This handbook provides information for Honors Program students and others interested in understanding the principles and practices that guide the Honors Program at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon.

I. Honors Program Mission Statement:

The Honors Program seeks to create, together with highly motivated students, an ongoing community of learners that will create leaders for church and community characterized by their love of learning, devotion to excellence and commitment to service as an extension of and in service toward the stated mission of Concordia University. Concordia University’s Mission Statement: “Concordia is a Christian University preparing leaders for the transformation of society.”

II. Honors Program Profile:

Concordia University is one of hundreds of universities with Honors Programs, many in small, liberal arts colleges with a religious commitment and heritage. Concordia’s Honors Program is a member of The National Collegiate Honors Council, an organization of faculty, students and administrators committed to honors education.

The Honors Program widens the appeal of Concordia University, attracting students who have demonstrated high academic aptitude and achievement.

The Honors Program has a strong record of retaining students many of whom serve the university in leadership positions while they are still students. These experiences prepare future leaders who will transform the societies in which they find themselves.

The Honors Program provides highly motivated students with a heightened collegiate experience at Concordia, socially and academically. Evaluations of the existing Honors courses have demonstrated that the students found their experiences in these courses to be academically rigorous and overwhelmingly positive.
The Honors Program helps build a community of learners. It allows students to challenge one another, a critical component in learning both inside and outside the classroom. It also provides for a superlative teaching experience, one in which new approaches to teaching and learning might be developed. Finally the Honors courses provide an occasion for implementing innovative technological initiatives and pedagogical strategies which might be transported to other courses in the curriculum, including non-Honors courses.

The Honors Program contributes to greater public visibility for Concordia University and enhances its academic profile in the Pacific Northwest.

**III. Honors Program Goals:**

The Honors Program will

1. provide an academic challenge for gifted and highly motivated students;

2. raise the academic profile of the student body and model the notion of Concordia University as a vibrant learning community;

3. serve as a pilot venue for innovative pedagogical methods and new technologies that will benefit all students;

4. encourage students to take advantage of leadership opportunities on campus;

5. provide extra-curricular activities that are intellectually and socially enriching, activities open to members of the Concordia community from all colleges and majors.

**IV. Honors Program Desired Student Outcomes:**

In addition to meeting Concordia University's General Education Desired Student Outcomes in a distinguished manner, the Honors Program seeks to create a community of learners in the following ways. The Honors Program will

1. promote complex critical thinking skills, including the ability to appreciate paradox and irony;

2. develop highly crafted communication skills in a variety of modes of communication that embody the notion that learning is a dialogical activity;

3. model the idea of servant leadership, incorporating the highest ethical ideals of the university;

4. exemplify the principle of experiential learning both inside and outside the classroom (e. g. using the community as an organic part of classes and extra-curricular activities, known as the City as Text concept);
5. enhance awareness of citizenship in the Global Village and promote involvement in social justice activities;

6. promote disciplined learning as well as synthesis of information from a variety of academic fields;

7. envision learning as a natural human endeavor and promote curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities across all colleges and majors.

V. Admission to the Honors Program:

1. Admission to the Honors Program is highly competitive and the number of positions available is limited to 25 incoming freshmen each year. The applications receiving highest consideration by the Admissions Committee will be completed and submitted early.

2. Students may access information about the Honors Program from the program’s website: http://www.cu-portland.edu/admission/admission-requirements/freshmen/honors. Incoming freshmen students will be considered for admission in the Honors program if they meet the following minimum test score and GPA standards:

   - 1725 combined SAT and/or 26 ACT
   - 3.65 high school GPA on a 4.0 scale

3. Invited students should submit their application for the Honors Program no later than March 1 for consideration for fall semester admission. The application includes the on-line application form, an official transcript of the student’s academic work (if one has been submitted with the original application to Concordia University, it is not necessary to submit a second transcript), a personal essay (see item 4 below) and at least two letters of recommendation, at least one of which should specifically address admission into the Honors Program and be written by a teacher who has had the student in class. Admission decisions will be based on academic record, test scores, personal essay and letters of recommendation. The Admissions Committee seeks to select students who show promise of fulfilling Concordia University’s Mission Statement.

4. Guidelines for Personal Essay: In an essay of less than 1000 words (typed, double-spaced, 12pt font), please provide a compelling and substantial answer to the following prompt:

   What is the purpose of college, and why is it important? In our highly commercialized world, some view higher education as a commodity—one that delivers high economic returns. Arguably, students pay tuition, attend classes, and submit assignments to complete a transaction: the “purchase” of a valuable, college diploma.

   Others disagree. They contend that college defies commoditization. Instead it offers a unique opportunity for exploring significant issues, cultivating mentorships, and
developing key skills—writing clearly, speaking persuasively, and thinking deeply.

This debate is alive and well on campuses across the country. Enter this argument. Take a position, and defend it.

5. In certain cases, applicants may opt for an on-campus, personal interview with the Honors Program Director in lieu of submitting a personal essay. Contact the Honors Program Director or Concordia University’s Admissions Office for details regarding this option.

6. Once a student is accepted for admission into the Honors Program, they will have **thirty days** following notification of their admission to accept or reject admissions into the program as well as the Honors Scholarship.

7. **Transfer students** entering with sophomore or junior status may apply to the Honors Program by submitting an **Honors Program application form** (available from the Honors Program Director) and a **personal essay** (see item 4 above) and **one letter of recommendation** from a faculty member who has had the student in class. **NOTE:** Transfer student admission is subject to space availability in the program.

Transfer admission standards for the Honors Program are as follows:
3.50 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale for all college courses.

8. **Current Concordia students** who have achieved **sophomore or junior status** may apply to the Honors Program by submitting an **Honors Program application form** (available from the Honors Program Director) and a **personal essay** (see item 4 above) and **one letter of recommendation** from a full-time Concordia faculty member. Concordia faculty members are encouraged to nominate eligible students who may then apply to the Honors Program. Nominations should be given directly to the Honors Program Director. Current students are **not** eligible for Honors Scholarships but may receive “Honors Program Graduate” on their diploma if they successfully complete 20 hours of Honors courses (if they join the program as sophomores) or 14 hours of Honors courses (if they join the program as juniors) and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 or higher for all college courses. **NOTE:** Current student admission is subject to space availability in program.

Current Concordia student admission standards for the Honors Program are as follows 3.50 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale for all college courses.

9. Current Concordia students, who are not members of the honors program, may enroll in individual honors courses upon the approval of the course instructor(s) and the Director of the Honors Program.
VI. Advantages of Participation in the Honors Program:

1. The Honors Program Scholarship (for incoming freshman applicants only) covers at least 50% of tuition and is renewable for up to three additional years.

2. Honors Students will take many general education course requirements in Honors sections, small classes where students and faculty will pursue excellence together.

3. The Honors Program will sponsor many enjoyable social and cultural activities (e.g. plays, hikes, speakers, etc.) that take education off campus, using Portland (and Oregon) as a “classroom.”

4. Students who successfully complete the requirements of the Honors Program (see below) will have “Honors Program Graduate” on their diplomas and transcripts, and will receive a commemorative medallion and academic cords recognizing this honor.

5. Graduate schools, professional programs, and/or prospective employers will note approvingly academic achievement in a rigorous program like Concordia’s Honors Program as well as the interpersonal and social skills developed in curricular and extracurricular activities.

6. In general, students in the Honors Program do not have to do more work than their counterparts in non-Honors classes. The level of discourse in the class is more intense but the expectation in terms of homework is quite similar in time consumption to traditional courses.

VII. Continuing Participation in the Honors Program:

In order to maintain the Honors Scholarship (or membership in the Honors Program for transfer students or current students who join the Program) and be eligible for “Honors Program Graduate” designation on their diploma, the Honors student must

1. maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.25 or higher in all college courses;

2. successfully complete at least 24 hours of Honors courses. (See information under Section V. 6. and V. 7. “Admission to the Honors Program” for transfer students and current Concordia students who do not start the program as freshmen.);

3. make normal progress toward graduating in four academic years with 24 hours of Honors courses;

4. successfully complete the Honors Capstone Seminar during the senior year;

5. participate in a range of extracurricular Honors program activities;

6. meet once a year with the Director of the Honors Program to discuss academic and social progress and plans for the future.
Honors Program students are encouraged to become involved in the Honors Program Advisory Council (described in Section IX) and to participate in campus-wide activities, including Choir, Student Government (ASCU), Community and Worship Life, Ethics Bowl, etc.

**Honors Probation / Dismissal from Honors Program**

At the end of each academic year, the Honors Program Director will verify the academic progress and participation status of Honors Program students. Failure to make normal progress in the Honors Program and/or failure to participate in Honors Program activities outside of the classroom will place the student on probationary status. Failure to remedy these behaviors will, under normal circumstances, result in expulsion from the program.

In most cases, students with a cumulative university GPA below 3.25 will be placed on Honors Probation. Students placed on Honors Probation will receive a letter from the Honors Program Director informing them of their probationary status. A copy of the letter will be sent to the student’s academic advisor. Students may be on Honors Probation for multiple semesters as long as they demonstrate they are making progress toward raising their cumulative university GPA. Normally this will be demonstrated by maintaining a semester GPA of 3.25 or higher.

Students on Honors Probation will continue to receive their Honors Scholarship and will receive a letter from the Honors Program Director at the end of each semester notifying them of their continued probationary status as long as their cumulative university GPA remains below 3.25.

Students on Honors Probation who fail to demonstrate they are making progress toward raising their cumulative university GPA will be dismissed from the program. Students dismissed from the program will no longer receive the Honors Scholarship and will not receive the designation “Honors Program Graduate” on their diploma. Students who wish to take an Honors class after being dismissed from the program must secure the approval of the course instructor(s) and the Director of the Honors Program for each class taken after dismissal.

Students dismissed from the Honors program will be offered the merit scholarship that they would have been offered on admission to the University had they not been part of the Honors program. There is a minimum GPA for renewal of merit scholarships and students will be reviewed for this GPA requirement following their first term under the new merit scholarship.

Students dismissed from the program will receive a letter from the Honors Program Director informing them of their dismissal. Decisions regarding removal from the Honors Program may be appealed, in order, to the Honors Program Committee (see Section IX), the Dean of College of Theology, Arts, and Sciences (CTAS), the Provost, and the President of Concordia University.
VIII. Academic Curriculum:

Honors courses will have an “H” appended to their course number (e.g. HUM 151H). Some of these courses may be interdisciplinary. Some courses may be team-taught.

Honors courses will seek ways to challenge students with creative pedagogical methods and assignments appropriate to the workload for the credit hours earned.

Students may choose from a number of Honors-designated seminars to fulfill General Education requirements. The Honors Program Director will encourage Departments to propose and develop new Honors courses and seminars. See Section IX.

All Honors students who are not in the nursing program are encouraged to take a junior year semester abroad, an experience to be arranged with the Director of International Studies at CU and local faculty representative for AHA International for study abroad programs. Up to six semester hours of academic credit during a study abroad experience may qualify for inclusion as Honors courses at the discretion of the Honors Program Director. Students desiring such annotation on their transcripts should submit a request to the Honors Program Director prior to participation in the study abroad program.

The Honors Program will include a strong service component and opportunities to experience the “City as Text.” The “City as Text” concept—using the community and surrounding regions as an organic part of classes and extra-curricular activities—could be used to develop seminars that will meet General Education requirements for all students.

Honors courses may not be taken with a Pass/No Pass option.

The following list of courses is subject to change with department input. Departments will be consulted on a regular basis about Honors courses. At this time, Honors courses are limited to courses that meet general education requirements. Note there is a different schedule for nursing program and non-nursing program students.

The schedules are meant to demonstrate all possible options. Students may take Honors classes as they fit into their schedule provided they meet prerequisite and class level requirements. Honors students should refrain from taking many non-Honors general education classes to ensure they are able to complete the credit requirements for the Honors Program prior to graduation.

Because Honors classes are limited to general education requirements, students should plan to take the bulk of the required Honors credits before their junior year. Students bringing in AP or transfer credits that meet general education requirements will need to limit the number of non-Honors general education classes taken. An academic advisor or the Honors Program Assistant may be contacted for additional information.
## Honors Classes by Year
### BACHELOR OF ARTS

### Freshman Year

#### Semester One
- **HUM 151H**  Ethics and Citizenship  3 Credits  Yearly
- **MUS 121H**  Music Appreciation  2 Credits  Yearly
- **WR 121H**  English Composition  3 Credits  Yearly

#### Semester Two
- **ART 121H**  Art Appreciation  2 Credits  Yearly
- **ENG 202H**  Intro to Speech  2 Credits  Yearly
- **PSY 201H**  Principles of Psychology  3 Credits  Yearly
- **REL 211/221H**  Old/New Testament  3 Credits  Yearly*

### Sophomore Year

#### Semester One
- **HUM 251H**  From the Pre-Modern to the Post-Modern World  3 Credits  Yearly

#### Semester Two
- **MTH 231H**  Research and Statistics  3 Credits  Alternating Years
- **WR 30XH**  “Advanced” Writing  3 Credits  Yearly*
  (X = WR 303-Rhetorical Approaches to Literature/Culture, WR 304-Creative Nonfiction: Art of the Essay, WR 305-Journalism and Feature Writing, or equivalent)

### Junior Year

#### Semester One
- **HUM 351H**  Challenges/Global Diversity  3 Credits  Yearly
- **REL 371H**  World Religions  2 Credits  Yearly

#### Semester Two
- **SCI 112H**  Environmental Science  3 Credits  Alternating Years

### Senior Year

#### Semester One
- **HON 488H**  Honors Capstone Seminar**  1 Credit  Yearly

#### Semester Two
- **REL 401H**  Faith for Life  3 Credits  Yearly

*Offered on a rotation basis

**Successful completion required in order to receive “Honor Program Graduate” designation on diploma*
# Honors Classes by Year
## NURSING

Due to the nature of the Nursing major, an Honors student in the Nursing program will take 23 credit hours of Honors courses in their first two years and the 1 credit hour Honors Capstone Seminar their Senior year.

### Freshman Year

#### Semester One

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<td>Principles of Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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### Sophomore Year

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### Senior Year

#### Semester One

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<td>Yearly</td>
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*Offered on a rotation basis

**Successful completion required in order to receive “Honors Program Graduate” designation on diploma

NOTE: Nursing students will need to work closely with an academic advisor to ensure the necessary 24 hours of Honors credits are taken, especially when AP or transfer hours are used to fill any General Education or Honors Program requirements.
IX. Honors Program Advisory Councils and Extra-Curricular Activities:

There are two Advisory Councils for the Honors Program: a student council (Student Honors Council) and a faculty council (Honors Program Committee). The two councils will work separately on some projects and together on other projects.

The Honors Program Committee (Faculty) is composed of three faculty members who are invited by the Honors Program Director to participate on the Committee for a period not to exceed three years. Ideally, the Committee will be composed of members who represent the four colleges at Concordia.

The Honors Program Committee has the following duties:

- Propose and make decisions on Honors Program structure, goals, and objectives.
- Invite and make decisions on new courses for the Honors Program.*
- Be involved in admission of new students.
- Make decisions on student appeals.
- Brainstorm extracurricular activities for students.
- Develop procedures for evaluating the Honors Program, its personnel, courses and activities.

* Potential new Honors courses must be submitted to the Director of the Honors Program as Substantive Curricular Modifications by September 1 of the year before potential implementation. After approval by the Honors Program Committee, such courses must go through the normal submission process (approval by department, APC and faculty) and meet all deadlines established by the faculty for new courses.

The Student Honors Council, which models an ethos of servant leadership, is open to all Honors Students. Its leadership is composed of one student representative from each year (one freshman, one sophomore, one junior and one senior) and one President who will chair the council. In total, the Council will consist of 5 leaders. All positions will be voted on by Honors students and all elected officials must maintain good standing in the Honors Program. The President must be a junior or senior Honors student in good standing.

The duties of the Student Honors Council include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Help evaluate the program, including teachers and curriculum.
- Propose changes in the Program, including curriculum, brochure, website, etc.
- Mentor new students.
- Plan and implement service activities and fund raisers.
- Suggest and implement extra-curricular and social activities. These may include faculty sponsored events (e.g. evenings at faculty members’ homes), student pizza parties, or recreational or educational outings. Events organized by the Honors Program will be open to all students at Concordia.
X. Honors Program Administration:

1. The Honors Program will have a Director, chosen by the Dean of CTAS.

2. The Director will receive a stipend for his/her services, to be determined as the equivalent of three hours of adjunct weight load per semester (though it will not involve lowering the Director’s teaching load).

The Duties of the Honors Program Director include, but are not limited to the following:

- Work closely with the CTAS Dean, the Honors Program Committee (Faculty), and the Student Honors Council (Students).
- Develop a budget for the Honors Program.
- Work with Department Chairs and other faculty to create new courses and experiences for the Program.
- Work with Department Chairs to select faculty for Honors sections of courses.
- Evaluate the Program, including courses, personnel and extra-curricular activities, and suggest changes.
- Work with Admissions to recruit Honors Students. Admissions will market the program to a pool of potential students and send a list of eligible students to the Director of the Honors Program, who will invite these students to apply (Fall semester and January/February of Spring semester). As applications arrive (and no later than March 1), the Honors Program Committee (Faculty), along with the Honors Program Director, will select up to twenty-five (25) eligible students each year, who will be asked to accept or reject the scholarship offer within thirty (30) days.
- Monitor, record progress of and routinely report about Honors students to Financial Aid director, who communicates with students about scholarships and to advisors, who are responsible to work with Honors students about progress in the program.
- Develop mentoring program that will enable upper division students to help new students adjust to the program.
- Write an annual report about the Honors Program, sharing information with the CTAS Dean about program, curriculum changes, retention of students, etc. The purpose of the annual report is to improve the program.