English Honors Program Policies (8/31/2018)

The English Honors Program offers students the opportunity to pursue advanced study in English or creative writing, to work in independent studies and small classes with English Department faculty, and to learn from and with a small peer group of committed students.

Each fall the program recruits eight to twelve students to participate as a group in a series of intense seminars and independent studies, usually beginning in the spring of the student’s junior year and culminating in a thesis at the end of the senior year.

Program Requirements:

The English Honors Program consists of twelve units (four courses): two sections of an exclusive honors seminar (496A Honors section) and two independent studies (499), normally taken in the fall and spring of the senior year, during which the student writes a thesis. The courses can also fulfill requirements for the major and for the Honors College (if applicable). Many English Honors students are double majors, or plan a semester abroad during their junior or senior year; the requirements for the English Honors Program can usually be successfully coordinated with these individual needs. The thesis can be counted for Honors College credit (Honors College students who are also English Honors only have to write a single thesis for both programs).

The Seminars:

The Honors seminars are exclusive and challenging small topical seminars that will provide not only advanced study in a topic of the faculty member’s research specialty, but also advanced training in the critical reading, argumentative writing, and research discipline necessary to pursue independent thesis research. Since English Honors cohorts usually comprise both English and Creative Writing majors, the seminar faculty are encouraged to incorporate some creative assignments into the coursework. English Honors students must take two designated English Honors seminars, and one is offered every semester.

The Thesis:

The honors thesis is a substantial and original piece of critical or creative work that forms the signal achievement and culmination of the student’s undergraduate career. Students may apply to write either, or both, a critical or a creative thesis.

The critical thesis is a long essay modeled after published scholarship in the English discipline and written under the advisement of a member of the English faculty. It should advance an original and well-researched argument that participates in existing scholarly debates about a topic of the student’s choosing. Critical theses may be of any length, but customarily they are 25 to 50 pages.

The creative thesis is a substantial piece of creative writing in one of three genres—Fiction, Non-fiction, or Poetry—written under the advisement of a member of the creative writing faculty. Note: Students wishing to write a creative thesis are strongly encouraged to apply for English Honors. Due to great demand and limited faculty availability, students accepted into the English Honors program will be prioritized for thesis advising.
Application Process:

Any student may apply for English Honors, regardless of their major or their college. Students in the Honors College must apply as other students for admission to English Honors, and admitted students are not required to join the Honors College. Admission is competitive, but not dependent upon any single factor.

Students who miss the application deadline but are able to turn in all materials before the committee meets to review, usually within 1-2 weeks of the application deadline, may be considered but will not be prioritized. After the committee reviews and makes decisions, no further applications for that year will be considered.

Honors College Note: Honors College students who are only applying for a creative writing thesis (not English Honors) may turn in applications after the application deadline. These will be considered on a rolling basis but will not be prioritized for Creative Writing faculty advising.

Application Requirements and Eligibility:

Applicants should submit a completed application form, which includes a writing sample, a personal statement, and the names of two faculty members who will serve as references.

The writing sample(s) should be in the genre of the thesis for which the student is applying (e.g. a critical essay about literature for a critical thesis, a set of poems for a poetry thesis). The personal statement of one to two pages should briefly account for the student’s interest in the English Honors program and give a brief description of a possible thesis project or topic. Faculty references will be contacted by the department directly. Faculty references do not have to be members of UA faculty, but should have instructed the student at some point (transfer students may list as references faculty from prior institutions). Students may find it beneficial to ask faculty members for permission to list them as references prior to doing so.

Since the English Honors program usually takes three semesters to complete, it is best to apply before the final three semesters of a student’s undergraduate career. Any student, however, regardless of major or college, is eligible to apply. Students with only a single semester left in their undergraduate study, however, will most likely not be admitted.

Transfer students are eligible to apply.

Application forms and deadlines are available on the English Department website:

http://english.arizona.edu/english-honors-program