**Ethel Waddell Githii Honors Program**

**Student Guide**

(Updated August 2016)

**The E.W. Githii Honors Program Rationale and Mission**

Honors Programs can be found across the nation, in high schools and in colleges and universities. These programs share certain features—the first being the expectation of high academic commitment and integrity among the faculty and student membership. We share that expectation. However, Programs are often distinctive according to the ways that they affirm their unique populations, geographies and missions.

The Ethel Waddell Githii Honors Program exists to encourage an intimate, supportive and engaged intellectual environment—spaces that foster a strong sense of connection and community among women of African descent. Women arrive at Spelman College from diverse geographies, economic circumstances and situations. They bring with them different memories and different dreams. The Program believes that it can express the urgency of building and preserving, among diverse Black women, the kinds of environments that have, do and must exist for us. Our students are in a unique position to produce here and beyond the gates of the College, the environments that we require. Honors expects our students to prioritize their intellectual relationships and balance their academic work with their social engagements.

What makes Githii Honors distinctive? Our program structures and personnel should, whenever possible, reveal ways that students’ scholarly / creative research and writing situates them as “insiders,” owners of a powerful African American liberatory tradition of visionaries, scholars, artists, inventors, healers, scientists, public intellectuals and political actors.

The Githii Honors Program strives to encourage interdisciplinary engagement and questioning in order to embrace an important legacy, and reveal the relevance of all of our areas of scholarly investigation and production.

**Admissions Criteria—two admissions opportunities**

**Entering First Year students**:

Students applying from high school may apply to the Honors Program if they have a demonstrated record of high achievement and whose habits as intellectually curious, committed students are endorsed by members of their faculty. The Honors Program Committee considers this in addition to GPA and test score information (SAT or ACT) provided by their institutions.

*Admission to the Program is competitive*; however, the minimum GPA for eligibility for Honors review is an *unweighted* GPA of 3.5. The minimum and SAT score is 1160. This score includes the combined Math and Verbal scores **and does not** include the Writing score. The ACT minimum score for eligibility is 26. The committee also looks at the ways that applicants describe their extracurricular activities. We do not look for quantity of activities, but for the quality or extent of the commitment. Students may also note whether they have worked for wages in addition to other kinds of activity. Finally, when possible, the review considers the rigor of the high school program. Even though we prefer the unweighted GPA, a student’s participation in Honors, AP, IB or other intellectually challenging programs is considered.

**Rising Sophomores (April deadline--second semester entry):**

Applicants who achieve a minimum 3.5 GPA during the first year of college work and have a record of intellectual engagement and curiosity may apply before the end of April at the conclusion of the second semester. The “Rising Sophomore” application form is available on our website (<http://sites.spelman.edu/honorsprogram/>--click on “Current Students”) and in the Honors Program office (on the shelf outside of Giles 103). Documentation submitted later than May 15 will not be considered. **Transfer students** who are rising sophomores (maximum of 36 s.h., 3rd semester), and who meet the minimum requirements for GPA may apply by submitting the “Rising Sophomores” application form with all supporting documents. Member students who are aware of others who are interested in considering Honors should invite these friends to Honors supported public events.

**In “Good Standing” and Letters of Appeal**

Members who wish to graduate with Full Program Honors must be consistently enrolled at the College for at least 12 hours per semester; meet the Program expectations for intellectual engagement and course completion; **maintain a 3.2 annual grade point average, and avoid earning a grade of “F” in any course.**

Students will be notified by the Honors Director if their GPA falls below our requirements. However, a student who is having difficulty in her courses, or who is just not doing as well as she feels she could, should not be silent about her difficulties. We are a community. Consult with your faculty and then with the Honors Director early in your effort to strengthen your work.

Students who are dismissed from Honors for GPA must meet with the Director and, if it is feasible, request Honors Probation by submitting a formal appeal, in writing. The letter of appeal offers an opportunity to provide the details of your case and why the dismissal should be put on hold.

**Honors Program Curriculum**

The Honors Program curriculum functions within a loose framework of courses intended to bring breadth and interdisciplinarity to our students’ perspectives as critical thinkers, questioners and future professionals. Course offerings will change from semester to semester, but always with an eye to making important connections to your location within the global picture, and your professional or graduate school plans. Of course, requirements will look different depending upon a student’s entry point—as a first or second year/transfer student.

All Honors Program courses and seminars fulfill College core curriculum or graduation requirements.

**First Year Entry:**

CORE

[[1]](#footnote-1)ENG 193: Honors First Year Writing

[[2]](#footnote-2)Math 107 [see the footnote]

[[3]](#footnote-3)PHIL 191: Honors Philosophy

INTERDISCIPLINARY ELECTIVES: **All students** who wish to graduate with Honors will select two 300-400 level elective courses in addition to the CORE courses.

[[4]](#footnote-4)Two Honors elective courses

Honors Thesis Research or Capstone equivalent (2 semesters)

All students who wish to graduate with Honors will prepare an Honors thesis or Capstone equivalent. Many major departments have an internal thesis sequence, which can satisfy the requirements of the Honors Program. Students must attend an Honors thesis workshop to clarify their specific needs to satisfy the requirement.

**Sophomore Entry/Transfer students**

Students entering as sophomores may require exemption from First Year writing and Mathematics courses based on completed coursework. All other course requirements apply.

ENG 193 – HONORS FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION (4)   
A spectrum of writing experiences from analysis to argument to criticism. Emphasis on readings and extended research from literature and nonfiction prose.

MATH 107 –Contemporary Mathematics (4)

An introduction to mathematics in the real world, including elementary probability and statistics, financial and consumer mathematics, with emphasis on quantitative reasoning skills and problem solving.

PHI 191 – HONORS PHILOSOPHY SEMINAR (4)   
An introduction to ancient and modern philosophy. Designed to be intensive. Critical study of six of Plato’s Dialogues (representing the ancient) and Descartes’ Meditations on First Philosophy (representing the modern).

HONORS ELECTIVES (8): A wide range of Honors electives across disciplines challenge and engage students. These electives are seminar based courses specially designed by leading Spelman faculty. They are characterized as rigorous, writing and critical thinking intensive, interdisciplinary in content and/or approaches, as well as international or global in scope. Available courses updated on the webpage.

HONORS THESIS RESEARCH (4-8)   
Your research for Honors is departmentally supervised. Advising for your senior research takes place throughout your four years of study. Your selection of a Thesis advisor must be determined no later than your Junior Year. Students intending to graduate with Honors Program recognition must complete a thesis approved by their Department, and by the Honors Program. Honors Program hosts workshops on thesis preparation each spring semester. Calendar.

**The Honors Program Participation Agreement**

This Agreement indicates the Honors Program’s interest in developing and supporting the intellectually engaged student. The First Year Honors Retreat as well as the Reading Program and discussions are intended to model the kind of diverse intellectual inquiry and curiosity that defines the women of Githii Honors beyond the expected classroom performance, where you should also model the attitude of intellectual engagement, independent thought, questioning and preparation.

Your first year co-curricular activities *are required* to maintain your good standing with Honors Program. Beyond the first year, the Honors Program expects to see its students defining and demonstrating “the intellectually engaged, curious, assertive volunteer learner. We expect to see you present at important Honors –sponsored events, developmental workshops, and invite your participation in support or development of programming.

First year activities are required. However, if a student reports that she cannot attend the Honors Retreat, or major book discussions, she must give early notice with documented evidence of her conflicting commitment. The student must then apply with the Director for approval of an alternative engagement either prior to the Retreat, or during the first semester. A st*udent who does not attend the Retreat or the book series and does not demonstrate participation in significant alternatives may be asked to show reasons why should not be removed from the Honors Program.*

**Advising:** Honors students have priority registration. Therefore, it is wise to meet early with your academic advisor and/or the Honors Director. For major courses, develop a relationship with your department chair early in your academic career, and/or with other faculty in your major department.

Meet with the Honors Director at least once per year, but more frequent visits may be useful in individual cases to review your first year experience and to discuss your participation in co-curricular activities. Meet with your first-year advisor in your second semester, for early registration.

Records kept in the Director’s office are for the purpose of advising and letters of recommendation, and will be shared with Honors faculty only for purposes of recommendation letters, scholarships, internships, graduate programs, etc.

**Co-Curricular Activities:** Students may meet with the Honors Director, Academic Advisor, or other mentors throughout the year to discuss progress in courses, and broader matters related to preparations for scholarship application, thesis development, career interests and other matters that relate to student development and long-term planning.

INFORMATION RESOURES

Subscribe to your Honors website and to departmental resources to keep abreast of opportunities and information relevant to your development and planning.

1. Students will take ENG 193 either in the first or second semester, based on available space. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Math 107 is not an Honors math, but appears here as a College Core requirement for Honors students who do not exempt mathematics based on a higher math placement; and who are not pursuing a higher math sequence for their major requirements. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. PHIL 191 is NOT RECOMMENDED until you have completed first year writing. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. A list of approved courses is posted on the site each semester. Also, the Director can approve proposed courses that do not have prior approval. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)