

# The OBU Honors Program Handbook

2018~2019 edition



**OBU**  
HONORS PROGRAM

*Expand the Mind. Enrich the Soul. Explore the World.*

The OBU Honors Program  
is affiliated with the National Collegiate Honors  
Council and the Great Plains Honors Council.



## Preface

This is the Handbook of the OBU Honors Program. It attempts to present functional information for students enrolled in the program, for faculty assisting or advising students in the program, and for students who are considering application to and participation in OBU Honors.

### A History

Honors education has a history of almost 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.

### Information

Questions regarding the operation of the program or the contents of this handbook should be addressed to the Honors Program Director:

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## The Program's Philosophy

### Purpose Statement (The WHY of Honors)

Expand the Mind. Enrich the Soul. Explore the World.

### Mission Statement (The WHAT of Honors)

OBU Honors elevates scholarly experience by:

- ▶ Cultivating and building upon a Christian intellectual heritage
- ▶ Broadening transdisciplinary encounters, and
- ▶ Inspiring innovative research, service, and global engagement.

### Vision Outline (The HOW of Honors)

The Honors Program fulfills its purpose and pursues its mission through:

- Fostering a vibrant multidisciplinary Honors community.
- Faithfully engaging diverse intellectual perspectives
- Maturing servant leadership
- Facilitating study abroad experiences
- Mentoring scholars in independent research

*Expand the Mind. Enrich the Soul. Explore the World.*

Our purpose statement articulates the WHY of OBU Honors. Why did Oklahoma Baptist University start an Honors Program? Why ought incoming OBU freshmen participate in Honors? The purpose of Honors is tri-fold. Expand the mind: stretch, develop, and cultivate the intellectual abilities and fields of knowledge of bright and inquisitive students. Enrich the soul: apply our rational faculties to the Greatest Commandment, “to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with *all of your mind*, and with all of your strength;” and to participate in activities which nurture students’ understanding of God as the good, the true, and the beautiful. Explore the world: investigate, understand, and critically analyze data, claims, and knowledge from diverse academic disciplines, geographical cultures, and religious traditions; engage with people and ideas, both locally and globally, that represent the full variety of God’s creation.

The mission of Oklahoma Baptist University as an evangelical liberal arts university is to transform lives by equipping students to:

- Pursue academic excellence
- Integrate faith with all areas of knowledge
- Engage a diverse world, and
- Live worthy of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

The Honors Program’s mission aims to fulfill and further OBU’s mission.

*OBU Honors elevates scholarly experience by:*

- *Cultivating and building upon a Christian intellectual heritage*
- *Broadening transdisciplinary encounters, and*
- *Inspiring innovative research, service, and global engagement.*

Our desire in Honors is to cultivate thoughtful, intelligent, devout disciples who see the world and their place within it as God would have them to see it. As such, we acknowledge the rich intellectual tradition bequeathed us by the Christian Church over

the centuries, and seek to apply that heritage to the various opportunities and challenges presented by a complex and pluralistic contemporary world.

The Honors Program is neither an accelerated path to graduation nor an evasion of normal degree requirements. It aims, instead, to provide opportunities for social and academic interaction, and careful advisory attention to the unique skills, needs, and aims of students in the program.

*The Honors Program fulfills its purpose and pursues its mission through:*

- *Fostering a vibrant multidisciplinary Honors community*
- *Faithfully engaging diverse intellectual perspectives*
- *Maturing servant leadership*
- *Facilitating study abroad experiences, and*
- *Mentoring scholars in independent research.*

We strive to cultivate an intimate community of Honors students and faculty. It is our conviction that Christian worship and fellowship is essential to building a successful Honors Program which glorifies the Lord in all aspects. Accordingly, we hold annual Honors retreats for all Honors students, and host various movie and fellowship nights to bind our Honors community together.

Honors courses are not intended to be more difficult in content or performance than non-honors courses. They do tend to be smaller in size, and faculty are selected for their particular interest in working with honors students. Students are assumed to be interested in the content and the activities of learning—reading, writing, discussion, and presentation.

The Honors Program seeks to encourage students to broaden their cultural perspectives; one reflection of this is the optional travel/study abroad capstone.

The Honors Program is not intended to be merely a “service” organization, but it does recognize a scriptural injunction to service and assumes that service learning is a valuable part of the undergraduate experience; one reflection of this is the optional service internship capstone.

The Honors Program values and encourages the traditional scholarly activities of extensive reading, research, and analytical writing; this is reflected in the various course assignments, but especially in the optional thesis capstone.

Recognizing that students in the Honors Program have a particular inclination toward study beyond the undergraduate degree level, the program attempts to offer activities and advisement attention to help students identify and pursue further study opportunities.

What follows in this Honors Handbook is an expansion upon the Purpose, Mission, and Vision of OBU’s Honors Program. Please consult it as a helpful guide.

## 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 (<https://www.okbu.edu/academics/honors/honors-application.html>). These criteria are:

- a. a high school GPA of at least 3.5, demonstrated by transcript;
- b. a score of 27 (composite) on the ACT, or a score of 1200 (critical reading + math) on the SAT, demonstrated by test results (or the high school transcript, if scores are clearly displayed).

In addition to meeting the minimum entrance criteria, Honors applicants must submit three documents:

- c. a personal resume of the student's involvement and recognition in a range of activities (e.g., school, church, work, hobbies) in recent years;
- d. an essay intended to provide both an introduction to the candidate and his/her writing ability (please feel free to use a high school essay assignment)
- e. a letter of recommendation from an instructor of a high school core curriculum course (or a high school administrator/counselor)

Many students who are also applying for university scholarships may already have provided these pieces of evidence. Duplicate submission of materials presented to support scholarship applications is not necessary for Honors applications.

The standard deadline for application is March 15. Honors applications will be adjudicated as they are received. All fully qualified students who have applied by March 15 will be offered a place in the Honors Program's Introduction to Honors (HON 1013 – Critical Skills for the Liberal Arts) course at the beginning of the next fall semester. Applications received after March 15 will be admitted if space permits.

Not all students who begin in the Honors Program complete all the requirements for Honors graduation. Students withdraw from Honors for various reasons, such as changing academic priorities, lack of time or funds to complete capstone requirements, assumption of additional extracurricular responsibilities and relationships, and outside employment. Some students fail to maintain the minimum grade point average for continuation in the program (see page 24).

The choice to begin in the Honors Program, then, is not an inflexible commitment to continue or finish. For the student who meets the criteria for admission and who is wondering if Honors is “for me,” it is advantageous to begin in the program. If the Honors Program does not suit your character or needs, or if you feel overwhelmed by the requirements, you can withdraw at any time. The aim of the Honors Program is to provide enriching and enjoyable learning experiences for all students who qualify, whether or not they eventually attain the goal of Honors graduation.

## The OBU Honors Community

Participating in OBU's Honors Program involves integrating into a community of passionate and unique Christian scholars. Part of the vision of OBU Honors is *fostering a vibrant multidisciplinary Honors community*. We feel that the greatest strength of our Honors Program is the students taking Honors. As such, we endeavor to provide the context in which a cohort of Christ-honoring, curious young men and women can grow in their knowledge, wisdom, and love for the Lord in community together.

Some elements of our Honors community-building are designed specifically for incoming freshmen:

- A special Pre-Enrollment dinner for incoming Honors freshmen and their families, around the end of April (senior year of high school)
- Welcome Week orientation activities as a freshmen Honors cohort (the week before freshmen classes start)
- Freshmen Honors fall retreat & orientation (at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> full week of classes)
- Movie night (late October)
- Christmas celebrations (including caroling)

Other aspects of our community-building apply to all of our Honors students:

- Spring Honors retreat (typically early February)
- Honors Colloquia classes and outings
- Honors Graduation & Awards Banquet (May Commencement)
- Honors corporate study abroad (summer)



## The Curriculum in Honors

The work expected in the Honors Program is not intended to be heavier than in equivalent courses, and the standards by which grades are assigned are not intended to be more rigid than in equivalent courses (where they exist). Some Honors courses carry only zero (0) credit hours (e.g. HON 4770); others may be taken for variable credit (e.g. HON colloquia, HON 3779); some carry a fixed number of credits (e.g. HON 1013, HON 3073, HON 4993).

There are four “pillars,” or major components of the Honors Program: (1) Completion of four core Honors classes, Honors versions of OBU Common Core class requirements; (2) Completion of at least four Honors colloquia; (3) Completion of *either* a Contracted Study *or* a state-wide Honors seminar through OSLEP; and (4) Completion of *two* of the *three* Honors Capstones: Service Practicum, Study Abroad, and Honors Thesis Project. The pages that follow outline the curricular components of OBU’s Honors Program in detail.

## Honors Core Classes

### **HON 1013 Introduction to Honors: Critical Skills in the Liberal Arts**

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

Students enrolled in HON 1013 fulfill OBU’s ENGL 1153 Common Core requirement. All students beginning in Honors, even those who have received AP or CLEP credit for ENGL 1153, must enroll in HON 1013 in the Fall semester of their freshman year.

HON 1013 is designed to orient students to the challenges of the Honors Program, to deepen their appreciation of liberal arts learning within the context of Christian higher education, and to enhance their skills in attentive study, critical research, and effective writing.

Furthermore, the course serves to 1) provide a beginning step toward active participation in and successful completion of the OBU Honors Program; 2) reinforce the “critical skills” of reading, writing, research, and discussion, especially as they relate to the experience of an undergraduate education in a liberal arts university; and 3) encourage an integration of Christian faith and higher education.

Students are expected to complete assigned readings and various written and oral projects. Local opportunities for volunteer service are identified, and students are expected to complete a minimum number of service hours.

### **HON 1163 Honors Composition and Classical Literature**

*Students enrolling in HON 1163 (offered only in the spring semester) should have completed HON 1013.*

The HON 1163 course is equivalent to ENGL 1163 in its content, workload, and grade standards. Realistically, the course may seem to progress more rapidly than a typical ENGL 1163 class, but this is usually due to a difference in method (e.g. more small discussion) or efficiency (e.g., less need to address mechanics of writing or literal readings of texts).

The content is primarily a study of early Western civilizations, specifically the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Hebrew, and Greek, and the literary texts related to them. Primary texts (read in translation) usually include *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Homer’s *Iliad* and/or *Odyssey*,

dramas by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, and historical writings by Herodotus and Thucydides. Secondary readings may include critical essays and assessments of these works or events and characters from the historical era.

### **HON 2063 Honors Arts and Western Culture**

*Students must complete HON 1163 and achieve sophomore standing before enrolling in HON 2063*

HON 2063 corresponds to FNAR 2063, and examines the development of the visual, musical, and theatrical arts through 1900 (with references to significant modern ideas), focusing primarily on western European idioms. It closely relates works and ideas to philosophical, historical events and sociological trends. This course further enhances the liberal arts experience for students in the Honors Program by serving as a platform for discussion in arts and aesthetics.

As with HON 1163 this course may seem to progress more rapidly than a typical FNAR 2063 course, but the more significant difference is with regard to method (e.g., more student responsibility for discussion).

The course is offered each fall, and Honors students should plan to enroll in it the fall of their sophomore year unless their particular degree plan dictates taking Fine Arts later in the undergraduate experience.

### **HON 3073 Honors Biblical Ethics**

*Students must complete HON 1163 before enrolling in HON 3073*

One of OBU's requirements for graduation is six (6) hours of course work in religion (two of these three courses: REL 1013, REL 1023, REL 3073). For students in the Honors Program, the requirement is still six hours, but HON 3073 (which replaces REL 3073) must be one of the courses chosen; the other may be either REL 1013 or REL 1023. Students in some majors will take all three courses. HON 3073 is offered only in the spring semester, but may be taken during the sophomore, junior or senior year.

The course is intended to provide a forum for discussion about personal ethical responses to a range of contemporary social and cultural issues, with special emphasis on the biblical basis for Christian ethical behavior. Readings are intended to provide a range of perspectives for classroom lectures and discussions. The practical application of faith as a topic for carefully reasoned argument and as expression of personal responsibility is a central component of the Honors Program curriculum design, and this course is an important part of that design.

## Honors Colloquia: HON 2119-2719

*Students must complete HON 1013 before enrolling in any of the colloquia.*

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, and usually no more than one will be approved. 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/discussion 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). Some past Colloquia include:

HON 2119: 20<sup>th</sup>-Century British Mystery Authors (on location); 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

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

HON 2519: Alexander Hamilton; Humility; 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

## **The Oklahoma Scholar-Leadership Enrichment Program (OSLEP)**

The Oklahoma Scholar-Leadership Enrichment Program (OSLEP) is a unique intercollegiate interdisciplinary program designed to develop the scholarship and leadership abilities of Oklahoma's outstanding college students. Students in the Honors Program take OSLEP seminars to achieve OBU's mission to "Engage a Diverse World" and "Pursue Academic Excellence." Honors students may participate in OSLEP courses any time after Freshman year to complete the OSLEP/Contracted Study component of the Honors Program.

Small groups of students selected from Oklahoma's four-year colleges and universities study with distinguished visiting scholars in an intensive, seminar-style course for five days. Between four to eight courses are offered each year on a variety of topics. Past courses have ranged in focus from American foreign policy, to the history of marriage and family, to advancements in stem-cell research. OSLEP classes are held on various university campuses in Oklahoma (most frequently OU's Norman campus).

Specific assignments vary for each OSLEP course, yet a successful completion of the program typically includes three major requirements. A pre-course reading list (along with writing assignments) is sent to students upon acceptance into the program. These assignments must be completed prior to the start of the course. Attendance and participation in all course sessions is also required. After the conclusion of the program, students must also complete a final written assignment, typically 10 to 15 pages in length, synthesizing the course material.

Applications for OSLEP programs are completed online at <http://oslep.org/home>. One faculty recommendation letter and a brief written essay are required components of the application. Students chosen to participate in an OSLEP program will receive free meals and lodging for the duration of their course. Required textbooks will also be provided free of charge. Students enroll for their 3 hours of OSLEP course credit in the appropriate discipline through OBU, at applicable OBU tuition rates. Please see the Honors Program Director for any additional questions or information on current OSLEP course offerings.

## HON 3779 Contracted Study

*The Contracted Study application form must be completed online at <https://www.okbu.edu/academics/honors/forms.html>*

The Mission of OBU Honors is to elevate scholarly experience, in part by “Broadening transdisciplinary encounters and inspiring innovative research.” We pursue that mission, in part, through “Mentoring scholars in independent research.” 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 some sort of limited-scope independent study project according to personal interests. 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 to satisfy the Honors Program requirement 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 must be completed online at <https://www.okbu.edu/academics/honors/forms.html>*

*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**

Students who complete the Honors Program requirements for graduation are required to complete two of three Honors Capstone experiences. The Service Practicum is one of those options, and is intended to pursue the Honors Program mission of “Inspiring innovative service and global engagement” through “Maturing servant leadership.” 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 (80) 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 your specific syllabus on Canvas 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 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.

**HON 4770 Service Practicum/Internship**  
*Anecdotal Examples of Capstone Experiences*

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 served tea, cooked suppers, served meals, sorted donations, and learned 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 (temporary and otherwise) 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 must be completed online at <https://www.okbu.edu/academics/honors/forms.html>*

*Honors students may enroll in HON 4889 during any semester after the freshman year. The Capstone course usually carries zero credit hours, but can be taken for up to three hours.*

### **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**

Study outside the United States is another of the Honors capstone options. OBU Honors elevates scholarly experience in part by “Inspiring global engagement” through “Facilitating study abroad experiences.” The Study Abroad experience also pursues OBU’s mission to “Engage a Diverse World” while “Integrating Faith with all areas of Knowledge.” 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 on-line sites, and they should use these to project both schedule and expenses.

Prior to studying abroad, students will complete a book review to help them prepare for their capstone experience. Consult your specific syllabus on Canvas for more information.

To satisfy the Study Abroad capstone, an acceptable experience must include a minimum of four weeks (28 days) 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 (every 2<sup>nd</sup> summer or so) corporate study abroad opportunities through “OBU Abroad,” wherein students enroll in OBU courses which will be completed on the ground in a foreign setting (e.g., London 2019).

Completion of the HON 4889 Study Abroad capstone is accomplished when the time abroad is completed and the paperwork is turned in to the Honors office. The student is expected to keep a journal record of observations and experiences (at least during the tenure of the travel) and also submit a summary essay of approximately 1000-1500 words assessing the impact of the overall experience.



**HON 4889 Study Abroad**  
*Anecdotal Examples of Recent Capstone Experiences*

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 Kitake, Kenya, serving at Mercy Rescue Center and assisting local church pastors in their church and educational programs.

In the summer of 2016, OBU Honors sent its first Study Abroad team to Rome in partnership with Veritas Christian Study Abroad. Six students took 6 credits of classes at the American University of Rome while living in local apartments, immersed in local Roman culture and life.

In 2018, two OBU faculty couples led a group of 15 students for a 4-week Study Abroad in London, England. Students took ENGL 4329 (British Authors on Location) and/or HON 3073 (Honors Biblical Ethics) as well as an Honors Colloquium (20<sup>th</sup>-Century British Mystery). Students visited 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. Smaller groups of students used free weekends to visit Paris, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

## XXX / HON 4993 Honors Thesis

*Students in the Honors Program enroll in the thesis-writing capstone during their second-last 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; in most cases, it is advisable to choose the 4999 course in the major as the vehicle for this project, but when that course number has already been used for another independent study project, then the HON 4993 course may be used. 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 online at**

**<https://www.okbu.edu/academics/honors/forms.html>**

**The Honors Thesis application must be filled out on-line.**

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. OBU Honors elevates scholarly experience by “Cultivating and building upon a Christian intellectual heritage,” “Broadening transdisciplinary encounters,” and “Inspiring innovative research, service, and global engagement” through “Faithfully engaging diverse intellectual perspectives” and “Mentoring scholars in independent research.” When done right, the Honors Thesis brings together all of these aspects of the Mission and Vision of the OBU Honors Program, and fulfills OBU’s mission of “Pursuing academic excellence” and “Integrating faith with all areas of knowledge.”

Successful completion of an honors thesis usually sets the student apart from most other applicants to graduate study, 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.

Students choosing the thesis as one of the capstones for Honors Program graduation should begin early. 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.

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 that summer instead). Contracted Study will serve as the foundation of the Thesis Proposal.

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 thesis-writing course (HON 4993 or XXX 4999) in his/her second-last semester, usually the Fall semester of his/her senior year. Registration for the 4999 course includes completing the Honors Thesis Proposal **and** the Independent Study Proposal (both forms are available on the Honors website). In unusual circumstances, the student may petition to enroll in the thesis-writing course in his/her final semester, or 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. 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.

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 that must be sent to the external reader (<https://www.okbu.edu/academics/honors/forms.html>) 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 copy of the final document. The additional forms needed for the thesis final draft are available on the Honors website ([www.okbu.edu/honors/forms.html](http://www.okbu.edu/honors/forms.html)).

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 on pages 21-23.

## **General Timeline for Senior Honors Thesis Project**

Spring semester of Junior year	Complete HON 3779 (Contracted Study)
By April 30 of JR 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. 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.

While senior research projects completed within the normal curriculum for particular majors may serve as useful pilot studies or provide useful research catalysts for a Senior Honors Thesis, such work should not be recycled as a central part of the senior thesis. The thesis must be a substantially new study, representing new research, new writing, and new results/conclusions. 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.

**XXX / HON 4993 Honors Thesis**  
*Anecdotal Examples of Capstone Experiences*

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.
2017. Anna Burton [nee Smoot] (English), “Sexuality, Ethnicity, and Class Distinctions in the Works of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather,” advised by Dr. Sidney Watson.
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.
2014. Jacob Collard (Biology), “The Promontory: A Creative Writing Thesis,” advised by Dr. Brent Newsom.
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:
- Remind yourself that the project is not completed until a clean final 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 a 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 (see page 25) and 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.

## **Honors Grade Average Maintenance Requirement**

In order to remain eligible for graduation “with 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.

## **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.

## **Guidelines for Senior Thesis Project**

Along with the Honors Thesis, which is pursued by OBU Honors Students as one of the required capstones within the Honors Program, 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 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 Outside Reader**

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. 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 completed by the beginning of his/her final Spring semester, and will submit that rough draft to his/her faculty supervisor and the Honors Director.

### **Style and Presentation**

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 document to the Honors office 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.

**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. Tawa Anderson  
Montgomery #208, ext. 4437  
OBU Box 61156  
[tawa.anderson@okbu.edu](mailto:tawa.anderson@okbu.edu)



*Expand the Mind. Enrich the Soul. Explore the World.*

