

HONORS PROGRAM

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology offers an honors program for students seeking independent research opportunities. Students completing the honors program are recognized at graduation. Students should apply for admission to the honors program in their junior year.

In order to qualify for entry into the honors program, student must have:

1. Completed at least 60 credits
2. A cumulative GPA of 3.3
3. At least three upper level courses in Sociology or Anthropology, including SOCY 300, with a cumulative GPA in those courses of 3.3

In order to graduate with an honors degree, the student must have:

1. Completed all requirements for the major
2. A 3.3 GPA overall
3. A 3.3 GPA in sociology and anthropology courses combined
4. At least 16 credits in Sociology and Anthropology courses taken at UMBC
5. Completed SOCY 401 and 402

The first step in entering the honors program is to find two faculty members in the department (assistant professors, associate professors, or full professors) who will serve as your Honors Committee. A good time to do this is in the first or early in the second semester of your junior year. The best way to find committee members is to speak to the faculty members with whom you have taken courses, because most faculty members want to know the student before agreeing to serve on an Honors Committee. Faculty members usually want to see your transcript, so bring an up-to-date one with you. It is the student's responsibility to be sure that the committee has two faculty members.

When looking for Honors Committee members, decide what area of Sociology you want to study. The faculty section in the department website contains a full list of the faculty and their interests. This will help you to decide which faculty members to contact.

It is helpful to complete SOCY 300 and SOCY 301 before beginning the honors program because your honors project will require a knowledge of sociological methods. Some faculty members do not require this, but be sure to tell the faculty members whether or not you have completed these courses.

The honors program consists of a two-course sequence (SOCY 401 and SOCY 402 – Honors Thesis Research I and II, 3 credits each), in which the student completes a research project, called a thesis. The student may propose the topic for the project, or a committee member may suggest a topic, but all of you must agree. The topic may consist of work done at UMBC or work related to an internship or other outside activity. After your Honors Committee and you agree on the project, write a brief description of it and have it approved by both committee members. It is to your advantage to be as specific as possible in this description, which is an agreement spelling out what you are going to do in SOCY 401 and 402.

SOCY 401 and 402 will ordinarily be taken during the two semesters of the senior year. You are not permitted to enroll in SOCY 402 until the Honors Committee is satisfied with your performance in SOCY 401. Towards the end of SOCY 402, you must give copies of a draft of your thesis to both the committee members at least four weeks in advance before the last day of classes (not including the final examinations). Committee members will almost always suggest changes in the draft, so you should submit the draft as soon as possible to give yourself sufficient time to revise it. The final approved version is due at the end of the semester. You must give copies of the completed and approved thesis to each committee member and to the department's Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies.

Students who complete the Honors Program must submit an Honors Certificate application signed by both committee members to the Sociology office. The application form is available in the Sociology office.