

BIOLOGY HONORS REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

These departmental requirements complement those of the [College](#).

- 1) **GPA requirement**
- 2) **Graduate course requirement**
- 3) **Proposal**
- 4) **Committee selection and responsibilities**
- 5) **Grading (for advisors)**
- 6) **Progress report**
- 7) **Thesis**
- 8) **Dropping honors**
- 9) **Honors Ceremony**

Keep in mind that students need to:

- By Sep. 1, email an [application](#) for Biology Honors to Arri Eisen, bio honors coordinator.
- Attend a Fall meeting run by the College for *all college Honors students*; if students miss this meeting (there is more than one opportunity to attend one) they may be dropped from the program. Students will be contacted by the College with dates.

1) GPA requirement

- Students must be seniors, maintain an *overall* and *major* 3.50 GPA and complete at least two semesters of Biology 495 research. Graduation semester students must register for 495BWR for the thesis to count towards the senior writing requirement.
- Second semester juniors who plan to graduate in Fall '17 must register for Honors in the Fall '16 semester.

2) GRADUATE COURSE requirement

- Students 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 only fulfill the Honors requirement.
 - The graduate course must be taken for a letter grade; talk with the instructor about the syllabus, requirements, etc.
 - Check online for the IBS and RSPH course lists for ideas.
 - Students may be able to register for the class on OPUS, otherwise contact prof for permission.

3) PROPOSAL (by Nov 4)

- Students prepare a short research proposal (3-5 pages) describing their honors project. Proposals introduce the research area, then address the hypotheses to be tested and methods to be used.
- Students submit proposals to Arri Eisen via email by Nov 4, 2017.
- Honors candidates who previously prepared a Biology 499 proposal must upgrade their proposal to the honors level and include the above sections.

- Students using human participants in their research must have Emory IRB approval (<http://www.emory.edu/IRB/>). Approval to begin such research can take weeks or months; discuss this with research advisor as soon as possible.

4) COMMITTEE (selected by January 24)

- By January 24, students select a committee and email names to College (Carlee Beard) and Departments (Arri Eisen).

- The committee must include at least three **faculty** members employed at Emory University:

- One of whom must be the research advisor

- At least one of whom must be in the Emory College Biology Department

- At least one of whom must be from outside the Biology Department

•Committee responsibilities:

Much like a graduate thesis committee, the honors committee mentors, facilitates, and monitors student progress. Specifically, committee members:

1. Read and evaluate student written and oral progress reports (by March 1); student submits a form indicating completion of progress reports to the coordinator.

2. Read and comment on the student thesis (by April 5).

3. Evaluate the student thesis (written and oral) and assign level of honors (as elaborated below)

5) GRADING (advisor only, submit by Dec 5 and April 30):

- Research advisors, please submit a grade for fall semester (by Dec 5) and for spring semester (by Apr 30) by email to the coordinator, Arri Eisen, at aeisen@emory.edu.

- Grades are on an A to F scale, with +’s and –’s if needed. If you have any questions about appropriate grades, please contact Arri.

6) PROGRESS REPORT (presented by March 1, form due March 3)

- Complete the **honors progress report** form on the Biology website and return it to Arri Eisen by **March 3**—scanned and emailed is fine.

- PLEASE NOTE: STUDENTS WHO DO NOT COMPLETE THEIR ORAL PRESENTATION BY MARCH 1 WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE HONORS PROGRAM.**

- Students 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. Students reserve a conference room for presentations at the Biology Dept. office.

- The 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.

- The committee will ask questions during and after the progress report. These questions may pertain to specific data or more general issues of the research field: be prepared.

- At this meeting the committee is informed they will be provided with a publication-quality version of the thesis by April 1. Students should also schedule their thesis defense date and then reserve a room for 90 minutes.

7) THESIS (to committee by April 1, defend by April 5, to college by April 10)

•**Under no circumstances should students submit a thesis to their committee without their research advisor having read, revised and approved it.** A cover sheet designating this approval is on the Bio Dept Honors website.

•**NOTE: Some faculty are out of town in mid to late April: be certain to determine that the entire committee can be present during these times.**

•Copies of former students' Honors theses are available to peruse in Bio Dept Office; please do not remove these.

•The final oral presentation during the thesis defense should last about 30 minutes; this will be followed by general questions from the audience. Friends and family are welcome, but will be asked to leave after the general Q&A, so that then the committee can ask questions and make comments.

•Levels of honors (guidelines):

Honors: the student has performed excellent work and understands it, writes about it and explains it well to an expert and to a general audience.

High Honors: the student does excellent work and understands it, writes about it and explains it well to an expert and to a general audience, and the work has reached the level at which it is ready to be presented or has already been presented at a national meeting.

Highest Honors: the student does excellent work and understands it, writes about it and explains it well to an expert and to a general audience, and the work is of publishable quality, i.e. it has been published or may well be, possibly as part of a larger paper, in the future.

8) DROPPING HONORS

•If a student decides at any time this academic year not to complete the Honors Program, please let Arri Eisen know.

•If a student drops out of Honors during the 495BWR semester, but still needs the writing requirement, a thesis quality paper will need to be written and evaluated.

9) HONORS CEREMONY & CELEBRATION (May 13)

•Honors advisors are expected and invited to attend a special Honors graduation ceremony and present students with their honors fourragere, the symbol of all their hard work.