



Dr. Derek A. Petrey, *Director*  
937.512.2092 or 937.512.4331  
Email: derek.petrey@sinclair.edu

# SINCLAIR HONORS PROGRAM STUDENT HANDBOOK

revised Winter 2008

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## SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE HONORS PROGRAM

### HISTORY

The Honors Program at Sinclair was established in the mid-1980s at the initiative of Dean Clifford Barr at a time when many community colleges were just beginning to develop Honors curricula. Dr. Mary Navarro was appointed to convene a committee to develop an academic Honors Program within the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The committee drew up plans to offer a variety of course offerings, in both core and special topics. The Board of Trustees approved the program and an operating budget. The Honors Committee was formally established to assist the Director, oversee the program, develop criteria for Honors course proposals, and recruit students and faculty for the program.

We offered our first two courses (English 112 and Math 116) as pilots during Winter Quarter 1987. The program soon expanded to include courses in psychology, history, biology, humanities, and physics. During the 1990s we branched out into other divisions and departments, including fine arts, business, and communications. Interdisciplinary courses were first developed under a Sinclair Foundation grant for faculty planning. Interdisciplinary courses are an essential feature of any Honors program and are a key part of articulation agreements with four-year institutions.

The Sinclair Honors Program is an institutional member of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and the Mid-East Honors Association (MEHA). We have an articulation agreement with University of Dayton, Wright State University, the University of Cincinnati, and Wittenberg University, and students who complete our program are eligible for special scholarships at these institutions.

### VISION STATEMENT

The Sinclair Honors Program is designed to meet the needs of students who seek intellectual challenge and are willing to assume more responsibility for their learning experience. The aim of the program is to identify, stimulate, and recognize Sinclair's driven students with the belief that Honors students, as leaders of tomorrow, should make a commitment to community service. Honors courses cultivate critical thinking skills, encourage individual inquiry, promote community involvement, and demand high quality performance and responsibility.

### STRUCTURE

The Honors Program is housed in Room 10-339, telephone 512-4331. The Director of the Honors Program is assisted by a program aide and by an Honors Council. The Director reports to the Provost of the college. The heart of the program is, however, the dedicated faculty teaching the courses and working with students.

The Director's responsibilities include:

- maintaining and supervising the Honors Program Office, Room 10-339
- recruiting Honors faculty
- recruiting students for courses and for the Honors Scholars Program
- coordinating Honors courses
- maintaining student records
- handling applications for Honors Scholars and Honors Scholarships
- developing in-service programs for Honors Faculty
- supervising the program aide in partnership with Phi Theta Kappa advisor

The Honors Council members are expected to:

- oversee the development of new Honors courses
- help recruit faculty to teach Honors courses
- help identify students as potential Honors Scholars
- interview students applying for admission to the program
- support and assist the Honors Director and Phi Theta Kappa advisor
- review applications for Honors Scholarships
- help identify new Service Learning opportunities
- serve on subcommittees as needed

The members of the Honors Council are:

- Director of the Honors Program
- Advisor to Phi Theta Kappa
- a representative of the Admissions Office
- an academic counselor
- faculty members who teach, or may teach, Honors courses
- a student member of Phi Theta Kappa
- an Honors Scholar student
- other faculty and staff as invited by the Honors Program Director

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## **THE HONORS CURRICULUM**

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Sinclair's Honors curriculum is flexible and innovative, allowing instructors latitude in creating courses that challenge students. Syllabi and/or contracts for Honors courses must be approved by the Honors Director in consultation with the Honors Council when appropriate.

### **THE HONORS FACULTY MEMBER**

Any faculty member may submit a proposal for an Honors course or may complete an Honors Contract with a student. An Honors faculty member need not be a member of the Honors Council, but he or she must be committed to high-quality, academically rigorous teaching and learning. It is highly recommended that faculty new to the Honors Program meet with the Honors Program Director prior to offering an Honors course or contract.

## HONORS COURSES

There are three types of Honors courses:

### 1. Core (or General Education) Course

Most Honors courses fall into this category. These are courses required in most degree programs and transfer modules, usually 100-level, and offered in a large number of "regular" sections. Ideally, one course each quarter among these sections will be designated "available for Honors." Stand alone courses (one where all students enrolled are taking the course for Honors) are the only courses designated with an H section number. These courses require faculty recommendations in order to register.

### 2. Interdisciplinary Courses

These courses have been approved by the Honors Council as covering more than one discipline. They may or may not be cross-listed with a "double" departmental designation, and may or may not be team-taught. For example, an interdisciplinary special-topics course team-taught by faculty from sociology and psychology might be cross-listed as PSY 297 and SOC 297.

### 3. Special Topics Courses

These are special courses, often offered on a one-time-only basis, with a "297" number. They deal with issues and ideas of current interest, and are usually a special project by one or two faculty members. Each year the Honors Program in conjunction with Phi Theta Kappa will offer a "ΦΘΚ Honors Topic" course based on that year's national ΦΘΚ study topic.

## CRITERIA FOR ALL HONORS COURSES

Regardless of the type of Honors course, it must meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Honors coursework should be based on research, writing, and presentation. Some form of presentation is required in every Honors course and contract. Honors students are also expected to complete some type of project that demonstrates a command of the vocabulary and concepts of the subject, critical analysis and synthesis skills, problem solving, and mastery of the English language.
2. Students will be expected to interact, participate fully, and be a role model to other students in the class.
3. A class presentation will be given by the student. Presentations must also be completed in online courses. The type of presentation in online courses is at the discretion of the faculty member but must be stated in the Honors Contract. This may take any number of forms. If special equipment is required, the instructor will make the arrangements.
4. Interdisciplinary courses will involve integration of two or more disciplines (these courses are cross listed in two disciplines or from the Humanities).
5. Any course available for Honors must specifically state the Honors requirements in the syllabus and/or the student must complete an Honors Contract with the faculty member. An explanation of how the Honors project is going to be assessed must be included in either the syllabus or the

contract. If there is no syllabus on file with the Honors Program office, an Honors Contract must be submitted by the seventh day of the quarter. See the Honors Contract section.

6. A student must complete the course with an A or B to receive Honors credit.

## HONORS STUDENTS

Students are chosen for Honors Courses through faculty or staff recommendations or by qualifying as Honors Scholars. Since Sinclair does not base entrance on ACT or SAT scores, and because the student body is largely non-traditional, selection works best through the student's own record and motivation. Many students are self-referred. Faculty recommendation has proved to be the most reliable way to select and recruit Honors students.

Honors students should demonstrate:

- ability in the given academic area, as demonstrated by grades already earned
- intellectual curiosity—the desire to learn more than the minimum required
- open-mindedness and a toleration for diverse points of view
- active participation in class
- willingness and ability to work independently
- initiative and responsibility
- dependability: regular attendance, punctuality, meeting deadlines
- an understanding of the Honor Code at Sinclair Community College

## HONORS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

This program is designed to give special recognition and support to students who wish to do more than take a few Honors courses, and who maintain a high grade-point average during their time at Sinclair. The Honors Scholars Program hopes to encourage and educate tomorrow's community leaders.

Requirements for application to the program:

- 3.25 GPA or other evidence of academic potential as listed on the application
- completed application form
- two letters of reference from college or high-school instructors
- interview by the Honors Council

Requirements for completing the program

- maintain a 3.25 GPA
- complete five Honors courses with a grade of A or B (courses must be from three or more different disciplines, and one course must be interdisciplinary)
- complete a community service, service-learning or leadership project
- complete three Honors experiences (effective Winter 2008)
- complete Honors Portfolio (effective Winter 2008)
- complete graduation requirements (to receive Honors Scholars medallion)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Honors Scholars students are required to take a minimum of five Honors courses throughout their time at Sinclair Community College. Three of the five must be in different disciplines, and one course must be interdisciplinary. As part of the final portfolio process evidence of completion of course

requirements should be included. Evidence includes copies of Honors course syllabi and Honors Contract (if applicable), copy of final Honors project and outline of class presentation for each Honors course completed. Faculty assessment of each Honors project may be included.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE, SERVICE LEARNING, LEADERSHIP REQUIREMENT

As a member of the Honors Scholars program, a student must complete one of the following:

1. taking an Honors course that includes a Service Learning requirement or;
2. completing 20 hours of volunteer work at an organization of your choice;
3. assuming a leadership position of any student organization at Sinclair Community College for a minimum of three quarters (other forms of leadership positions may be submitted to the Honors Program Director for consideration).

In any case, the student must provide documentation that the project has been completed. Forms are available in the Honors Program office, Room 10-339, or on our website – [www.sinclair.edu/departments/honors/index.cfm](http://www.sinclair.edu/departments/honors/index.cfm) - and should be submitted as part of the final Honors Portfolio.

Community Service is defined as a *not-for-pay* activity that benefits the public good. The Honors Council has the sole right to determine whether a given activity fits this definition. This activity may be an internship such as that required by Ohio Fellows, but still must be not-for-pay and for the public good. It is highly recommended that Honors Scholars seek pre-approval before completing this requirement.

In order to provide the widest possible range of Honors experiences, the Council urges students to be creative, and will in good faith strive to accept a great variety of activities as fulfilling this requirement. However, the Council reserves the right to reject any proposal which in its opinion (by majority vote) does not fall within these guidelines.

This requirement should ideally be completed while the student is an Honors Scholar. The Council will consider activities performed before acceptance into the program, but in any case, the activity must take place while the student is enrolled at Sinclair. Projects completed after departure from Sinclair do not fulfill this requirement.

## HONORS EXPERIENCES

Honors Scholars are expected to participate and support Sinclair Community College events. It is important to be involved and learn more about the community in which you live. The Honors Program will offer quarterly Honors Experiences such as visiting museums, participating in book discussions, attending conferences, presenting in symposiums and attending speakers' series. Honors Scholars should strive to participate in at least three such experiences before graduating. In consideration of scheduling challenges, other non-sponsored Honors Program activities on campus may be submitted to the Honors Program Director for consideration of fulfilling this requirement. A one-page typed brief explaining each Honors Experience should be included in your Honors Scholars Portfolio as evidence of your participation. Other evidence can include newspaper write-ups, flyers, and photos of the experience.

## HONORS PORTFOLIO

The final step in completing all the requirements of the Honors Scholars program is the submission of the Honors Scholars Portfolio. It is highly recommended that students work on this portfolio throughout their academic endeavors at Sinclair Community College. This portfolio should include the following documentation:

1. Completed Honors Scholars Checklist
2. Evidence of completion of Honors Course Requirements
3. Evidence of completion of Service/Leadership Requirement
4. Evidence of completion of Honors Experiences
5. Original Honors Scholars application and two faculty letters of recommendation
6. List of any awards or scholarships received while an Honors Scholar
7. List of professional presentations and/or publications
8. Copy of official transcript

This portfolio should be a professional representation of your Honors Scholars work while at Sinclair Community College. It is recommended that you attend a portfolio workshop sponsored by the Honors Program and also meet with the Honors Program Director for guidance on the completion of the Portfolio. Examples and further directions can be found on the Honors website. Honors Portfolios will be returned to Honors Scholars after review by Honors Program Director.

## COMPLETION OF HONORS SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Honors Program Director will review portfolios and determine if student has met all requirements of Honors Scholars Program. Upon approval of completion of the program, the student will receive an Honors Scholars Program certificate. As the notation “Honors Scholar” cannot be added to diplomas, the Honors program has its own certificates of completion available when you have satisfied all the requirements of the Honors Scholars program. Normally these certificates are awarded just before you leave Sinclair (whether through graduation or transfer) but can be obtained before that, if appropriate.

When a student applies for graduation from Sinclair Community College and has completed all the requirements for the Honors Scholars Program, the Honors Scholars graduation medallion will be presented to the student. Medallions will be awarded throughout the year for students completing all the requirements. Should a student wish to wear the medallion at commencement, he or she must submit the Honors Portfolio and graduation evidence at least four weeks prior to commencement date. This date will be posted annually on the Honors Program website. No requests will be granted after the deadline.

## HONORS SCHOLARS GRADUATION MEDALLION

Our medallion represents and affirms those virtues and endeavors which form the foundations of Scholastic Honor. The four icons located in the center of the medallion stand, respectively, for the modern Quadrivium of liberal education. The Greek letter Pi represents not only geometric mathematics, but also the processes of rational logic and reasoning used in arithmetic and science. The Palette and brush stand for art as well as creative idea and invention. The tome of history signifies that the study of past causes and their respective effects can better prepare scholars to



recognize the outcomes of their own actions; its pages are open as a reminder that learning is a life long endeavor. The Quill represents the composition of poetry, prose, fiction, drama, and dissertation; for if the knowledge possessed by a scholar is not communicated and transferred on in an effort to teach others, that knowledge is wasted. In the winter of 1987, the first courses taught for Honors Credit at Sinclair Community College were in the fields of English Composition and Mathematics; the quill and Greek Pi are found in the upper quadrants of the medallion as homage to this humble beginning. Olive branches encircle the Quadrivium teaching scholars that Honor exists in the perpetual application of knowledge through benevolent and selfish action. The Latin banner reads *Ad Scientia et Conscientia* (for knowledge and character) further stressing that study is the foundation of Scholastic Honor while ethical practice is the capstone of an Honorable Life. The Honors Scholars Medallion was envisioned by the students of the Sinclair Community College Honors Scholars Council and was created by former Sinclair Community College student Scott Hadley.

## CALENDAR

There are a few dates each quarter that Honors Scholars should be aware of. Check the website or the door of Room10-339 at the beginning of each quarter for the exact dates and deadlines, but here are the approximate dates:

### 1. HONORS SCHOLARS SELECTION PROCESS

- a. Application forms are available at the Honors office, Room10-339, on the website or via mail—students may request them by telephone or email. You must submit the form itself, two letters of recommendation from faculty or other persons who know your academic record and potential, a personal essay, and an unofficial transcript (printed from WebAdvisor). Complete instructions are on the form. The quarterly deadline is posted on the Honors Program website by the fourth week of the quarter. Incomplete applications will be kept on file, but the applicant will not be invited for an interview if all materials are not in by the deadline. After the Director reviews the applications, making sure that all conditions are met, the applicants are invited for an interview. This interview (usually less than 30 minutes) will be conducted by the Director along with at least one other member of the Honors Council. Within a few days, the applicant is formally notified of acceptance or rejection by mail. If accepted, the applicant is considered an Honors Scholar immediately and can apply for a scholarship for the upcoming quarter. (see “Scholarships”)

### 2. HONORS SCHOLARSHIPS

- a. Each quarter, excluding summer, the Honors Council will grant several scholarships of up to \$400 to students accepted into the Honors Scholars Program. The amount of these scholarships will not exceed \$400 each quarter, and a student may not receive more than six scholarships (that is, the scholarship may be renewed up to five times). The scholarship may be applied toward tuition and fees and/or bookstore charges. Students must have a current, completed Free Application for Federal Student Aide (FAFSA) filed and a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

### 3. MEHA and NCHC

- a. The Sinclair Honors Program is a member of the Mid-East Honors Association and the National Collegiate Honors Council. These organizations accredit and coordinate Honors program all over the United States, provide educational materials, and sponsor conferences. Each year MEHA holds a conference usually, but not always, in Ohio, aimed primarily at students. The usual date is the last weekend in March. The Honors

Program has limited funds to send students to MEHA. Talk to the Director or see the website for full information.

- b. NCHC also holds an annual conference, usually in late October. It is aimed more at faculty but a large number of students attend and present papers and seminars. The Honors Program also has some limited funds to take students to NCHC, but it is always more expensive than MEHA and might be held anywhere in the country. The Director will consider taking and paying for students who are presenting at the conference, but the application process for presentations begins very early in the calendar year (some nine months before the conference), so talk to the Director early if you are interested, and keep in mind that you will probably have to bear at least part of the expenses.

## HONORS SYMPOSIUM

Each spring the Honors Program will invite all students enrolled in fall, winter or spring Honors courses to present in this annual event. Honors faculty will be asked to help identify some of the best presentations or papers from their courses. The instructor will invite the student to submit the project to the Honors Program Director for consideration for a public symposium. Students can also take the initiative and submit their work themselves. One copy should be provided to the Director. This event is held in May and the campus and community are invited to attend. Other Honors Symposiums may be held at the request of Honors faculty.

## REGISTERING FOR AN HONORS COURSE

1. If the course is designated as an “H” section, student must have a 3.25 grade point average and see an academic advisor and/or the Honors Program Director to be given electronic permission to register for the course. Some departments give students letters approving their registering for these sections. These letters must be submitted to an academic advisor and/or the Honors Program Director to be given electronic permission to register for the course. Once a student is given electronic permission, registration can be completed by the student as with any non-Honors course.
2. If the course is designated as “available for Honors,” student must have a 3.25 grade point average, register for the course, and obtain from the Honors instructor a copy of the Honors contract and/or Honors syllabus.
3. Bring your fee bill listing the course and the Honors Contract and/or syllabus prior to the seventh day of the quarter to the Honors Program office.
4. Sign the Honors Course Registration Eligibility Form.
5. At the end of the quarter, and if you’ve earned an A or B in the course, Honors designation will be added to your transcript for the course.

## HONORS CONTRACTS

If a student enrolled in a "regular" course section wishes to take the course for Honors credit, an Honors Contract must be filled out and submitted, and the student must complete an Honors Program Course Registration Eligibility Form in the Honors Program office. Both should be done before the seventh day of the quarter. This date is posted each quarter on the Honors Program website.

The instructor is responsible for completing the online contract form posted in the Content section of the my.sinclair community group, providing it to the student and ensuring that it is filled out properly and returned to the Honors Office to be kept on file. Both the student and the instructor should make copies for themselves and the student should bring the original to the Honors Program office in order to register for Honors. Honors Contracts may be submitted before the course begins or during the first week of the quarter.

## EVALUATION OF HONORS COURSES

Evaluation is an important element in maintaining integrity and credibility in an Honors program. Faculty evaluations and student evaluations are required at the end of each course. The forms are completed and submitted online to the Honors Program Director and reviewed by the Director or by a subcommittee of the Honors Council that does not include a student. All evaluations are confidential and shared only with the instructor. As part of the evaluation of Honors courses, Honors Scholars will have the opportunity to nominate an outstanding Honors faculty member each year. The Honors Council will review nominations and select up to four Honors faculty per year to receive Honors Scholar Faculty of the Year award. Recipients will be awarded an Honors Scholar Faculty medallion and be recognized at an annual event at Sinclair Community College. See the Honors Program Faculty Handbook and Honors Program website for award criteria.