

School Honors Program

Majors in Child Learning and Development, Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, Psychology, and Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.

The **School Honors** Program in the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences provides eligible students with opportunities for in-depth experience in research and writing, while working individually with members of the faculty. These opportunities enhance preparation for graduate school and employment in the student's chosen field. Notation of BBS School Honors appears on official transcripts and students are awarded distinctive white honor's stoles to wear at commencement. Students whose thesis is judged to be of exemplary quality by a faculty committee will be awarded BBS School Honors with Distinction.

What is the Goal of the School Honors Program?

A central goal of the program is to assist students in completing an honors thesis. Here is a comparison with other UTD honors designations.

Levels of Honors	UTD GPA*	Min. graded hrs. at UTD	Other Requirements
<i>Summa cum laude</i>	3.94	45	
<i>Magna cum laude</i>	3.78	45	
<i>Cum laude</i>	3.58	45	
BBS School Honors	3.40	30	Thesis + seminar + 12 hrs. UTD BBS Core Courses

*For '06-'07 academic year. Latin University Honor GPA thresholds are established each summer.

The key element in the **School Honors** Program is the **Honors Seminar**, which is offered in the **spring semester only** each year. Students should take the **Honors Seminar** in their **junior year** to prepare them to complete the honor thesis during their senior year. Although not required to attain University Honors, the **Honors Seminar** is strongly recommended for those pursuing all levels of honors as well as those planning to pursue graduate study. (Students can earn both University and **School Honors** by meeting the requirements of both programs. See the Associate Dean if you are unable to take the **Honors Seminar** but wish to pursue **School Honors**). The designation of **School Honors** will appear on official UTD transcripts but not on your diplomas. The student will also receive an award certificate from the Dean of the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences acknowledging that **School Honors** have been earned.

How do I earn BBS School Honors?

Students must apply for admission in the Associate Dean's office. Before applying, students should have completed at least 15 semester hours at UTD, including two core courses in the major. Students should have at least a 3.4 GPA for those hours, as well as in the core courses. Students who do not yet meet these requirements, but think they will by the time they graduate, may petition the Associate Dean for admission. Normally students apply at the beginning of their junior year, but are encouraged to do so earlier if they meet the requirements.

To earn BBS School Honors, students will need to graduate with (a) at least 30 hours at UTD, (b) at least 12 hours in Psychology major core courses, (c) have an overall UTD GPA of 3.4 or better, (d) pass the Honors Seminar, and (e) complete an honors thesis with a grade of at least B+. Theses that are judged

by a faculty committee to be of exemplary quality (i.e., A+) may earn the designation of BBS School Honors with Distinction.

Finding a Thesis Advisor

To undertake an honor thesis, students must seek out a faculty sponsor to oversee the planing, supervision and approval of the honors thesis. If possible, it is best to find a sponsor who agrees to supervise your thesis prior to enrolling in the **Honors Seminar**. The Associate Dean and Program Heads will be happy to assist the student in finding a sponsor. The student usually enrolls in Honors Thesis independent study (PSY/CGS/NSC/SPAU 4397) and may also take one or more Independent Study/Research course (PSY/CGS/NSC/SPAU 4398/9) with the faculty sponsor while completing their thesis.

The Spring Honors Seminar (CGS/CLDP/PSY/NSC/SPAU 4375)

The Honors Seminar is offered in the spring semester and is open to students who meet the qualifications for the **School Honors** Program (see APPLYING). The course is designed to be taken by students in their junior year; do not wait until your senior year. The course is designed to bring together students engaged in the development of honors theses to discuss their plans and report on their progress. The course also includes material on research methods, professional development in the fields represented in the School, advice on applying to graduate school, and guest speakers on relevant topics. Every attempt will be made to offer the course at a time convenient to the greatest number of students possible. The course is taken on a Credit/No Credit basis. The **Honors Seminar (CGS/PSY/NSC/SPAU 4375)** functions as an elective under Major and Related Courses for each of the various majors in the School. See the Associate Dean if you are unable to take the Honors Seminar but wish to pursue **School Honors**.

Honors Thesis (CGS/CLDP/PSY/NSC/SPAU 4397)

In order to graduate and to be awarded **School Honors** by the School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences, undergraduates must complete an honors thesis. The Associate Dean's office has an **Honors Thesis** handout providing a more complete description of honor thesis requirements and procedures. The thesis may take the form of either a research project or a literature review. (It is highly recommended that students have completed courses in statistics, research design and scientific writing prior to attempting an empirical research project thesis.) It should be completed in 1 or 2 semesters, usually during the beginning of your senior year. Students must have a faculty member who agrees to sponsor the thesis project and with whom they usually take the 3-hour Directed Research (4V98) which is taken on a credit/no-credit basis. During the semester they complete the thesis, student will enroll in Honors Thesis (4397) for a letter grade. The thesis is a self-contained written document produced by the student that, together with the research relating to this production, represents at least 3 semester credit hours of effort. The university-wide standard for the award of honors is that the thesis should represent "exceptional scholarship" at an undergraduate level. The faculty sponsor and a second reader make a recommendation regarding honors. If the sponsor and second reader feel it is warranted, they can forward the thesis to a committee appointed by the Associate Dean to evaluate whether it qualifies for the "with Distinction" designation (i.e., A+ quality).

Students and faculty sponsor should be sure that they have a clear and explicit understanding of what the student will be expected to do, and a timetable for completion of the project. It may be helpful to reduce this understanding to writing.