

# Communication Studies Honors Program

The Communication Studies Honors Program provides a special opportunity for advanced students to pursue an intellectual passion, acquire valuable research and writing skills, and complete their undergraduate career with distinction. Through guided development of an independent study research project, the student will produce a scholarly paper, laboratory research report, or other dedicated research project. It is generally expected that the scope of the project will be such that it can reasonably be completed in 2 quarters of student effort.

This work provides an opportunity to draw together the student's distinctive set of courses and other academic experiences, and to strengthen applications for subsequent career preparation or placement. Students in the program will conduct their Honors project with the guidance of a faculty advisor. Final projects will be archived in the digital collection of the Northwestern University Library and presented at the annual departmental poster session. Those who complete the program successfully will be eligible to graduate with departmental honors.

Applications for the Honors Program are due during **winter quarter** of the student's junior year (or the year prior to graduation if the student plans to graduate in fewer than 4 years), with the specific deadline announced each Fall Quarter. To be eligible, the student must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.6 at the time of application. The application should be 2-3 pages long and include a description of the project and a brief plan for completing it. The application must be accompanied by a brief statement of support from a faculty advisor, which can be sent separately by email.

*It is **strongly** recommended that students begin talking and building relationships with possible faculty advisors no later than fall quarter of junior year, and ideally well before that.* This could include, for example, reading work by relevant faculty to determine fit, taking courses with relevant faculty, scheduling informational meetings and/or applying for research assistant positions in faculty labs, where available.

Applications will be reviewed by the curriculum committee and students will be notified of acceptance in late February. Students whose applications are accepted will be required to attend a brief orientation meeting with the Comm Studies Undergraduate Administrator and to submit short quarterly progress reports until the project is complete. Throughout the Honors Program, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to be familiar with the structure of the program, to meet regularly with the faculty advisor, and to plan the project accordingly.

Students in the Honors Program will enroll in the Honors Independent Study course (COMM ST 397) for a **maximum** of two quarters, which are typically (but need not be) consecutive. The first can be **spring quarter** of the student's junior year *or* **fall quarter** of the student's senior year, and the second credit is typically earned during the following quarter. The project should be completed no later than the **first day of spring quarter of the student's senior year** (or the first day of the student's graduation quarter, for those graduating early). Faculty advisors may not extend this deadline.

Note that the **first credit** will not be awarded until a formal project prospectus is deemed complete by the faculty advisor, and the **second credit** will not be awarded until the project is deemed complete and of honors quality by the faculty advisor. In cases where the prospectus or project is not completed during the quarter of 397 enrollment, a grade of 'K' should be assigned by the advisor and changed when the prospectus or project is complete. *No independent study or other course credits may be awarded in completing the honors project.*

Students who successfully complete the program will receive their degree with honors, including a notation on their transcript, and be acknowledged at the School of Communication Honors Convocation and graduation.

**All application materials, including the student application and letter of support from the faculty advisor, should be emailed to Rebekah Sigman at [rebekah.sigman@northwestern.edu](mailto:rebekah.sigman@northwestern.edu) by the deadline, occurring each January with a specific date announced each Fall Quarter.**

Further questions about the program should be addressed to Rebekah Sigman at [rebekah.sigman@northwestern.edu](mailto:rebekah.sigman@northwestern.edu), Undergraduate Program Administrator.