, <i>Lysistrata</i>	Euclid, <i>Elements</i>	<i>Ramayana of Valmiki</i>
Cicero, <i>First Oration Against Catiline</i>	Terence, <i>Phormio</i>	Lucretius, <i>On the Nature of Things</i>	Confucius, <i>Analects</i>
Lucan, <i>Pharsalia</i> Books 1&2	Virgil, <i>Eclogues</i> & Martial, <i>Epigrams</i>	Juvenal, <i>The Third Satire</i> & Horace, <i>Odes</i>	Selected poems of Li Po and Du Fu
Anselm, <i>Proslogion</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Against Heresies</i>	John of Damascus, <i>An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith</i>	The Qur'an (selections)
Sir Thomas Malory, <i>Le Morte Darthur</i> (final book)	<i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>	Geoffrey Chaucer, <i>The Knight's Tale</i>	<i>Tao Te Ching</i>
Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i>	Christine de Pizan, <i>The Book of the City of Ladies</i>	Nicolaus Copernicus, <i>On the Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres</i>	Murasaki Shikibu, <i>The Tale of the Genji</i> (selections or condensed)
William Shakespeare, <i>Henry V</i> & <i>King Lear</i>	William Shakespeare, <i>Twelfth Night</i> & <i>Othello</i>	William Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i> & <i>The Winter's Tale</i>	William Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> & <i>The Tempest</i>
Rene Descartes, <i>Meditations</i>	Pascal, <i>Pensées</i>	Francis Bacon, <i>Novum Organum</i>	Jean Racine, <i>Phedre</i>
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, <i>Social Contract</i>	Daniel Defoe, <i>Moll Flanders</i>	Isaac Newton, <i>Principia Mathematica</i>	Kalidasa, <i>Sakuntala and the Ring of Recollection</i>
Edmund Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i>	Emily Bronte, <i>Wuthering Heights</i>	Jane Austen, <i>Emma</i>	Samuel Johnson, <i>Rasselas</i>
Alexis De Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> (selected portions)	Herman Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i>	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	<i>The Epic of Son Jara (Sundiata)</i>
Charles Dickens, <i>Great Expectations</i>	Kate Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i>	Charles Darwin, <i>Origin of the Species</i>	Henrik Ibsen, <i>A Doll's House</i>
Theodore Dostoevsky, <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>	Gustave Flaubert, <i>Madame Bovary</i>	Henry James, <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i>	Leo Tolstoy, <i>Anna Karenina</i>
Confucius, <i>Analects</i>	<i>The Epic of Son Jara (Sundiata)</i>	<i>The Bhagavad-Gita</i>	Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i>
Virginia Wolf, <i>To the Lighthouse</i>	Edith Wharton, <i>The Age of Innocence</i>	James Baldwin, <i>Go Tell it on the Mountain</i>	Chinua Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>No Exit</i>	Marcel Proust, <i>Swann's Way</i>	James Joyce, <i>Dubliners</i>	Zora Neale Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>

Nota Bene: Some works on each list are very short and can be read in one sitting. Others are quite large and will take significant time to read. Be sure to acquire all your books at the beginning of your reading and to properly access the time you will need for each.

Proposals for substitutions may be submitted for any work on the same line. For instance, you may propose a substitution of any work on line 18 for any other work on line 18. Any other substitutions will be determined in consultation with your reading supervisor as necessary.

XXX / HON 4993 Honors Thesis

Students planning to write a thesis enroll in the thesis-writing capstone during their penultimate semester (typically Fall of Senior Year) after approval of their plan by the Honors Program Director & Committee. Students are expected to enroll in either the XXX 4999 Independent Study in the major area or in HON 4993 for three (3) credit hours. Students cannot enroll for this capstone until a thesis plan has been filed and approved by the proposed faculty advisor and the Honors Program Director.

NOTE: All forms related to the Honors Thesis can be found on the Honors webpage. The Honors Thesis application must be filled out online.

The Honors Thesis is the most traditional of the Honors capstones, and may prove to be the most rewarding in terms of facilitating subsequent study. It is required for students planning to graduate with University Honors.

Successful completion of an Honors thesis sets the student apart from most other applicants to graduate schools, and this can prove a powerful advantage in seeking admission and financial aid for such study. In addition, it may provide rare insights into the experience of professional research and the rigors of sustained academic writing.

It is the goal of the Honors Committee that required capstones or senior projects within students' chosen majors be allowed to streamline with the Honors Thesis project. In every case, completing a thesis means that a student should go above and beyond the requirements for their regular senior project or capstone. However, they do not have to do an entirely different project for Honors. For example, if an Art major is already planning a capstone design show, they could expand a certain aspect of their show and create an additional series of pieces, accompanied by a short written thesis explaining the relevant art history and the design process. Because Honors students have such a wide range of majors, the thesis project parameters will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Streamlining between regular senior requirements and Honors Thesis projects will happen through coordinated communication between the Honors Director, and the student's department chair and advisor.

Students choosing to write a thesis should begin early. Students intending to complete an Honors Thesis must complete HON 3779 (Contracted Study) in the Spring semester of their junior year (in rare cases, HON 3779 can be completed over the summer instead). Contracted Study will serve as the foundation of the Thesis Proposal. Proposals for the thesis must be completed and approved by the faculty advisor and the Honors Program Director by April 30 of Junior year. Though the specific focus of the thesis project may be amended after the proposal is approved, any substantial change in focus should be formally approved by the advisor and Honors Program Director.

A student working on the thesis capstone may elect to begin the research and writing any time (e.g. one may perform the research during a summer internship prior to the junior year) but cannot register for XXX 4999 or HON 4993 until after approval of the thesis proposal. The student will register for the 3-credit-hour thesis-writing course

(HON 4993 or XXX 4999) in his/her second-to-last semester, usually the Fall semester of his/her senior year. In order to register for the 4999 course, the student must fill out the Honors Thesis Proposal **and** the Independent Study Proposal (both forms are available on the Honors website). The grade is assigned by the faculty member of record for the course. When enrollment in the 4999 course occurs before the semester in which the project is completed, a final grade may be deferred until completion of the project. In such cases a temporary grade of IP will be assigned at the discretion of their faculty supervisor.

In unusual circumstances, the student may petition to take their thesis-writing course for 1 or 2 credit hours, rather than 3, if their degree plan simply does not have any margin for an additional 3-hour course, and if they cannot afford overload tuition expenses. However, the work done by the thesis writer must still be equivalent to the work done in a 3-hour course load. Also, a student may petition to enroll in the thesis-writing course in his/her final semester, or to spread the 3 credits of thesis-writing over multiple semesters: such petitions will be considered by the Honors Committee on a case-by-case basis.

During the research and writing portion of the project, the student is required to maintain weekly contact with the faculty advisor, informing him/her about progress and submitting sections of the thesis for consideration as they are developed in draft form. The student and advisor will meet formally with the University Honors Committee at least once in the fall and once in the early spring semester for progress reports. A full rough draft of the thesis project must be submitted to the Honors Committee by the first day of his/her final semester (i.e., usually the first day of class in the Spring semester). When questions arise regarding the appropriateness or satisfactory quality of the student's work as an honors thesis, these should first be worked out between the student and faculty advisor; unresolved questions should be presented to the Honors Program Director, who may submit them for consideration to the University Honors Committee.

Before Spring Break (Fall Break for December graduates), the thesis draft will be sent to an external reader – an expert (with a terminal academic degree) in the respective field. It is the responsibility of the thesis-writing student, in consultation with his/her faculty supervisor, to identify an appropriate external reader and secure their agreement to serve in that capacity. There are two forms (available from the Honors director) that must be sent to the external reader and returned to the Honors Director in order for us to provide a modest token of our appreciation for their services (a \$100 honorarium).

Early in the semester in which the thesis is to be publicly presented, the student and faculty advisor will confer with the Honors Program Director to set a date for the thesis presentation and to discuss issues related to the format of the final document and circumstances of the public presentation. The Honors Program Director in consultation with the University Honors Committee will be responsible for arranging time and place and for publicizing the presentation.

Once the project is completed and has been presented publicly, no later than a week before the end of the semester of anticipated graduation, the student will deliver at least

one clean digital copy of the final document. The additional forms needed for the thesis final draft are available from the Honors director. Students and faculty advisors involved in the preparation of an honors thesis should read and consider the “Some Advice for Thesis Writers and Advisors” section of this handbook.

General Timeline for Senior Honors Thesis Project

Spring semester of Junior year	Complete HON 3779 (Contracted Study)
By April 30 of Junior Spring semester	Submit Thesis Proposal to Honors Director
Summer semester after Junior year	Continue thesis research; outline; begin writing
Fall semester of Senior year	Enroll in HON 4993/XXX 4999 (Thesis-writing)
	Work on rough draft of thesis
	Meet with Honors Committee for Progress Report
First week of Senior Spring semester	Submit complete rough draft to Honors Committee
Spring semester of Senior year	Meet with Honors Committee for Progress Report
By Spring Break of Senior year	Send thesis to external reader
Late Spring, Senior year	Revise, edit, polish, repeat
	Present thesis to OBU Community
By final week of Spring classes	Submit final polished thesis for binding & printing

Expectations of an Honors Thesis at OBU

The Senior Honors Thesis at OBU is a substantial research project that represents a significant undergraduate accomplishment in the field of study—an achievement clearly beyond the normal liberal arts curriculum. Its content should be marked by extensive and rigorous research, original thinking, and sound critical judgment. Its form should be carefully designed, of sufficient length for the scope and demands of the study, and written in a polished, scholarly prose. (The length of the thesis will vary by discipline and will be based on the student’s research aims and their advisors’ counsel. For example, a thesis in Mathematics or Biochemistry may be 30-60 pages, while a thesis in Biblical & Theological Studies or English may be 80-120.) While the project will be overseen by a faculty advisor in the major and reviewed and evaluated by an external reader in the field, the University Honors Committee will make the final judgment as to each project’s fulfillment of these criteria and will offer final approval of each project for Honors Distinction.

In every case, work on the senior thesis should be of sufficient scope and rigor to merit 3-credit hours of advanced-level work in the field. In exceptional cases, Honors Program students may be approved to do a senior thesis in their minor field.

Anecdotal Examples of Thesis Experiences

2022. Brandon Alley (Religion), "I Am the Light of the World: The Inauguration and Culmination of the Light Theme in Johannine Literature," advised by Dr. Mario Melendez.
2022. Micah Hinson (Accounting), "Dignity Restored: An Analysis of Contemporary Literature and a Holistic Response to Poverty in America," advised by Dr. Craig Walker and Dr. Alan Noble.
2019. Kelsi Guleserian (Math), "Links in Higher Dimensional Spheres," advised by Dr. Cherith Tucker.
2019. Noah Jones (Philosophy), "The Mereology of God Incarnate: A Critique of Part-Whole Approaches to Christ's Attributes," advised by Dr. Randy Ridenour.
2018. Morgan Smith (English), "Love and Friendship: Female Friendship in Jane Austen's Novels," advised by Dr. Jonathan Callis.
2018. Chancellor Stillwell (Biblical Languages), "The Witness Motif in the Book of Acts," advised by Dr. Alan Bandy.
2016. Jacy O'Dell (Biochemistry), "Employing Zebrafish as a Model for Investigating Butyrate's Anti-Cancer Properties in the Colon," advised by Dr. Contessa Edgar.
2016. Matthew Clear (English), "Early American Literature and the Birth of the American Short Story," advised by Dr. Kaine Ezell.
2015. Alec Daugherty (Philosophy), "Just Time It Right: An Introductory Exploration of Time-Traveling Justice," advised by Dr. Tawa Anderson.
2015. Seth Wright (Music Composition), "Mass for the Penitent Soul: An Original Composition," advised by Dr. James Vernon.
2013. Sherrod Donnelly (Political Science), "Descent to Dictatorship: The Steady Rise of Executive Power," advised by Dr. Tony Litherland.
2012. Rachel Adamson (Psychology: Pre-Counseling), "Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence: Assessing Effective Rehabilitation Service," advised by Dr. Canaan Crane.
2010. Drew Melton (Biblical Languages & Philosophy), "Justification by Faith According to Paul: A Look at the Debate between N. T. Wright and John Piper," advised by Dr. Bobby Kelly.
2008. April Harden (History), "Interpreting the English Civil War: The Influence of Conrad Russell's Three Kingdom Thesis," advised by Dr. Glenn Sanders.
2006. Mary Amonsén (Biology & Spanish), "Identifying Target Proteins for Cancer Research: A Bioinformatics Approach," advised by Dr. Bradley Jett.
2003. Angela McWilliams (History), "Under Travail: Women and Childbirth in Early New England," advised by Dr. Carol Humphrey.

Some Advice for Thesis Writers and Faculty Advisors

I. Especially for the student - a timeline for the thesis project:

1. Any time prior to submission of the “Proposal”:
 - Consider whether you want to do the thesis project; it will offer some fine rewards, but it will also make demands on your time during the final year of your undergraduate career.
 - Consider several possible topics related to your major or minor field and some of the opportunities for research that may be available to you.
 - Visit with one or more faculty members who might serve as the advisor(s) for the project. You want to determine if the faculty member is willing to serve as advisor (Is he/she interested? Well informed on the topic of your study? Able to commit the time required to oversee the project?). Also, you need to decide what sort of working plan you and the advisor can establish to complete the project within the necessary time frame.
 - Enroll in HON 3779 (Honors Contracted Study) in Spring of Junior year as preparation for the Honors Thesis project.
 - Visit with the Honors Program Director about procedures for submission and approval of the “Proposal for an Honors Program Thesis.”
2. At the time you fill out the “Proposal” - prior to registration for the fall semester of your senior year:
 - Draft a prospectus of up to 500 words; this should state your intended thesis and your anticipated process of working toward completion.
 - Outline a rigorous and realistic timeline (at least month by month) for work on and timely completion of the project.
 - Identify some core resources that you anticipate using in your research.
 - Using these pieces of information, prepare the “Proposal,” perhaps along with your advisor, get his/her signature, and deliver the documents to the Honors Program Director for approval.
 - Complete the Independent Study (XXX 4993) paperwork for the Registrar’s office, supplying a copy to the Honors Director.
 - Attach the outcome of your HON 3779 – Contracted Study – to your Honors thesis application.
 - Submit your thesis proposal to the Honors Office no later than April 30.
3. During the work of research and writing:
 - Meet **every week** with your faculty advisor. Even if there is little (or nothing) new to report, it is essential to maintain weekly face-to-face contact for guidance and accountability.
 - Work as close to your projected timeline as possible.
 - If problems arise, do not delay in consulting your advisor and the Honors Program Director.
 - Meet formally with the University Honors Committee once in the fall semester and once early in the spring semester to discuss progress and to plan for the completion and presentation of the project.
 - Identify an outside reader for the project. It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to identify an external reader and secure a commitment from that reader to read and evaluate the project.

4. As you approach completion of research and writing and prepare for presentation:
 - Be sure that you and your faculty advisor are in frequent contact and communication about the progress of the thesis.
 - Meet with the Honors Program Director early in the semester of the presentation to set a date for the presentation, to finalize a publication title for the project, to clarify questions about formatting of the final document, and to discuss other arrangements for the public presentation and final preparation of the thesis document.
 - Decide on the media that you want to include in your presentation. Prepare to spend 25-35 minutes summarizing your project (research question/s, process, conclusions) and to allow another 20-40 minutes for questions and feedback. How you choose to enhance your presentation with audio-visual media is up to you so long as it promotes the basic purpose of presentation and cross-examination.
5. After the presentation:
 - The project is not completed until a clean digital copy of the document is delivered to the Honors office, at least one week prior to the end of the semester. Frequently, this will mean editing a final draft of the document after the public presentation (perhaps with final adjustments identified then).
 - Prepare the final draft of the thesis project according to the guidelines laid out in the Thesis Compilation procedures.
 - Submit the official copy of the final thesis document to the Honors Program Director.
 - The Director will arrange for the printing and binding of the thesis.

II. Especially for the Faculty Advisor of the thesis - a timeline

1. Before beginning on the Honors Program thesis project, the student should meet with you to:
 - Obtain your general consent to direct the project
 - Discuss the feasibility of the intended project
 - Discuss a timeline for completion
 - Participate in a Contracted Study (HON 3779) under your supervision (Spring of Junior Year)
 - Obtain your written approval of the project's formal proposal and complete the Independent Study paperwork for the Registrar's office
2. Once the project has been approved and the student has begun to work on the project, the faculty advisor should:
 - Meet weekly with the student to discuss progress on the project; in the early stages, this may involve helping to focus the study or suggesting directions in the research or work plan; later it may involve discussing related texts and ideas, reading parts of the thesis drafts, and suggesting necessary changes in scope, direction, strategy, emphasis, or conclusions.

- Communicate with the Honors Program Director periodically to indicate the progress of the project and attend two progress meetings with the University Honors Committee in the fall and early spring.
 - Work with the student to choose an external reader for the project. It is the responsibility of the student and advisor to identify an external reader and secure a commitment from that reader to read and evaluate the project.
3. As the project nears completion, the faculty advisor should be prepared to:
- Indicate approval or disapproval of the student's completion of the project (if communication has been regular, this should be no surprise); approval does not indicate a particular grade which the faculty member may choose to assign for the XXX 4999 course.
 - Assist the student in final preparation for the presentation of the project and, unless special circumstances prevent, be present for the presentation.

The Senior Thesis Project for Non-Honors Students: (The Honors Committee Thesis Project)

The OBU Honors Committee thesis project is separate from the Honors Program thesis capstone and the curricular Honors Program; it offers qualified students the option of earning an honors designation in their major. The Senior Thesis also provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate independent, higher-level research skills that may be valuable when applying for graduate study or certain occupations.

Students who choose this option must demonstrate qualification and make formal application for the thesis project during the junior year; the project is to be completed and presented before the end of the senior year. The Committee thesis project is governed by guidelines set out on the following pages. Students wishing to pursue this thesis should carefully consider the qualifications, timelines, and requirements for completion before undertaking it. Further information about the Honors Committee thesis project may be obtained by visiting with the Honors Program Director.

OBU's Honors Committee (chaired by the Director of the Honors Program) oversees the writing of Senior Thesis Projects by students outside of the Honors Program. Successful completion of a Senior Thesis Project results in the student earning the graduation recognition, "With Honors In" his/her major field of study. The principal purpose of a Senior Thesis Project at Oklahoma Baptist University is to encourage superior students to pursue a three-semester research project in their major, working closely with a supervising professor. A major aim is to encourage long-term work between senior and junior scholars.

To qualify for a Senior Thesis Project, a candidate must present and maintain to graduation a composite grade average of at least 3.5 overall and in his or her major field. A student beginning a Senior Thesis Project must 1) consult with a professor in his or her major about a suitable research project, 2) fill out an application form (see below, page 28) and 3) submit the application form and a two or three page proposal and bibliography to the Honors Program Director by **April 1** of his or her Junior year.

The proposal should state the topic of the project, indicate ways that it will be researched and developed, propose major chapter headings, provide a well-developed bibliography, and include a schedule for completion of the project.

The project, to be completed during the final three semesters at OBU under the guidance of a faculty advisor and the Honors Committee, will culminate in the presentation of a bachelor's thesis.

The student is required to arrange weekly meetings with his/her faculty advisor, beginning during junior year and continuing until the project is completed.

Three hours of credit may be earned in the student's major department through this program by enrolling in a 4999 (Independent Study) course in his/her major.

The student and advisor must arrange for an outside reader, a specialist in the field who is not associated with OBU. The outside reader should read the finished project in order to judge its quality. An outside reader is expected to send a letter to the advisor and to the Honors Program Director indicating the results of his or her study of the thesis. Instructions for the outside reader are available from the Honors Director.

The student and advisor will meet with the Honors Committee for progress reports in both the fall and early spring of the student's senior year. Ideally, foundational research should begin during the second semester of the junior year and continue through the summer. The student is expected to enroll in XXX 4993 (Independent Study) in his/her major area of study in the Fall semester of senior year. Writing should begin as soon as possible, so that at the October progress report the student can present a robust sample of his or her work. The thesis-writing student is expected to have a complete rough draft of the project finished by the beginning of his/her final Spring semester, and will submit that rough draft to his/her faculty supervisor and the Honors Director.

Theses should be written according to the style used in the discipline appropriate to the student's field of study (e.g., APA for Psychology, MLA for English, Turabian for Theology/Ministry, CBE for Science, etc).

Once the project is completed and has been presented publicly, the student will deliver the final digital documents to the Honors Director no later than a week before the end of the semester of anticipated graduation. Instructions for final thesis drafts are available on the Honors website.

Schedule for Senior Thesis Projects

April 1, Junior Year: Application for Honors Thesis Candidacy due.

April, Junior Year: Explanation and defense of application to the Honors Committee.

Mid-October, Senior Year: Progress Report. This should include a written report of progress, including a specific account of research completed; a possibly revised outline of the project; a robust writing sample (e.g., introduction and opening chapters); and a week-by-week plan for completion of the project.

Late January, Senior Year: A complete rough draft of the thesis is due to the student's faculty supervisor and the Director of the Honors Program.

Mid-February, Senior Year: Progress Report. The student will meet with the Honors Committee to discuss their completed thesis draft. If the student has fallen behind in their thesis-writing, they will present a detailed plan to redeem the project in a timely fashion.

Mid-March: Send revised draft to Advisor, Honors Director, and outside reader.

Early-April: Complete revisions based on outside reader's input; polish for presentation.

Mid-April: Presentation and defense of senior thesis project.

Early May: Submit final polished senior thesis project to Director of the Honors Program.

Progress Reports

The student will provide the Honors Committee with an electronic version of his/her progress a week in advance of meetings with the committee, to provide members of the Honors Committee with sufficient time to carefully read all written materials prior to the progress report.

Presentation and Defense

The Honors Director will schedule a time for the student to present his or her project to the university community and defend it. The presentation should be 25-35 minutes and focus on such things as key points in the paper, a problem the project resolved, or the insights into the creative process. Following the presentation, the student will have an additional 20-40 minutes to field questions before the committee and others present.

Honors Grade Average Maintenance Requirement

In order to remain eligible for graduation “with college honors” a student in the OBU Honors Program must maintain a grade point average of 3.25 or higher. The Program Director, with help from the Registrar’s office, will monitor the grades of all students in the program.

A student whose grade point average in a single semester falls below 3.25 and whose cumulative OBU grade point average is below 3.25 shall be considered on “probation” in Honors and will be so informed by the Director. If at the end of the next long semester the student’s overall grade point average is raised to or above 3.25, normal status is resumed. If the student’s cumulative average is not raised above 3.25 by the end of the next long semester, probationary status ends and the right to graduate “with College Honors” in the OBU Honors Program is forfeited.

Honors students may register for colloquia or other honors classes, with the permission of the Director, while they are on probationary status.

Withdrawing from Honors

If a student is considering withdrawing from the Honors Program, he or she should initiate a meeting with the Honors director or assistant director to discuss the matter in person. If after the meeting the student would still like to withdraw from the program, he or she should submit a letter to the director by the end of the current semester, but ideally before the semester’s midpoint. In this case, the director will notify the university registrar of the withdrawal and the student can work with his or her advisor to determine the necessary adjustments that are required for his or her degree program.

The Honors Council

The Honors council exists to encourage social interaction among Honors students. Any Honors student may join the council, and officers are elected from among council members by a vote of students on the council.

Examples of events hosted by the Honors Council include the following:

- A Halloween party with a costume contest
- A chili cookoff
- Game night
- Bingo
- Movie night
- Honors social awards

A History of Honors at OBU

Honors education has a history of over fifty years at OBU. In 1970 the faculty established a University Honors Committee to oversee the completion of senior honors theses by students eligible for and interested in such a project.

In 1990, the university's Faculty Forum approved the establishment of the OBU Honors Program, a curriculum based honors model incorporating several designated honors courses and a series of independent study projects, including three different "capstone" experiences—study abroad, service internship, and the research thesis project. Beginning in 1992, freshman students were admitted to this program; members of this first honors class graduated in the spring of 1996.

In 2020 the Honors curriculum was redesigned to include a four-semester core sequence in Western Civilization and the Great Books. This new curriculum engages students in a discussion of great books and big ideas from ancient Israel and Greece to the modern world. In this course, students study the Old and New Testaments as well as authors such as Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare. They do so in paired classes consisting each semester of one lecture section and one seminar section.

Application and Admission Procedures

The OBU Honors Program invites prospective students who meet its minimum criteria to apply for admission by completing the online application form. These criteria are:

- a. a high school GPA of at least 3.5, demonstrated by transcript;
- b. the Honors Program does not have minimum required test scores, but the average composite ACT for incoming Honors freshmen is a 27, and the average SAT is a 1230. A comparable CLT score would be an 85.

In addition to meeting the minimum entrance criteria, Honors applicants must submit an essay intended to provide an introduction to the candidate's writing ability (please feel free to use a high school essay assignment). The applicant must also submit a letter of recommendation from someone familiar with the student's academic work.

Honors applications will be adjudicated as they are received. All fully qualified students who have applied by March 31 will be offered a place in the Honors Program at the beginning of the next fall semester. Applications received after March 31 will be admitted if space permits.

**Oklahoma Baptist University
Application for Senior Thesis Candidacy**

Name	
ID#	
OBU Box #	
Phone#	
Email address	
Major	
Minor	
Overall GPA	
GPA in major	
Expected date of graduation	
Area of Thesis Study	

Title of Project: _____

On the back of this form, please list courses taken in the major or minor areas that are related to the thesis project.

Attach to this form a proposal for your Senior Thesis Project, including (1) the problem or questions to be investigated and some explanation of the original aspect of the project, (2) the methods to be used (subjects, resources, materials, apparatus, procedures), (3) the nature of the finished work, (4) a preliminary bibliography, and (5) timeline for project completion

Name & Signature of Project Advisor _____

Name & Signature of Department Chair _____

Name & Signature of Honors Director _____

This form and all supporting materials are to be submitted to the Honors Director by April 1.

Honors Director: Dr. Benjamin Myers
Mabee Learning Center 320, (405) 585-4243
honors@okbu.edu

