

University Honors Program

Faculty Handbook

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University Honors Program

Welcome to the GW University Honors Program. Whether you are a long-time GW professor or a newly appointed faculty member, we hope that you will review this guide carefully. It provides important and useful information about your participation in our community of scholars.

The University Honors Program (UHP) was founded in 1990 with the goal of providing a rigorous and stimulating academic experience for a highly motivated and exceptionally talented subset of GW undergraduates. The program is housed administratively in the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and serves each of the several undergraduate schools of the university. The UHP student body closely mirrors the student population at large in terms of affiliation with the undergraduate schools at the university. Thus the honors program is truly multidisciplinary in scope and outlook. The UHP admits approximately 125 freshmen students each year, and in 2011 began accepting 15 rising sophomores into the program each year as well.

The University Honors Program is a dual-campus program, with offices located in Foggy Bottom (714 21st St. NW) and the Mount Vernon Campus (Ames Suite 101). All staff work at each office.

The Executive Director of the University Honors Program is Professor Maria Frawley. Professor Ingrid Creppell serves as the Deputy Director for Honors.

The Honors Program Assistant Director of Finance and Administration, Eydie Costantino, provides financial and personnel oversight; assists in strategic planning regarding programmatic fiscal and personnel issues; and plans special events for the program. Full-time Program Officers assist students in planning their academic programs and undertake planning for numerous programmatic and co-curricular activities. The Administrative Coordinator, Alex Dent,, A team of student staffers, all Honors students, work at the front desks of both offices and are available to assist you. A directory of current telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the UHP staff is included at the end of this handbook (Appendix A).

The Mission and Goals of the University Honors Program

The mission of the University Honors Program is to challenge its students with a rigorous education and to invite their engagement in and contributions to a community of scholars. Our distinctive curriculum promotes a broad liberal education that encourages students both to probe the most foundational questions of humanity and to apply their understanding to complex problems of the world today. We expect our students to strive for academic excellence and to contribute to our community, enhancing their coursework with research and other experiential opportunities and working with our faculty and staff to promote their intellectual and personal development throughout their undergraduate years.

To that end, the University Honors Program will:

- Engage and challenge students who are intellectually curious, highly motivated, and love to learn.
- Create a community where students experience the challenges of critical inquiry and creative endeavor in close engagement with peers and dedicated faculty.

- Empower students to take the initiative in their educations by cultivating interests across academic disciplines and traditions.
- Engender a culture of scholarship and accomplishment that will serve as a model for the University.

The goals of the UHP curriculum are to:

- Offer a compelling intellectual experience that enables students to hone their analytical and expressive powers, deepen their understandings, broaden their perspectives; spark their curiosity and personal aspirations; and develop their capacity for independent, original thinking.
- Provide a coherent honors experience that is integrated into, synergistic with, and reinforcing of, the academic aspirations of all of our students' degree programs;
- Lead students to see, think and understand beyond the limits of a particular discipline or specialized, pre-professional program of study;
- Stimulate in students the intellectual breadth, depth, and literacy expected of well-educated persons and leaders in the 21st century.

Community of Scholars

The University Honors Program offers students and faculty the opportunity to participate in an active community bound by shared interests in learning, teaching, inquiry and conversation. Co-curricular and social events are an important dimension of the honors experience.

Faculty presence and engagement in Honors community life is essential. Regularly scheduled UHP faculty meetings provide an opportunity to meet your full-time faculty counterparts and to collaborate on program development. Student/faculty events such as the fall Welcome Reception, the Honors Hike, (usually scheduled early in the fall semester) and the Honors Student/Faculty Dinners provide opportunities for social interaction with students and colleagues. Co-curricular programming such as guest lectures and panel presentations associated with our capstone course and Faculty Fellows courses provide occasions for faculty members to engage in substantive conversations with students and faculty alike. Faculty should also engage in conversations with each other and students online at the various homes of the UHP on the web.

Our "Professors on the Town" program provides the opportunity for faculty to take their class out of the classroom and experience relevant local events of interest. Taking your class to a Professors on the Town event is highly recommended, but it is not mandatory. The Honors Program will fund the cost of attendance for the professor and a guest as well as "coffee and conversation" after the event;; it will partially fund the cost for all students. Faculty may propose to take students to a wide range of activities in the Washington, DC area: live arts performances of plays and musicals, dance, poetry and other literature readings, and music of all types; film screenings; exhibitions at fine art, history, science and other types of museums and galleries; lectures on all manner of topics hosted by think-tanks, institutes, universities, government agencies and museums; religious, ethnic or folk events or institutions.

The UHP will make all advanced purchases for the events when possible, and will make reimbursement to the professor for expenses which could not be paid for ahead of time. In order for the UHP to make any purchase or reimbursement, faculty must complete and hand in the appropriate expense forms (found on the UHP website here: gwu.edu/~uhpwww/facultyforms.cfm) before an event. Instructions for how to complete this simple form is available at the webpage linked above.

Faculty who participate in the “Professors on the Town” program are highly encouraged to ask a student in the class to write a blog post for the UHP blog based on their experience at the event. We love to share with the rest of the University and other Honors students how our classes connect classroom topics with the real world. Most students are happy to write for you, so make sure to ask. Students can submit their short (~200 word) post directly to the blog at honorsprogram.gwublogs.com/submit.

The key to learning about many of these activities is to check regularly the UHP blog, our Facebook site, and always read e-mails sent to you through the Honors faculty listserv. We encourage you to participate in as many of these activities as possible so that you and your students may benefit from the extended honors community outside the classroom. We also welcome your ideas as we continue to enhance the community life of the UHP.

Governance of the University Honors Program

Program guidance is provided by an Honors Advisory Committee comprised of twelve faculty members representing the various constituent schools of the University. The Honors Advisory Committee meets regularly to provide guidance and academic oversight.

The entire UHP faculty – including regular GW full-time faculty, lecturers, Honors Program regular full-time and part-time faculty, and Honors course-by-contract faculty - meets once a year to discuss program direction and development and new initiatives and administrative issues concerning the faculty. Regular full-time faculty meets once a month with the director to discuss curricular matters and hiring or staffing issues, as well as anything else that faculty wants to discuss.

Faculty Appointments and Responsibilities

Faculty appointments in the Honors Program are of several types:

Regular, Full-time, University Faculty Members

Several regular, full-time, university faculty members teach in the honors program. For these faculty members, their contractual arrangements are made through their home departments. In effect, their

teaching with the honors program is in place of a course or courses within their normal departmental teaching load.

Full-time Contract Appointments

These faculty members serve in non-tenure accruing positions for limited terms of service, normally three years. These positions are renewable, contingent on programmatic needs and satisfactory service, indefinitely. Faculty members in these positions have secondary appointments with a department in their particular field of research and discipline. Full-time contract appointment positions are subject to national searches.

Regular Part-time Positions

Regular part-time positions are renewable annually, contingent on programmatic needs and satisfactory service.

Course-by-Contract Faculty Members

Per Course faculty members are appointed on a semester-by-semester basis to fill particular programmatic needs. Appointments are contingent upon enrollment.

Responsibilities

Although the hiring process and range of responsibilities will differ depending on the type of appointment (or reappointment) made, certain responsibilities are fixed:

Every faculty member teaching in the honors program should submit annually an updated and current curriculum vitae. These are typically solicited early in the fall semester of each year. Having your current C.V. on file allows us to summarize your teaching and research expertise as the need arises. By means of a current C.V. we can also track your annual academic accomplishments for the purposes of program reviews, faculty annual reports and the like.

The Honors Program promotes and facilitates research assistant relationships between Honors students and faculty all across the University. Honors faculty should be especially involved in providing research assistant opportunities to Honors students. You can see current research assistant opportunities by visiting the UHP Blog. To find out more about the program, contact Catherine Chandler.

The UHP provides limited research funds to students through the Sigelman Undergraduate Research Enhancement (SURE) Award. Faculty should encourage students to apply for SURE funding, and some faculty have been able to combine SURE funding with research being performed in class. To find out more about the SURE, ask Catherine Chandler.

The Strasser Writing Prize is an annual prize awarded in the spring semester to the best papers written in the Honors Program over the last year. Full-time faculty are asked each year to review student entries, but all faculty are welcome to volunteer.

It is expected that every full-time Honors faculty member will play a role in our community of scholars by mentoring students outside of class, leading Professors on the Town expeditions, participating in a range of intellectual activities sponsored by the program, such as our “Food for Thought” lunchtime presentations, and in Honors student-faculty social events.

Academic Matters

What is an Honors Course?

Required courses in the freshman year are the Honors seminars in “Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought” and “Scientific Reasoning and Discovery.” Upper-level “Self and Society” and “Arts and Humanities” seminars may be taken in the sophomore, junior, or senior years.

The Honors Program offers other courses in addition to the core curriculum courses. These courses fall into three broad categories: courses taught by University Professors, Faculty Fellows courses taught by visiting professors through the Faculty Fellows Initiative, and introductory and upper-level courses. These categories sometimes overlap.

Honors introductory courses are discipline-based and have included topics such as Honors Acting and Honors Creative Writing. These courses allow Honors students to fulfill general curriculum requirements and to experience small group, inquiry-driven introductory courses.

Honors upper-level “special topics” courses provide students and faculty members a chance to explore in-depth topics not normally offered within the University. Recent topics include: Leadership in Theory and Practice, Justice and the Legal System, and Islam and the Political Economy of Oil in the Persian Gulf. These courses are offered by regular Honors faculty as well as by distinguished University Professors and faculty affiliated with the Mount Vernon Faculty Fellows initiative.

Regardless of the type of honors course, all honors courses are designed to reward intellectual curiosity and engender academic discovery. Freshman and sophomore proseminars are typically capped at fifteen students and thus provide a natural environment for discussion and inquiry-based learning. Other honors courses are capped at twenty. A successful honors course is about academic challenge and not just a heavier workload. Inquiry, critical analysis, discussion and expansion of one’s intellectual boundaries are the core of honors courses. Ideally course learning objectives will also be linked to the learning objectives of the relevant area of the curriculum (i.e., Origins and Evolution of Modern Thought; Scientific Reasoning and Discovery; Self and Society; and Arts and Humanities) and, more broadly, to the program mission and learning objectives.

Therefore, there are no set answers to questions such as: “How much additional reading or writing is required?” or “What is an acceptable length for a research paper?” Rather, the instructor, through his/her syllabus and classroom discussion, must identify the learning objectives of the course and frame its scope, content, expectations, and mode of delivery accordingly.

Characteristics of an Honors Course

Honors courses should model academic challenge. An Honors course should be characterized by some, if not all, of the following.

- Be small (normally capped at 15 or fewer);
- Offer, as and when appropriate, a discussion-based/seminar format where professors and students engage in dialogue and students bear a high level of responsibility for exploration of ideas; many UHP faculty begin their seminars by providing background and contextual information to help frame, structure, and guide the discussion that follows;
- Encourage, assess, and reward independent thinking, risk-taking, originality and creativity;
- Move students beyond their comfort zones;
- Require deeper and more sophisticated thinking and analysis;
- Expect student attendance, preparedness and participation;
- Provide faculty who are intellectual models and mentors willing to learn from students;
- Provide students with sustained, close, critical evaluations of their writings;
- Establish the highest expectations of students; rigorously apply the highest academic standards;
- Apply grading policies that fairly recognize, and educate students about, the qualitative differences among truly superior, good, average, below average and unsatisfactory academic work;
- Assess student-learning based upon writing, participation, or creative projects as well as exams.

Depending upon the academic disciplines, topic, and scope covered by the course, an exemplary honors course might also:

- Require a mix of small group and individual work products;
- Use an inquiry-, problem-, or case-based learning format;
- Emphasize primary sources, avoid textbooks;
- Include differing cultural perspectives;
- Include interdisciplinary perspectives;
- Offer learning opportunities outside the classroom, including use of cultural, scientific, governmental, city, social service and international community resources in the Washington, D.C. area.

Your Role as an Honors Faculty Member

As an Honors faculty member, you have more substantial contact with our students than does the Honors staff. In this sense, for many of our students, you personify the Honors Program and model its intellectual goals. Your enthusiasm and support for the program is invaluable.

In your first class meeting we recommend that you articulate, clearly and specifically to your students, your expectations of them as Honors students in an Honors course as well as your hopes and goals for their learning experience. This discussion might include your expectations of attendance,

preparation, in-class discussion, expectations for writing assignments and the like.

You should read the weekly Honors NewsFlash!, regularly visit and comment at the UHP blog (www.honorsprogram.gwublogs.com), interact at the UHP Facebook page (www.facebook.com/theUHP) and encourage your students to do likewise. All contain information about Honors activities and opportunities. Think about hosting an Honors event, either for your class or for the Honors community at large. The Honors Program will do its best to facilitate and support your event. Please be certain to have any such events approved by the program before announcing them to your students. We can advise you of what sort of support is available, possible schedule conflicts and other such matters.

Office Hours

For each of your classes, you should arrange regularly scheduled office hours for students. Faculty members without an assigned office can meet their students in the Honors townhouse or in our suite at the Mount Vernon Campus; please arrange this with Eydie Costantino.

Syllabus Submission

For your own and your students' records, it is essential that you submit a final, detailed, copy of a current course syllabus for each course that you teach. Please leave a copy of your syllabus with the honors program staff prior to the beginning of each semester.

Syllabus Content

Each faculty member must also submit, before the beginning of each semester, a detailed course syllabus for each course taught. These syllabi must include a statement of the course's learning objectives. Ideally these objectives will be keyed both to the relevant component of the UHP curriculum (e.g., Origins, Self & Society, etc.) and to the mission of the UHP generally. Additionally each faculty member is responsible for encouraging student participation in the online course evaluation available at the conclusion of each course.

There are as many different syllabus formats as there are teachers. Nonetheless, a useful syllabus provides the following:

1. Instructor's name, contact and office-hours information.
2. An elaboration of the goals and learning objectives of your course.
3. A brief course description.
4. Titles of required texts or readings.
5. Course regulations, such as your policy on class attendance, academic integrity, make-up exams, late submittal of work products and the like.
6. A quantitative description of the factors (papers, exams, participation, etc.) that comprise the final course grade. These factors should be readily quantifiable for course assessment at the end of the semester. Ideally there will be "checkpoints" during the semester by which the students can determine how well they are meeting the goals of the course.
7. A semester schedule (by class session or by week) listing topics, reading assignments and "fixed points" such as exam dates, paper submittal dates, etc.

Class Meetings

All honors courses are expected to meet whenever scheduled, absent a compelling pedagogical rationale for doing otherwise. Any absences by the instructor (whether due to illness or travel) must be responsibly managed; either a visiting lecturer or a make-up class period should be scheduled. Please notify the Director of the Honors Program of any cancelled classes and provide her with information regarding coverage of the class. In the event of illness or other unforeseeable emergencies, please also notify the Honors Program office staff at uhp@gwu.edu, so that a class cancellation notice may be posted.

Final Examinations

Final Examinations are to be administered during the regularly scheduled final examination period as per university regulations. No finals shall be held during the last week of regularly scheduled classes or during the reading period and no final papers should be due during the last week of regularly scheduled classes or during the reading period.

In no circumstances should you use regularly scheduled class periods (or reading days) for your final examination or paper.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic honesty is one of the fundamental tenets of the Honors Program. Both students and faculty are charged with understanding both the spirit and substance of the university regulations regarding academic dishonesty. More information can be found at <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>. Demonstrated instances of academic dishonesty may result in dismissal from the University Honors Program as well as other sanctions from the university. Policies regarding academic dishonesty should be included on every syllabus.

Classroom Comportment

In our experience, Honors students cheerfully abide by reasonable expectations for classroom behavior. Your policies concerning promptness, attendance, civil and respectful dialogue, deadlines, etc. should be spelled out clearly and completely both in your syllabus and at your first class meeting. Students should be required to turn off their cell phones during class – no exceptions. Faculty members are free to adopt their own policies regarding laptop use in the classroom.

Grade Change Requests

In the event that you must change a final reported grade, grade change report forms are available from the Program Officers. After you complete a grade change form, please return it directly to Prof. Frawley for her signature. All the information required for the form is available to you in GWeb; please do not leave anything blank. Grade changes for all Honors courses *must* be processed through the Honors Office. It goes without saying that your reason for a grade change should be based on substantial facts that were unavailable when the final grade was first assigned.

Course Evaluations

All Honors courses use the University's Online Course Evaluation system operated by the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment according to their calendar - see <http://my.gwu.edu/mod/evaluations> for scheduling and more information. Reminder emails are sent out on the first day of the evaluation period to students and faculty that alerts them the evaluations

are live. Students will have about two weeks to complete the evaluations, and a report of the results will be available to faculty through the online system after grades are due.

The OCE has a general question set of about fifteen generic questions that precede the questions designed by the Honors Program to address your own course, whether it be a part of one of our curricular areas or a special topics course. The entire evaluation, with questions and time for comments, should take students fifteen to twenty minutes in total.

Though students are relatively well accustomed to the practice of evaluating courses online, we depend on you to repeatedly encourage their full and enthusiastic participation in evaluations. If you allow laptops you could use classtime to complete the evaluations and if you don't, you could schedule a computer lab during classtime. Otherwise, please make clear to your students the absolute importance of their honest and thoughtful feedback.

You will be able to access the results of the evaluation through the same OCE website once grades have been submitted.

Blackboard Course Management Software

We encourage all Honors faculty members to explore the possibilities for enhanced student/faculty communication presented by the full utilization of Blackboard. In the Blackboard system you can post your syllabus, class notes, assignments, electronic reserves, student grades and more. You can also maintain a class discussion board, a chat room, and send both blanket and individual e-mails to your students. Blackboard is fully supported at GW through the Information Systems and Services (ISS) help desk (<http://helpdesk.gwu.edu>) and the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (<http://citl.gwu.edu>). Blackboard workshops are regularly scheduled through CITL for beginning users and those interested in more fully exploiting the possibilities inherent in Blackboard. Additionally a short, but comprehensive, electronic "GW Blackboard Tour" is available on the CITL website. The UHP staff cannot provide Blackboard support to faculty. Courses are available on Blackboard at the beginning of August for the fall and the beginning of January for the spring.

Administrative Matters

New Faculty Appointments

All newly hired faculty members will receive a faculty appointment letter from the Office of Faculty Personnel. You will need to sign and return this letter to Faculty Personnel to accept your appointment. It will take about a week for your name to show up in the GW system.

Regardless of whether or not you have received your appointment letter, you will need to visit Human Resources, 2033 K Street, Suite 200, to complete some paperwork. Please bring your driver's license and Social Security card or passport. You need to complete an I-9 (verification of proof of identity) and a W-4 (withholding and income tax).

GWorld Card and E-mail Account

Use your appointment letter to obtain your GWorld (ID) Card in the Marvin Center, Basement level. To set up a GW e-mail account, go to <http://www.gwu.edu/helpdesk/>. You will need to be in the faculty personnel system before you can open an account.

Library Privileges

All honors faculty have library privileges at the Gelman Library, and other GW libraries during the semesters in which they are actively teaching. Your GWorld ID card allows library access and use. Interlibrary loan requests may be placed through the Gelman Library. Be certain to check with Gelman to ensure sufficient lead time on such interlibrary loan requests.

Paychecks

The Honors Office picks up faculty paychecks on the last day of each month. The University strongly encourages the use of direct deposit; therefore, please arrange for automatic bank deposit as soon as possible, as it takes GW payroll at least 2 weeks to process your request.

Mailboxes

All faculty are given a mailbox at the honors program office in Foggy Bottom, so please stop in to locate it and continue to check it regularly. Faculty who have an office in Ames have a mailbox there. If you do not wish to have a mailbox at the honors program office, please notify the office as soon as possible to avoid any student confusion. We will accommodate your request. Please remember to empty the contents of your mailboxes at the end of each semester.

Equipment Requests

A laptop or other equipment from Academic Technologies is available through <http://acadtech.gwu.edu/pages/equipmentreservations> or by emailing acadtech@gwu.edu. This request must come directly from the faculty member. Please provide sufficient lead-time for your request to be accommodated. For recurring special equipment, notify the Honors Program office at the same time as course scheduling, as requests for recurring special equipment needs are submitted at the same time as room assignments are made by the Academic Scheduling Office. The Scheduling Office cannot always accommodate late requests.

Course Packets and Copies

A color photocopier is located in the Honors Office at the Mount Vernon Campus and a black-and-white photocopier is located in the Foggy Bottom office for your use with small projects. If you require your students to read photo-copied articles or book excerpts, the GW Bookstore will be happy to create and distribute these materials to your students. Simply email the Textbook Manager at textbook@gwu.edu to make arrangements. The Textbook Manager will ensure that students are properly notified of required course materials and will ensure compliance with all applicable copyright laws and requirements.

Class scheduling

Class scheduling and classroom assignments for your course are managed by the Honors Program staff in cooperation with the Registrar's Office. We do our best to make certain that your classroom is suitable for your needs. Problems with classroom facilities and/or maintenance should be reported to a staff member at the Honors Program office who, in turn, will submit a work request to remedy the problem.

It is crucial that if you have a recurring need for a "technology-enabled classroom" (laptop link to LCD projector or the like) that you convey this need to the Honors Program office at the time your course is initially scheduled. The sooner such requests are made, the more likely that they will be accommodated. Requests for such facilities after the initial room has been assigned are likely to be declined.

Course Registration

Our primary means of communication with both students and faculty is our Honors NewsFlash!

Please review it carefully for pertinent information and opportunities, especially for information on course registration. Also, keep in mind that honors courses are capped at a maximum of fifteen or twenty students as a program-wide policy. Any request for exceptions to the student cap should be referred to the Executive Director.

Although non-Honors students may be accepted into under-enrolled Honors courses after all Honors registrations are complete, you should carefully verify the student's capability to successfully contribute to your course and he or she should present a compelling reason as to why they want to enroll in your course. Simply having heard good things about your course from previous participants or to resolve an otherwise intractable scheduling problem are not sufficient reasons to admit such a student. Be sure to send any non-Honors students you wish to admit to one of the Program Officers, who must approve the registration before it is transmitted to the Registrar's Office.

Book Orders and Desk Copies

Book orders should be placed promptly when requested by the Bookstore. Order forms are available from the Honors Office. Please provide the title, author, publisher, edition number and ISBN number, if known. Because the Bookstore "batch processes" their book orders, late requests may result in your text not being available at the beginning of the semester. If you wish to request a desk copy of the textbook you are using and cannot do it yourself, please e-mail uhp@gwu.edu with the following information: Title of your course, projected or actual course enrollment, book title, author, edition, publisher, and ISBN. Not all books are available as desk copies and are sent at the discretion of the publisher.

Parking

Faculty parking is available, although there is no free university parking. More information is available from GW Parking Services at www.gwu.edu/~parking/.

Grading, Grades and the University Honors Program

All students, including Honors students, deserve grading policies that are both fair and instructive. To be so, grading should recognize and reward superior academic work and teach students the qualitative differences among truly superior, good, average, below average and unsatisfactory work. Grades are, arguably, the most tangible measure of student success in any course. Our students rightly view their final course grades as symbols of their achievement and as competitive measures of their success. Few items in academia are as value-laden as grades and grade point averages. *Courses where most of the graded work only occurs near the end of the semester fail to signal early enough to the students how they are performing.*

To help you and your students navigate the shoals of the grading process, here are some things to think about.

1. Your syllabus, handed out on the first day of class, should contain an unambiguous section on how a student's final grade will be determined. How many quizzes, exams, written papers and the like will be assigned and how much is each worth as a percentage of the final grade? It goes without saying that class attendance is important but does it factor into the grade? What about class participation and discussion? Are writing assignments subject to revision and are grades based on the early and final drafts or simply on the final copy? How will late work be penalized? Is there a numerical grade – letter grade conversion that you will use to assign the final grade?
2. Your policy on "extra-credit", optional papers, projects, field trips, etc. should be spelled out in your syllabus. Any such opportunity extended to one student in your class must, in basic fairness, be extended to all. Far too often, extra-credit opportunities are extended to students who have failed to distinguish themselves on one or more assignments. We encourage you not to yield to this temptation.
3. Be clear and resolute about your policy on "incompletes". A grade of "I" should only be reported when a legitimate and compelling reason, typically beyond the control of the student, prevents the completion of a significant portion of the course work. In cases where a student fails to communicate with the instructor prior to the end of the course, a grade of "F" is appropriate. Before assigning an "incomplete" the instructor and the student should agree upon a scheduled plan for completing the missing assignment(s).

In short, each student has a reasonable right to understand how his or her grade is to be calculated and where they stand relative to each other and relative to your expectations during the semester.

The issue of grade distribution is a thorny one. Within the university system an A indicates excellent performance, a B is good, a C is satisfactory, a D is a low pass and an F indicates failure. A-, B+, B-, C+, C-, D+ and D- represent performance at the boundaries of these larger categories. **Please note that in the Honors Program a grade of C- or below does not fulfill the program requirement of "successful completion".**

While a student's GPA should not be disadvantaged simply because he or she is in the Honors Program, we do our students no favors when we routinely assign grades in small classes that are "all As" or nearly so. Your range of grades should be expansive enough to acknowledge truly excellent work, to identify and reward students who are truly excellent and to give those whose performance is "good" (or less) a realistic appraisal of the quality of their effort. By the same token, your standards need to be entirely objective and to be clearly articulated early in your course.

Often, a low grade on a paper, project or exam provides a valuable learning experience for our students. The challenge of improving such a grade and ultimately succeeding is undoubtedly worth more than a casually bestowed higher "feel-good" grade.

University Policy on Grades and Grading

The following grading system is used: A, Excellent; B, Good; C, Satisfactory; D, Low Pass; F, Fail; other grades that may be assigned are A-, B+, B-, C+, C-, D+ and D-.

The symbol of Z is assigned when students are registered for a course that they have not attended or have attended only briefly, and in which they have done no graded work. At the end of the academic year, students' records are reviewed; if there is more than one Z per semester, a student's record will be encumbered until released by the student's advisor or academic dean. The symbol of Z is not a grade but an administrative notation.

The symbol I (Incomplete) indicates that a satisfactory explanation has been given the instructor for the student's inability to complete the required course work during the semester of enrollment. At the option of the instructor, the symbol I may be recorded if a student, for reasons beyond the student's control, is unable to complete the work of the course, and if the instructor is informed of, and approves, such reasons before the date when grades must be reported. This symbol may be used only if the student's prior performance and class attendance in the course have been satisfactory. Any failure to complete the work of a course that is not satisfactorily explained to the instructor before the date when grades must be turned in will be graded F, Failure. If acceptable reasons are later presented to the instructor, that instructor may initiate an appropriate grade change, which in all cases will include the symbol I. The course work must be completed within the designated time period agreed upon by the instructor and student, but no more than one calendar year from the end of the semester in which the course was taken. When work for the course is completed, the instructor will complete a grade change form. If work for the course is not completed within the designated time, the grade will be automatically converted to a grade of F, 0 quality points, and the grade-point average and academic standing recalculated.

Submitting grades

UNIVERSITY POLICY STATES THAT ALL GRADES ARE TO BE SUBMITTED WITHIN FIVE WORKING DAYS AFTER THE FINAL EXAMINATION OR THE LAST CLASS MEETING.

The Office of the Registrar strongly encourages faculty to submit grades online via the GWeb Information System. You may access GWeb for Faculty through the [myGW portal](http://my.gwu.edu/), <http://my.gwu.edu/>. You can find detailed instructions on the Registrar's website: http://www.gwu.edu/~regweb/web-content/onlineforms/Faculty_Grading_instructions.pdf

Please note that students' grades are covered by FERPA and should never be disclosed to anyone, including their classmates, without the students' consent. Any questions about FERPA and the privacy of educational records should be directed to the Office of General Council.

UHP Grade Appeal Procedures

In the rare event that a student contests a final grade in a class, the following procedure will be observed.

1. The student tries to work out the situation with the faculty.
2. If that fails, the student submits a written appeal, including all pertinent course materials. The formal request is for reconsideration of "arbitrary and capricious grading."
3. Upon receipt of the written appeal, a three-member committee will be established by the Deputy Director to consider the appeal. The appeal documents will be made available to the committee members.
4. The faculty member whose grade is being appealed will be provided as well with the appeal documents and attachments. In so doing, the Deputy Director of UHP will also inform the faculty member that s/he may, if s/he wishes, respond to the appeal in writing.
5. After the committee members have had an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these materials (whether individually, collectively, or both), they schedule a meeting and invite both the student and the faculty member to attend.
6. At the meeting, the committee members ask the student for a brief overview of the rationale underlying his/her request (recognizing that the case will presumably have been made fairly comprehensively in the written documents), ask the faculty member for a brief response, and ask either or both of them to answer any questions the committee members consider appropriate. (Note that the faculty member and the student are invited to attend; they are not required to do so. Similarly, the faculty member is not required to submit a written response to the student's request.)
7. After this session, the committee members formulate a recommendation, which they then communicate to the Honors program director, including a brief statement concerning the reason(s) why they have settled upon this recommendation.
8. The program director then communicates the outcome to all pertinent parties. This outcome will ordinarily follow the recommendation of the committee, but in rare circumstances the program director may decide not to accept the committee's recommendation.

Appendix A: Contact Information

General Questions?

Contact the front desk student staff:

(202) 994-6816 in Foggy Bottom

or

(202) 242-6040 in Mt. Vernon Campus

uhp@gwu.edu

Office Locations

Foggy Bottom: 714 21st St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20052

Mount Vernon Campus: Ames Hall Suite 101, 2100 Foxhall Road NW, Washington, D.C. 20007

Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday

gwu.edu/~uhpwww | honorsprogram.gwublogs.com | [Facebook.com/theUHP](https://www.facebook.com/theUHP) | twitter.com/theUHP

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