BIOLOGY HONORS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

For students with an overall and Biology major GPA of 3.5 or higher, the research experience can be combined with a written thesis towards graduation with Honors. Below is information that should answer most of your questions about requirements for Honors in Biology. Barry Yedvobnick, Biology Honors Coordinator holds a meeting to register Honors students and discuss the requirements in more detail each August, just before the Fall semester begins. Notice of the meeting is posted in the Biology Majors conference of LearnLink, and also announced on this website.

1) You must be a senior, maintain an overall and major 3.50 GPA and complete at least two semesters of Biology 495 research. Graduation semester you must register for 495BWR for your thesis to count towards the senior writing requirement.

Second semester juniors who plan to graduate after a Fall semester must register for Honors in the previous academic year’s Fall semester. Those students will therefore spend 3 semesters in the Honors program.

2) You must pass a graduate level course (500 level or higher). If the class is three or four credits it can fulfill a Biology Dept. course requirement, assuming that your Biology academic advisor feels it is appropriate. A two credit course can fulfill the Honors requirement. The graduate course must be taken for a letter grade.

3) You must prepare a short research proposal (3-5 pages) describing your project. It should introduce the research area, and address the hypotheses to be tested and methods utilized. It must be submitted (to B.Y.) by early November. Students having previously prepared a Biology 499 proposal who have decided to enroll in Honors must modify their proposal according to the guidelines above.

4) Students using human participants in their research need Emory IRB approval. (http://www.emory.edu/IRB/). Approval to begin your research can take weeks or months; discuss this with your research advisor.

5) By January you need to select a committee. The committee of three must have two Biology Dept. faculty and one faculty member from a different department. If your research advisor is from outside the Biology Dept. then they are considered the non-Biology committee member. Please note: all committee members must be faculty members of Emory University. For instance, if your research advisor is at CDC and not an Emory faculty member then they cannot be a voting member of your committee (you need three voting members).

6) You must prepare an oral progress report (15-20 minutes) and a short written progress report for the committee in February. The February date should allow time for additional experiments if suggested by the committee. Your progress report should address the following: Hypothesis tested, Aims/Goals of Project, Experimental approaches, Results to date, Interpretation/Assessment of results, Planned experiments prior to end of project. Note that your committee will ask questions during your progress report as well as your final oral defense. These questions may pertain to your data, or they may pertain to more general issues of your research field: be prepared.
7) Your must give a final oral presentation during a thesis defense in April. It should last about 30 minutes; this will be followed by questions from your committee. At that point your Honors level is voted on by the committee. Honors level is typically determined by the quality of three things: 1. Data; 2. Written Thesis; 3. Oral presentation and responses to committee questions. After the defense you will make final corrections to your written thesis and submit it.

8) You will be recognized at the College Honors Ceremony in May.

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