



Faculty Mentor Manual for Signature Honors Project



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Signature Honors Project

Introduction

The Signature Honors Project (SHP) has the potential to be one of the most satisfying experiences of a student's undergraduate career in ECU's Honors College. In partnership with a faculty mentor, the SHP presents an opportunity for concentrated scholarly study in an area of the student's choice. The SHP will represent an original contribution to a discipline through the completion of a thesis, creative endeavor, or group project.

Students will need to complete the following:

- Identify a Ph.D. faculty mentor;
- Identify an idea for the SHP;
- Complete a two-semester (6 credit hour) experience that represents a scholarly or creative work contribution to a discipline:
 - ❖ thesis
 - ❖ creative endeavor
 - ❖ group project

The skills students refine while designing and then completing the SHP will often separate them from other outstanding candidates for graduate school or future employment opportunities.

SHP Requirements and Options

The main qualification of the SHP is that it represents original scholarly or creative work. You will evaluate the student's final project and give a letter grade as the instructor of record for the experience. Completion of a SHP is required for graduation from the Honors College at ECU. Students must earn a final grade of "B minus" or higher to receive Honors College credit.

Thesis

- Research/Scholarly Paper. Students will need to research a topic of interest in their major(s), minor(s), or in an area outside program of studies and develop an independent research study and paper about that topic. The thesis could include first-hand data from experiments including laboratory data, fieldwork data, previously collected survey data, etc. This research project could be a paper that uses original and/or secondary sources to make a contribution to the field. The thesis should include a review and synthesis of the literature pertaining to the research study. Follow your discipline writing guidelines for page length and writing style.

Creative Endeavor

- Students will develop a compilation of their craft that may culminate in several ways:
 - Directing a play

- Writing and performing original music
- Senior Show
- Recital
- A formal compilation of a student's artistry that goes above and beyond class requirements.
- The creative endeavor includes a 3-5 page paper that includes the following:
 - Provides the artist's statement
 - Background about the work and context for the audience.
 - **Note:** Some students have showcased their creative work in special venues or juried competitions.

Group Project

The group project option originates from discussions in HRNS 3000.

SHP Components

The format for the SHP will vary by department, school, or college. However, all SHP include a formal written component and a formal public presentation. See the Templates link on the Honors College website for common components:

- Honors College Title Page
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Content
- Bibliography/References
- Appendices (if appropriate)
- IRB or other approvals (if appropriate)

Signature Honors Project

Faculty Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

Faculty mentors are responsible for the following:

- Sign the completed SHP contract and forward to the department chair for signature. The student will forward it to Dr. Tim Christiansen for final approval.

When taking HNRS 4500 and HNRS 4550 (or approved course substitutions):

- The student will organize and schedule an initial SHP meeting with you before the second week of classes.
- The student should attend and be prepared for regular meetings with you following the timeline listed on the SHP contract.
- Assist the student to secure any necessary special approvals for the SHP project.
- Students are required to present their SHP at Research and Creative Achievement Week (RCAW), which is scheduled every spring, and at one *additional* public presentation. Public presentations may be made during conferences, symposiums, workshops, signature shows or performances, etc. Faculty mentors should support the students at the presentations.
- Ensure students utilize the proper Honors College PPT and Poster templates (see Templates link on the Honors College website).
- Completion of the SHP:
 - o The thesis option requires a research paper and the creative endeavor option requires a context paper that will accompany the portfolio. Students are required to use the Honors College Title Page template as the first page of the thesis paper or portfolio context paper.
 - o Students are required to submit the completed, approved thesis paper OR portfolio context paper and any related portfolio materials (i.e., PPT, video, website link) into the Joyner Library ScholarShip online repository.

Please note: The most important aspect of the SHP will be communication with you and their commitment to the project. Ultimately, students have the responsibility for researching, writing, and compiling a scholarly product.

The faculty mentor and student are responsible for the following:

- SHP independent studies should comply with the Writing Intensive (WI) Course Information Process. Details about the WI outcomes can be found at the ECU Writing Center website: http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/writing/wac/university_writing_outcomes.cfm

Signature Honors Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. When do students need to start thinking about the SHP?

Classes, research, and interests that arise throughout a student's undergraduate career inspire SHP work. As a general rule many students begin thinking and asking questions about the SHP during their sophomore year. The earlier students begin to think about the SHP, the more time they will have to explore research topics or creative endeavor.

2. Can students use the SHP to complete requirements in their major?

Check with your faculty mentor for departmental course substitutions for HRNS 4500 and HRNS 4550 (see Appendix A).

3. Does the SHP have to be something in the student's major?

No. Students can choose a thesis, creative endeavor, or group project in their major, minor, or another area of interest.

Choosing a Faculty Mentor and Topic

1. Choosing a faculty mentor for SHP topic first?

Students should identify the SHP topic first, and then identify a faculty mentor in that area.

2. Next steps?

Students will meet with Dr. Tim Christiansen for approval of faculty mentors.

The SHP Courses

1. How do I enroll in my SHP courses?

After initially meeting with Dr. Tim Christiansen, students will need to return the completed SHP contract to him for approval, and he will forward it to Mr. Jim Ellis, Honors College Academic Advisor, for HNRS 4500 or HNRS 4550 course creation. If students are using an academic departmental course, you will need to register the student for the courses.

2. What is the time span of the SHP?

Two semesters (6 credit hours), spanning approximately 8 months.

3. When do my HNRS 4500 and HNRS 4550 classes meet?

As an independent study course, you will meet with the student at a mutually agreed upon time, which should be outlined in the SHP contract timeline.

4. How does the grading of this course work?

You will assign letter grades to the student for the SHP courses. At the beginning of each semester the student should meet with you to discuss final course grade expectations. Students must earn at least a "B minus" to receive honors credit.

5. What length is required for my SHP?

Length requirements and formats vary according to discipline. As the faculty mentor you will be able to guide the student in selecting the proper length and format for your field of study. The most important item to remember is that the thesis, creative endeavor, or group project represents a significant piece of independent research or scholarly activity.

6. Is there funding available to support my SHP?

Yes, please visit the Office of Undergraduate Research Website. Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievement (URCA) awards are available (see website for submission deadlines).

7. How much time should be allotted for the Internal Review Board (IRB) approval process?

It depends on the nature of the research project. Please visit the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) website for more information guiding the student.

8. Can the subject of the SHP deviate from what was originally written in the proposal? If so, to what extent?

Slight variations may be made to the original SHP proposal submissions; however, you should remain the same because of credentialing for the project.

Public Presentation Queries

• **What is the approval process for the public presentation materials?**

Once the final presentation (PowerPoint or posters) has been submitted to you for review and approval, you will need to will determine whether it meets the requirements. (See the Templates link for further instructions).

Submitting a Completed SHP

• **What is the SHP submission deadline to the Honors College?**

Students will need to submit the SHP to the Joyner Library repository by Reading Day.

Appendix A: Course Substitutions

Departmental Courses that can replace Signature Honors

Project Courses HNRS 4500 and HNRS 4550

This is a partial list of substitute courses. Academic departments not listed below may have additional courses available for SHP use. Students must meet with you to determine course options so that credit can be placed in your department for FTEs and other accounting of faculty work.

Anthropology

Contact: Laura Mazow

Course One: ANTH 4550 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: ANTH 4551 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis

Biology

Contact: Jean-Luc Scemama

Course One: BIOL 4504 (2 s.h.) (fall)

Course Two: BIOL 4514 (2 s.h.) (fall)

Course Three: BIOL 4995 (2 s.h.) (spring)

Type of Project: Thesis

Chemistry

Course One: CHEM 4515 (1 s.h., repeatable once)

Course Two: CHEM 4516 (2 s.h., repeatable once)

Course Three: CHEM 4517 (3 s.h., repeatable once)

Type of Project: Thesis

Communication

Course One: COMM 4196 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: COMM 4199 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis

Economics

Course One: ECON 4550 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: ECON 4551 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis

Engineering

Course One: ENGR 3000

Course Two: ENGR 4010

Course Three ENGR 4020

Type of Project: Capstone

Exercise and Sport Science

Course One: KINE 4500 (1 s.h.)

Course Two: KINE 4501 (2 s.h.)

Course Three: Kine 4502 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis

History

Course One: HIST 4550 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: HIST 4551 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis

Neuroscience

Contact: Dr. Tran

Course One: NEUR 4950 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: NEUR 4951 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis

Nursing

Contact: Kim Larson

Course One: NURS 3750 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: NURS 4750 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Capstone Project

Political Science

Course One: POLS 4501 (1 s.h.)

Course Two: POLS 4502 (2 s.h.)

They are repeatable for a total of six.

Psychology

Course One: PSYC 4601 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: PSYC 4602 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis

Public Health Studies

Course One: HLTH 4901 (3 s.h.)

Course Two: HLTH 4902 (3 s.h.)

Type of Project: Thesis