

The Honors Thesis and the Human Service Studies Major **Revised 10/16/24**

The Process of Matching Students with Mentors:

We acknowledge that Honors students may already have a preferred faculty member in the Human Service Studies Department, someone with whom they feel most at ease. In such cases, students are encouraged to take the initiative and approach that faculty member as their first point of contact within the department. For those who do not have a pre-existing relationship, reaching out to the department chair is the next step.

Every faculty member, including the chair, who engages in the initial conversation with an Honors or Elon College Fellows student, is dedicated to identifying the faculty member in the department who best aligns with the student's interests. The student will then be guided to continue their discussions with the most suitable faculty member, ensuring their needs are met.

In all cases, the match between the student and the faculty member should be mutually agreed upon by the Human Service Studies Department faculty. This process is designed to ensure that every student is paired with a faculty member who can best support their academic and personal growth. Under no circumstances will a faculty member be assigned to work with a student for reasons other than achieving the best match between student interests and faculty expertise.

Electives:

We agree that four hours of HNR 4998 /ECF 4999 credit will count as a four (4) semester hour elective in the Human Service Studies majors. Students are required to complete two (2) such electives. Honors and EC Fellows must still complete one elective.

Honors Thesis / Elon College Fellows Research and the Existing Senior Seminar:

The senior seminar in Human Service Studies is a pivotal part of the academic journey for Honors and ECF students. It includes several components and a major research project. Therefore, the Honors thesis /ECF research project cannot simply be a substitute for the senior seminar. Honors and ECF students in the senior seminar may elect either to continue focusing on their thesis topic for their research project in the course (thus dovetailing the thesis work with the seminar), or they may elect to initiate a new line of study. Suppose students choose to work on existing research. In that case, they must work with their mentor and the senior seminar instructor to develop assignments comparable to the other students' work.

Regardless of their choice, Honors and ECF students in the senior seminar will be called upon to take a leadership role in sharing their thesis work to date with the class. This is not just a requirement, but a recognition of their expertise and a chance to inspire their peers. We believe that such student leadership in the senior seminar is instrumental in helping other students better understand the research process and enhancing the quality of work throughout the class.

What Constitutes Acceptable Honors Thesis Work in Human Services

An acceptable Honors thesis will generally be at least 40 to 50 pages (approximately twice the length of a typical senior seminar paper). The thesis should consist of multiple chapters or sections, including a comprehensive literature review, theoretical framework, methods section, results, and discussion. It must make an original contribution to knowledge within the specific field of study, whether through original

data collection or secondary data analysis. The thesis should meet publishable standards, adhering to disciplinary expectations regarding sources, citation practices, and overall writing quality.