Senior year is right around the corner!

In this packet, you will find information about your Senior Thesis requirements as well as information about the types of honors you may earn from GW.

All Honors students must complete the Honors Senior Thesis requirement, no matter what school or other program you are in. In Honors, a thesis is broadly defined as a substantial work of independent scholarship that culminates in a written product, presentation or performance.

The three options for completing the Honors Senior Thesis requirement are outlined in this packet. If you are unclear about these options, please speak with an Honors Program Manager.

In addition to completing the Honors Senior Thesis requirement, you are also required to take the Honors Capstone class for 1 credit. The Capstone is not the same as the Honors Senior Thesis, and is a 1-credit, pass/no pass course that invites students to re-engage with core questions and issues related to the Honors Program curriculum, reflecting on their learning in relation to enduring questions and challenges of our world.

Finally, there are several ways to earn GPA-based or departmental distinctions at GWU. They are outlined in this packet as well.

Best wishes for a successful senior year!
Senior Thesis Option One
Thesis Through the University Honors Program
Open to all University Honors Program Seniors

HONR 4198, 3 - 4 Credit Hours
Honors Senior Thesis
One or Two Semesters

The Honors Senior Thesis allows you to complete an independent senior thesis (independent means “not associated with a seminar”). First, you must find a faculty advisor who is willing to advise you in preparing a senior thesis. Your faculty advisor can be any full-time professor at GWU. Your senior thesis requirement cannot be fulfilled with a part-time faculty member as your primary advisor. If you’re not sure if a faculty member can oversee your thesis, please check with a Program Manager. This faculty advisor will be responsible for grading your final product. Some students choose to organize a senior thesis committee, but this is not required, as only one faculty member will have the authority to assign your thesis final grade.

You may take HONR 4198 for either one or two semesters. During this time, you might complete, for example, a library-based research paper, a primary research-based paper, or a creative project (this option is generally for Fine Arts and Creative Writing majors). You are responsible for developing your thesis’s topic, form, scope, and grading criteria in consultation with your faculty advisor.

You will need to fill out an Honors Contract, RTF-EZ form, and submit a thesis proposal (in conjunction with your thesis advisor) at the beginning of the semester to be fully registered for HONR 4198. The proposal must include a brief description of your project, your meeting schedule with your advisor, any deadlines throughout the semester, a breakdown of how your final grade will be calculated, and a grading rubric. The Honors newsletter will announce the due date for the Contract forms. Please consult an Honors Program Manager for more information about this process.

After you have submitted the Honors Contract and RTF-EZ, the University Honors Program will contact the professor whom you have indicated as your advisor to confirm the agreement. Toward the end of the semester, the University Honors Program will also request your final thesis grade from that professor.
Senior Thesis Option Two
Through Major or School

The University Honors Program encourages you to pursue your Honors Senior Thesis through one of the following options delineated by school. If you do not pursue one of the options below, then you must complete a thesis through the University Honors Program (HONR 4198, Option Two). All requirements apply to students in special 5-year and 7-year programs as well.

CCAS
Many CCAS students complete this thesis requirement by enrolling in a research or independent study course (or courses) offered by the department in which they are majoring. These courses are 3000 or 4000 level, with titles such as “Undergraduate Research”, “Senior Thesis”, “Independent Study”, “Directed Project” or “Pro-seminar.” This course will require you, with the help of a faculty guide or mentor, to produce a substantial work of independent scholarship, typically in the form of a written product, presentation or performance. For your Honors Senior Thesis, you must be enrolled in this course for 3 or more credits and successfully complete the course with a C- or higher. You must submit a signed Senior Thesis Verification Form to our office in order for this course to count toward your Honors Senior Thesis requirement.

Note that in some departments, these courses are limited to students pursuing “special departmental honors,” and each department has different criteria for allowing the pursuit of special honors, so consult with your departmental advisor to make sure that you are eligible for course enrollment. Even if you do not ultimately receive special departmental honors, the course will count toward your Honors Senior Thesis requirement so long as you have completed the course with a C- or higher.

If your major department does not offer a research or independent study course (or you are not eligible for the course), then you must complete your Honors Senior Thesis by enrolling in HONR 4198 (Option Two).

ESIA
IAFF 4199: “Senior Thesis” fulfills the Honors Senior Thesis requirement. Students must apply for this thesis option through ESIA. Please see the Elliott School website for more details.

-OR-
Elliott Undergraduate Scholars Program, a year-long research opportunity offering students support and guidance as you conduct independent research on contemporary international affairs topics. Please see the Elliott School website for more details.

GWSB
BADM 4801: “Strategy Formulation and Implementation” fulfills the Honors Senior Thesis requirement. This is a Business core course.
SEAS
For Engineering students, the senior design project (which typically requires a sequence of courses) fulfills the Honors Senior Thesis requirement.

Milken
PUBH 4140W: “Senior Seminar” fulfills the Honors Senior Thesis requirement. This is a Public Health core course.

Corcoran
CFA 4090: “Fine Art Thesis I” and CFA 4091 “Fine Art Thesis II” fulfill the Honors Senior Thesis requirement. This course is limited to bachelor of fine arts students. Please see the Corcoran website for more details.

Once you have successfully completed your thesis course (earning a C- or higher), please inform a Program Manager and they will submit a petition that allows your work to double count as your Honors Senior Thesis.
Senior Thesis Option Three
Enosinian Scholars Program
Open to select University Honors Program Seniors

This program aims to prepare gifted undergraduates for advanced work in their fields and provides both financial backing and mentoring during the student’s senior year. These students represent the most lively and committed scholars in a variety of fields, who come together in this program to share their work with faculty and peers.

Students apply in the spring of their junior year to participate during their senior year. The application process is simple, designed to take very little time, especially for those who have already thought about a research project for their senior year. The program looks for students who have a high grade point average within their discipline (typically 3.5 or higher), a clear idea for their senior thesis, and the strong support of a faculty member. Applicants are informed about acceptance approximately two weeks after the application deadline. Successful candidates then apply to register for Honors 4198, Honors Senior Thesis, unless they are already registered for thesis credits within their departments. Honors Program students should consult with an Honors Program Manager about how the Enosinian Program fulfills their senior thesis and Honors course requirements.

Beginning in the fall semester of their senior year, participants meet regularly, as a group and individually, with the Enosinian advisor. They also submit work to the Enosinian advisor leading up to their theses, including a statement of purpose, an annotated bibliography, an outline, and a selected segment of the thesis. With feedback during each phase, the student can confidently move forward toward completing the thesis in the course of the second semester. The Enosinian advisor also meets with each student’s departmental thesis director and reader so that there is clear communication about the progress of the thesis.

At the end of the spring semester, all participants give an oral presentation and “defense” of their work. The examining board consists of the student’s director, reader, and one reviewer from outside the GW community. If the thesis and the defense meet the standards of the Enosinian Program, the student becomes an Enosinian Scholar, a designation that appears on his or her transcript. Students who do not achieve GW Enosinian Scholar status but receive a passing grade from their advisors will get full credit toward graduation.

If you have questions about the Enosinian Scholars Program, please contact Dr. Theo Christov at christov@email.gwu.edu.
Types of Honors

There are three ways to receive honors from GWU:

1. **Latin Honors**
   Determined by cumulative GPA:

   - *Cum Laude* 3.40-3.59
   - *Magna Cum Laude* 3.60-3.79
   - *Summa Cum Laude* 3.80-4.0

   This will appear on your diploma.

2. **Special Honors in a Major or School**
   The requirements for special honors vary between departments and schools, so you should contact your major advisor for more information.

   Research or independent study courses taken in the pursuit of special honors may fulfill your Honors Senior Thesis requirement. For more details, please consult with an Honors Program Manager.

   This will appear on your transcript.

3. **University Honors Program Graduate**
   By completing the University Honors Program requirements, you will be listed as a graduate of the University Honors Program. To earn this distinction, you must:

   - Graduate with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
   - Take at least 12 credit hours every semester
   - Take the Honors Capstone course
   - Complete a senior thesis which fulfills the Honors Senior Thesis requirements
   - Fulfill all other Honors requirements and be in good standing with the program.

   The “Honors Program Graduate” distinction will also appear on your transcript.