

Ethel Waddell Githii Honors Program Student Guide

(Updated August 2019)

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 SAT score is 1300. The ACT minimum score for eligibility is 28. 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.

Required Courses:

CORE

¹ENG 193: Honors First Year Writing

²PHIL 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.

³Two 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.

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.

¹ Students will take ENG 193 either in the first or second semester, based on available space. **Only required by Sophomore Entry/Transfer students if the college has not accepted composition credit.**

² PHIL 191 is NOT RECOMMENDED until you have completed first year writing.

³ 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.

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 ELECTIVE OPTION (Pilot)

The Honors Elective Option, or H-Option, is an elective option that allows students to work with a faculty member of their choice inside of a course at the 300+ levels and for Independent Studies courses that they are taking to make it an honors elective option. Concerning the latter, students in the Natural Sciences who use the Independent Study option for summer courses and verifiable research and internship experiences may more readily recognize the relevance of how the independent study pertains. Students must present the H-Option form and the course syllabus to the Honors Program Director for approval no later than the fourteenth day (14) of the course semester. If approved, students would need to earn at least a "B" in their H-Option experience for it to count towards satisfying Honors elective credit.

HONORS THESIS RESEARCH--TRADITIONAL (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.

HONORS THESIS RESEARCH—NONTRADITIONAL (Varies)

Your research for Honors may be interdisciplinary. In this case, you must establish a committee of at least three faculty with relevant expertise to supervise the project. The selection of this committee must occur no later than your Junior Year. Students intending to graduate with Honors Program recognition must complete a thesis approved by their committee, and by the Honors Program. **Choosing to work outside of your major department may disqualify you from receiving departmental honors.** Honors Program hosts workshops on thesis preparation each spring semester.

ENRICHMENT/ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES (Pilot)

The character of notably engaged intellectuals reveals a capacity for introspection and curiosity. Honors requires students to make evident the quality of their inner lives through an engagement with activities that sets in relief this inner world. Our badging program is designed to assist you in making independent choices beyond the classroom that showcase seriousness of intellectual purpose. Every student must make satisfactory progress (see below) in order to remain in the Honors Program. Consider the activities below.

Habits of Mind - attend events that enrich your mind or allow you to engage in a meaningful way outside of your courses:

- 1x AUC events
- 2x Intercampus events (GSU/G-Tech)
- 3x Regional events
- 4x National events
- 5x International events

Scholarly Events

- _____ Academic talks/lectures (2 pts)
- _____ Disciplinary conferences (4 pts)
- _____ Fellowship Foundation Workshops (2 pts)
- _____ Study Abroad informational sessions (2 pts)
- _____ Library programming (2 pts)
- _____ Documentary film screenings (1 point)

Cultural Events

- _____ Museum exhibits and events (1 pt)
- _____ Live Cultural Performances (1 pt)
- _____ Film Festivals (1 pt)
- _____ Cultural Festivals (1 pt)
- _____ Community Performances (1 pt)
- _____ Library programming (2 pts)
- _____ Live musical performances (1 pt)
- _____ NPU Meetings (2 pt)

Habits of Mind – participate in activities and organizations that enrich your mind or allow you to engage in a meaningful way outside of your courses:

Scholarly Involvement

- _____ Intercampus activities/experiences (
- _____ Workshops and Webinars (3 pts)
- _____ Domestic Exchange Programs (5 pts)
- _____ International Exchange Programs (10 pts)
- _____ Social Justice Program/Events (1 pt)
- _____ Participate in Honors Program events (5 pts)
- _____ Participate in Alpha Lambda Delta events (3 pts)
- _____ Enroll/Audit classes at the 500+ level (8 pts)
- _____ Audit classes (8 pts)
- _____ Enter competitions (TBD)
- _____ Compete with Quiz Bowl Team (5 pts)

Career Development

- _____ Career Planning Events/Corporate Events (1 pt)
- _____ Participate in the Career Fair (1 pt)
- _____ Enroll in Handshake (2 pts)

Miscellaneous

- _____ Subscriptions to professional journals (3 pts)
- _____ Purchase "student business" cards (1 pt)
- _____ Complete Health Sciences forms (2 pts)
- _____ Register to vote (4 points)
- _____ Obtain a library card (1 point)
- _____ Obtain a passport (1 point)
- _____ Apply for research opportunities (2 pts)
- _____ Apply to the Presidential Reading Circle (2 pts)
- _____ Apply for Prestigious Fellowships/Scholarships (5 pts)
- _____ Create short study travel opportunities (4 pts)
- _____ Work independently with an archivist (3 points)
- _____ Arrange "meetings of the mind" (3 points)
- _____ Plan an alternative homecoming (3 points)
- _____ Participate in alternative Spring Break (5 points)
- _____ Foster relationships with other Honors Programs (1 pts)
- _____ Contribute to Journals for Student Research (3 pts)
- _____ Participate in conferences as presenters (6 pts)
- _____ Joining and Paying HPSA Dues (t-shirt) (5 points)
- _____ Purchase Honors Program Blazers/shirts (5 pts)
- _____ Apply for ALD scholarships (2 points)
- _____ Submit articles to ALD Journals (2 points)
- _____ Read Honors Program email and respond (5 pts)
- _____ E-board participation (5 points)
- _____ Applying for Internships (1 point)

Coloring Coding Legend

Black: Honors Program Specific

Blue: Cultural

Orange: Academic

Purple: Career Planning

Red: Flexible/Freestyle=dependent on student major/interest

Goals

- Enrichment
- Promote agency

- Promote intellectual sharing
- Shape scholarly behaviors

Potential Competencies

- Leadership
- Effective Communication (oral/written)
- Intellectual—Writing publications/Critique works

Intellectual Sharing Activities

- Blogs
- Digital Narrative
- Reflections
- Research Journals

Satisfactory Progress to Remain in Honors

- 20 points for Seniors
- 30 points for Juniors
- 40 points for Sophomores
- 50 points for Freshman
- At least 5 points per year must come from the Career Development category
- At least 5 points per year must come from the Cultural category

Notes

- *Students can petition to add events
- *First-year students are encouraged to participate in activities that are on campus
- *To do: Decide which types of learning artifacts will be assessed (i.e. reflections, etc.)

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 student 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 she 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 RESOURCES

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

