

## UCCS Honors program – Cohort 2021

### Vision

Fostering the culture of intentional learners at UCCS, committed to service, personal growth, and a positive contribution to the local and global community with an understanding of **Gray Matters**, which is a unique perspective, a mindset, that multiple and competitive complex views can exist at the same time, thus allowing us to appreciate diversity in both ideas and solutions.

**The UCCS Honors Program aims to foster a culture of intentional learners who are committed to service and personal growth, while making positive contributions to the local and global community. Central to these aims is an appreciation for Gray Matters, which we understand as the unique perspective, or mindset, that multiple or competing complex views can exist at the same time. Engaging with Gray Matters allows us to appreciate diversity in both ideas and solutions.**

### Honors Learning Outcomes

Motivating students who want to broaden their horizons beyond the classroom by promoting their:

- Passion for life-long learning with stimulating peer-group interactions.
- Appreciation for diversity of thought and opinion.
- Development of creative problem-solving skills and analytical thinking.
- Preparation to be outstanding candidates for future education and job opportunities.
- Contributions to the global and the local community.
- Leadership aspirations by including all perspectives in decision making.
- Understanding of Gray Matters, its ambiguity, indeterminacy, diversity, and complexity.

### Honors Program Portfolio Requirement

**A reviewed publication:** a document, a piece of art, a framework, a movie, an animation, a poster, a thesis project, or a portfolio where a student, using topics and tools in their chosen area of study, can explain their narrative and understanding about any of the following: an experience, a problem, a case study, a theater production, a research project, a study abroad experience, or a computer program analysis, exhibiting the student's learning of Gray Matters.

Portfolios will be part of UCCS digital collection.

## Academic Rigor

Students accepted in the Honors Program will have

1. Access to the “Gray Matters” course, which is a cornerstone of our program.
2. Emphasis on regular one-on-one faculty interaction with Honors students.
3. An opportunity to demonstrate learning and growth through the Honors Program Portfolio. The Honors Program Portfolio will provide an opportunity to deepen intentional learning in Gray Matters areas that the students are passionate about, encouraging personal growth and community impact. We believe that good ideas need our clear and personal voice, and are to be expressed succinctly and professionally. The Honors Program Portfolio depth is supported by two designated courses of the student’s choice. The assigned Honors Program faculty advisor will guide the student with the Honors Program Portfolio mentor selected from the UCCS faculty members across all departments.
4. Experiential learning outside the classroom with peers and mentors contributing to growth of global awareness through volunteering and engagement.

## Honors Program Core Values

Gray Matters explores the intersection of the mind and society with a focus on how we think, learn, and live. Topics of discussion are designed to investigate the role of ambiguity in the gray spaces of human endeavor. This course anchors the philosophy of our Honors Program, namely, that **Gray** exists in real-life situations and often times there is nothing definite, black and white. Students will learn adaptability and flexibility through the various Gray Matters interdisciplinary themes from perspectives drawn from disciplines such as Complex Systems, Leadership, Communication and Education, History, Ethics, Philosophy, Psychology, Mental Health, and others.

This philosophy provides Honors Program Core Values. Honors Program students are encouraged to embed Honors Program Core Values in their Honors Portfolio.

Honors Program students will strive to embody and promote these Core Values:

- (a) To foster empathy and compassion for people, including oneself.
- (b) To embrace the realization that there are always multiple and diverse perspectives.
- (c) To recognize that both collective wisdom and individual solutions may be appropriate alternatives in problem solving.
- (d) To support diversity and inclusion in action and thoughts.
- (e) To exhibit open-mindedness, self-reliance, intellectual curiosity, personal responsibility, and integrity.
- (f) To promote an understanding of and appreciation for scientific discourse and scholarship.

## Eligibility Criteria for Honors Scholarship

### Cohort 2021 Admission Criteria:

A total of about thirty \$1000 per year Honors Scholarships for four years will be awarded, by invitation only, to those students who have:

- (a) Cumulative High School GPA of at least 3.5,
- (b) Test scores (at least) ACT: 26 or SAT:1300 (test scores optional for Cohort 2021)
- (c) Essay (Prompts at the scholarship web-page).
- (d) Interview: Either face-to-face interview at UCCS (if face-to-face meeting is not possible, online/phone interview or video submission required).

Honors Admission Committee will review all applications and select the finalists for invitation.

### Plan of Study Requirements

Students accepted in the Honors Program will have the opportunity to interact with motivated and like-minded peers, who understand that good citizenship includes contributing to society. Besides the courses in their own degree program, Honors students are required to take the additional courses required to graduate with Honors from UCCS as described below. Many of our students embed these courses in their degree program without additional tuition.

Once accepted into the program, University Honors students will graduate with University Honors if they include the following:

- **Gray Matters course (GPS1010/3010):** All students receiving a UCCS Honors Scholarship must enroll in Gateway Program Seminar (GPS) 1010/3010 (Gray Matters) in their Freshman year. This course anchors the philosophy of our Honors Program: that **Gray** exists in real-life situations and often times there is no definite, black and white. Students will learn adaptability and flexibility through the various Gray Matters interdisciplinary themes such as Complex Systems, Leadership, History, Ethics, Philosophy, Psychology, etc. Includes **Research Methods Tutorial:** Honors students will participate in Research Methods Tutorial during the GPS 1010 Gray Matters course towards preparing a beginning proposal, possibly towards their Honors Program Portfolio (HNRS 4950) to be completed during their senior year. The Research Methods Tutorial will teach students how to be successful in an extended research project by developing skills in discipline-specific research, planning, time management, and editing.
- **Public Speaking course (COMM 2100) suggested but not required.**

- **HNRS 3011 Conversations around Complexity offered in Spring semester for students as a transition course towards two designated courses and HNRS 4950.**
- **Honors Program Portfolio (HNRS 4950):** Completed by the student or group of students in coordination with their Honors Program Portfolio faculty advisor and Honors Program Portfolio mentor. Taken in the semester when the student expects to complete the Portfolio and submit it to the Honors Program by Oct 30<sup>th</sup> for the Fall semester Graduation, and March 30<sup>th</sup> for the Spring semester Graduation. The report will be reviewed by an Honors Program Portfolio mentor, and then reviewed by two Honors Program Faculty members associated with that Portfolio during that semester. The feedback must be provided to the student within ten days after the student submits their report. The final report could be placed on the Honors Program website as a form of online publication by the Honors Program. These reports may be briefly mentioned by the Honors Program during the senior Graduation Ceremony, acknowledging the students' Portfolios. List of acceptable portfolio ideas have been mentioned earlier (See Honors Program Portfolio Requirement section). Other available venues for possible publication are UCCS Kraemer Library's permanent collection, CSURF (Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum), Mountain Lion Research Day (Poster presentation), regional conferences specific to student major, and Research Synthesis/Case Studies for Nursing Students. Publication or presentation in national and international conferences and journals, coauthored with their mentors, provide another method to satisfy these requirements, and is encouraged by the UCCS Honors Program. Alternative forms of portfolio presentation will be available to disciplines where emphasis is on theater, filmmaking, etc. Student should work with their assigned Honors Program academic advisor, assigned during GPS 1010 Gray Matters class, to explore a variety of Portfolio topics available to them to satisfy the Honors Program Portfolio requirement.
- **Two honors-designated courses:** selectable from the student's primary degree program, or from any other program. Honors-designated courses will require an Honors' Program learning contract to be filled out by the student before they take the courses and be approved by Honors Program Director/Associate Director. UCCS Honors Program also may maintain a list of possible designated courses as merely suggestions. Grade of B or higher required. A course in the University Catalog can become an honors-designated course by completing the Honors learning contract form available at <https://www.uccs.edu/honors/> - hover on Forms, and get all the necessary approvals.
- **Maintain a minimum overall cumulative GPA of 3.5**
- **Engagement of 6-10 hours** per semester is required<sup>1</sup> and expected of all Honors students. A form filled with list of activities will be due to the UCCS Honors Program Office by April 15<sup>th</sup> for the Spring semester, and November 15<sup>th</sup> for the Fall semester. Honors students get many opportunities to interface with faculty and peers during several mandatory and voluntary events including a social get together, Honors Program events, and other community/volunteer events (Alzheimer's walk, hiking activities, student clubs such as Undergraduate Research Journal, etc.). Engagement requirement can be satisfied by attending Honors Program events, the library's Just Talk series,

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<sup>1</sup> Required to continue receiving UCCS Chancellor's Honors Program Scholarship.

attending several relevant events organized throughout the University, e.g. lectures from Sustainability and Center of Aging, even attending performances by TheatreWorks. We believe that participation in the required Honors Program events will make Honors students life-long learners, quicker to adjust to new situations, more marketable for employment, and highly competitive for admission to graduate studies.

- In addition, the semester the student is completing the Honors Program Portfolio (usually the Fall or the Spring of junior/senior year) the engagement form requirement will be waived to focus exclusively on the HNRS 4950 Honors Program Portfolio report.

## Course Sequencing

1. Fall Freshman: GPS 1010/3010 (Gray Matters): Assigned Honors faculty advisor will teach and advise incoming Freshman.
2. Freshman Spring: Student should work with assigned Honors Program Faculty advisor to identify a UCCS faculty mentor for the student's Honors Portfolio, and two student-selected (designated) courses. Student takes HNRS 3011.
3. Fall Sophomore: Student-selected, Honors Program Designated Course One. At the end of this course, the student will define the basic Honors Portfolio idea.
4. Spring Sophomore: Student-selected, Honors Program Designated Course Two. At the end of this course, the student will define the basic Honors Portfolio idea.
5. Junior or Senior Fall or Spring semester: HNRS 4950 (Honors Program Portfolio): Student completes Honors Portfolio working with Honors Portfolio mentor, and two readers for review in preparation for Graduation in Fall, or by April for Graduation in Spring.
6. Student graduates from Honors Program.

COMM 2100 (Public Speaking) course suggested but not required.

## Honors Program Designated Course Rationale

We require UCCS Honors students to do additional Honors-Designated courses. Since there are very few Honors-*Dedicated* courses (i.e. courses that only enroll Honors students) most students opt to take Honors-*Designated* courses by completing an Honors Program learning contract (as explained earlier). In an Honors-*Designated* course, a student works with a faculty member to identify additional work they can do that goes above and beyond the standard course requirements. There are many different ways to approach this depending on the discipline. In the past, students have written essays, collaborated on research, served as a tutor or lab assistant for others in class, developed their own creative work or completed more complex work products. There is no one model that fits all courses, so we ask the instructor and student to complete a contract<sup>2</sup> that is turned in to the UCCS Honors Program Office. One final point of note: the work agreed upon to "designate" the course for Honors should not be factored into the final grade awarded to the student. The faculty teaching the designated course will still grade the student based on their completion of the course assignments required of all others, but the faculty

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uccs.edu/Documents/honors/HonorsLearningContract.pdf>

teaching the designated course will provide an additional pass/fail acknowledgement UCCS Honors Program Office, in regard to the additional work for which both the designated-course faculty and the student have contracted.

## Honors Program Engagement Events Attendance

Honors Program Cohorts are **required to attend all Honors Program events** (with reasonable accommodation made in case of emergency or work-related travel) and fulfil 6-10 hours of engagement hours per semester to continue their scholarship. Apart from other benefits explained earlier in this document, Honors Faculty feel that these required meetings will help students develop their portfolio and students who attend these events can count their hours towards the 6-10 hours of engagement required of a cohort in the Honors Program every semester.

## Dr. Michael Hackman UCCS Honors Scholars

Students with a cumulative UCCS GPA of 3.75 for all their (four or more) years at UCCS, and graduating with 3.75 or higher cumulative GPA at UCCS, will be recognized as *Dr. Michael Hackman UCCS Honors Program Scholars*. These students will be recognized at the UCCS Honors Program's Fall or Spring Graduation Ceremony.

## Retention and Scholarship

All cohorts will remain in the Honors Program until they graduate from UCCS, although students' plans can change, and they can always request to be out of the Honors Program by informing the Honors Program in writing or an email.

## Good Standing Requirement in the Honors Program

A UCCS Honors student shall not violate other University, College or Departmental rules and policies sufficient for disciplinary action.

To maintain the **Honors Program Scholarship, the Honors Program has a Cumulative GPA requirement of 3.5**. Students maintaining 3.5 and above, satisfying the Engagements requirements, and making continued progress towards completing Honors Program curriculum will receive the Honors Program Scholarship for next academic year.

Students whose cumulative GPA is below 3.25 must be advised in a face-to-face meeting with an Honors Faculty member. The Honors Faculty member will provide a summary of their conversation, specifically regarding the plan of study indicating how the student will complete

the Honors Program academic coursework, including the engagement hours. Any student leaving the Honors Program must do so in writing to the Honors Program Administrator.

## Honors Program Graduation Requirement and Designations

To graduate from the **UCCS Honors Program** students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 after their last semester and satisfy all the academic requirements of their cohort year, including required engagement hours. The student will be recognized during the UCCS Graduation Ceremony.

If a student has a cumulative GPA after their last semester at UCCS of 3.25 or above, but less than 3.5, and satisfies all requirements of the Honors Program as stated above, then they will graduate with the **UCCS Honors Program *Mountain Lion*** designation and will be recognized during the UCCS Graduation Ceremony.

A student whose cumulative GPA is below 3.25 will not receive any designation from the Honors Program during graduation. If the student has completed all the academic requirements, then the Honors Program will provide a letter indicating that the student has completed the Honors Program academic requirements for their cohort year.

## Honors Program Curriculum Faculty Members

Ms. Connie Blackmann, M.A., <http://www.uccs.edu/comm/blackmann.html>

Dr. Deborah Pina-Thomas <https://uccs.edu/xiphi/staff/deborah-pina-thomas>

Dr. Cerian Gibbes, [https://uccs.edu/geography/cerian\\_gibbes](https://uccs.edu/geography/cerian_gibbes)

Dr. Joseph Kuzma, [http://www.uccs.edu/philosophy/joseph\\_kuzma.html](http://www.uccs.edu/philosophy/joseph_kuzma.html)

Dr. Rob Sackett, <http://www.uccs.edu/history/rob-sackett.html>

Dr. Sudhanshu Kumar Semwal, [www.cs.uccs.edu/~semwal](http://www.cs.uccs.edu/~semwal)

[UCCS Faculty Portfolio mentor list https://honors.uccs.edu/id-4950-mentor-list-and-portfolio-information](https://honors.uccs.edu/id-4950-mentor-list-and-portfolio-information)

Any **UCCS Faculty** can serve as Honors Program portfolio mentor or a reader, including the Honors Program curriculum faculty. The Honors Program will have broader UCCS faculty input, and is working towards continually updating/adding to the above list.

**Transfer students** must complete a plan of study which is consistent with the above plan of study and will register for GPS 3010 in their first semester at UCCS. A transfer student must

submit their Honors Program Portfolio and finish all requirements of the honors program if planning on graduating that year.

### The UCCS Honors Program Policy 03-10-2017

Up to five students, who did not qualify for an Honors Program scholarship based on standard criteria in place, incoming or transfer students, may be admitted into the Honors Program in Fall of each year. The deadline to apply will be April 15<sup>th</sup> every year. The Honors Program will need their GPA, and a statement as to why the student wants to be part of the Honors Program **without the scholarship**. Based on the recommendation of the Honors Program Admissions Committee, which will be binding, the Honors Program will inform these students by July 1st of the final decision. Transfer students still must complete the Honors Program curriculum. Honors Program Faculty asks that transfer students enroll in Fall offering of GPS 3010 (Gray Matters) course, instead of GPS 1010 (Gray Matters). GPS 3010 (Gray Matters) may provide a better fit in their plan of study to complete required Honors Program curriculum.

Please review the criteria for your Cohort year at <https://www.uccs.edu/honors/> and hover on cohorts. If you qualify, then contact Associate Director/Director, Honors Program for further instructions to submit the paperwork for consideration by April 15<sup>th</sup> for the Fall semester.

### Other Resources

- Experiential learning: University of Washington  
<http://depts.washington.edu/uwhonors/reqs/exp/>
- Rated high honors program <http://honors.ucf.edu/about-us>