

# APPENDIX B - HONORS IN THE SOCIAL WORK MAJOR

## Honors in Social Work SSW:4192

Students who are identified as Honors students at The University of Iowa (those with GPA's of 3.33 or higher) are encouraged to register for Honors in Social Work. By successfully completing an Honors Project under the supervision of a faculty member in the School of Social Work, students will graduate with "Honors in Social Work". Simply taking honors courses or being a member of The University of Iowa Honors program does NOT qualify for an "Honors" designation at graduation, nor can a student use that designation on their resumes after graduation. To have graduated "with honors in social work at The University of Iowa," students MUST register for, and complete, an Honors project and submit the required paperwork to the Registrar's Office prior to graduation. Only students who are admitted to the School of Social Work can undertake an Honors project and register for this course.

Students should give serious consideration to an Honors Project in Social Work in the Spring semester of their junior year and approach a faculty member about their interest in completing the project during the Fall and Spring semesters of their senior year. Because of the heavy course demands of students entering the program as seniors (15 hours are required in their Fall semester), it would be difficult for a student entering as a senior to undertake and complete the Honors Project.

Students who wish to undertake an Honors Project will register for 3 hours of "Honors in Social Work" in the Fall semester and register for another 3 hours for this course in the Spring semester. Students who earn the 6 hours and satisfactorily complete the Honors Project (as determined by their faculty supervisor of the Honors Project) will earn the Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Social Work. At the same time that students are completing the Honors Project, they must maintain a GPA of 3.33 or otherwise have a GPA of 3.33 at the time of graduation. If they do not have the 3.33, they cannot graduate "with Honors".

Note: Although most students will register for the Honors Project in the Fall semester of their Senior year, selected students may begin their projects in the Spring semester of their Junior year with the approval of their Honors Project faculty supervisor. The negotiation of the timeline for the project must be approved by the faculty supervisor, dependent on their availability to monitor the project activities.

### **The five options for Honors projects in the School of Social Work:**

1. A research study completed under the supervision of the faculty member that has agreed to supervise this study.
  - The research study can be an original idea developed and implemented by the student or may be part of a larger study of a faculty member that the student takes responsibility for.
  - a. The Honors paper would follow the outline of traditional research papers, including the Introduction, Method Section, Results, and Discussion.
  - b. Studies can be either quantitative or qualitative. They must follow the

generally prescribed methods of data collection and analysis. The sophistication of the analysis will be determined between the student and their faculty supervisor. Descriptive studies are certainly appropriate, although hypothesis-testing may be possible if the student has sufficient knowledge for this level of analysis.

- c. The Honors paper would follow the guidelines of APA in format. Anticipated length: 35-40 pages.
2. Students can complete an Honors project that addresses a research question of interest, but does not require original data collection, nor conventional statistical analysis. For example, a student might address a question such as “When can children be reasonably expected to be left unsupervised by a parent for more than a short time?” This represents a research question that was pursued by a former Honors student in Social Work. The student examined the issue of “latchkey children” and examined expectations of children when they are left home unsupervised between the time they finish their school day and their working parents return home. The student obtained and critiqued different evaluation tools to establish the criteria for judging the competence of children to be left unsupervised. There are many, many research questions that can be posed and answered by students that do not require original data collection and analysis. Many questions can be answered by a thorough review of the literature and examination of social work practices with the population of interest.
  - a. The student and supervising faculty member agree on the research question and frame the study and project without an expectation of data collection and analysis.
  - b. APA guidelines are followed for this paper. Anticipated length: 35-40 pages.
3. The third option is a policy analysis or historical analysis. In either of these two instances, the Honors student and their faculty supervisor agree on the social welfare policy or historical event/personage that will serve as the basis for the Honors paper.
  - a. These papers will follow the conventional formats of papers devoted to subjects of policy or history.
  - b. APA guidelines are followed for this paper. Anticipated length: 35-40 pages.
4. The fourth option is a project whose product involves both a creative “media” effort and an explanatory paper. By “media,” it is understood that a video (VHS), DVD, CD-ROM, photographic exhibit, PowerPoint presentation, or an internet website will be produced on the topic of interest. Topics, of course, must be social work-specific and the subject of the video, etc. must be agreed upon between the Honors student and the faculty supervisor.

For example, a student might produce a video on organizing and leading a protest action about an issue that represents social injustice that can be used in the Social Processes course. The student might have an interest in services for persons with disabilities and plan and produce a video on this element of social work practice that can be shown in the Introduction to Social Work course. There are many, many ideas for videos and other electronic formats that can be developed and implemented by students.

- a. In addition to the audio-visual product, the student must prepare a 15-20-page paper in which they review the literature attendant to the

- topic of interest and present information about the development and utilization of the audiovisual material they developed.
  - b. APA guidelines are followed for this paper.
5. The fifth option is a project whose product involves the development of a curriculum, handbook, training manual, grant, or conference that addresses an issue of concern to social work *and* an explanatory paper. For example, a student might develop an agency handbook for survivors of sexual assault, an educational curriculum for high school students about eating disorders, a grant for funding a smoking cessation program at a substance abuse treatment center, a statewide conference on domestic violence. Possibilities for these projects – like all those described in #1-4 above, are only limited by the agreement of the product between the student and their faculty supervisor. In every instance, the student must clearly play a leadership role in the development of each product and the product should not have been used in any previous (or current) class that a student is enrolled in.
- a. In addition to the product, the student must prepare a 15-20-page paper in which they review the literature attendant to the topic of interest and present information about the development and utilization of the material they developed under this option.
  - b. APA guidelines are followed for this paper.

## Honors Contract (Also see Appendix F for form with list of options)

At the time that students and their faculty supervisors agree to work together on an Honors Project, a “contract” will be established and signed by the student, faculty supervisor and Honors Advisor for the School. This contract will specify the Learning Goals, Objectives, Timeframe, parameters of the intended product, and specifying the Honors Option that is being used to guide the project.

Although most Honors Projects will involve a single option, it may be possible for selective students to combine options across consecutive semesters as long as the final product represents a cohesive effort. For example, if a student was involved in some aspect of a large practice-based research study with their Honors faculty supervisor in the fall semester and wrote an abbreviated Research Report of the findings (Option #1), in their second semester, they might develop a “Practice Manual” for agency social workers (Option #5) that was directly associated with the research findings. The final product—the Honors Thesis—would be a “combined” paper that incorporated both the research study and the practice manual. Guidelines for the submission of the paperwork associated with *completion* of the Honors Project are found on the website of the Honors Program at The University of Iowa:

<http://honors.uiowa.edu/>

In addition, or instead of, undertaking and completing one of the above honors projects in the School of Social Work, any student who qualifies for the Honors Program at The University of Iowa, can participate in many of the Honors classes offered by The University of Iowa, can elect to pursue an “honors designation” for non-honors classes (by agreement with the course instructor), participate in an Honors Internship (143:000), participate in Honors Service Learning (143:042), Honors Research Practicum (143:100), or Honors Teaching Practicum (143:101). A discussion of all of these options—and others open to Honors Program members—are presented in publications of the Honors Program and on the Honors Program website (see above).