

*an invitation to join*  
**The Honors Program**

*The College of Saint Benedict (CSB) and Saint John's University (SJU)  
invite students with exceptional academic records and the potential  
for continued excellence in college to join the CSB/SJU Honors Program.*

### THE HONORS PROGRAM AT CSB/SJU

The CSB/SJU Honors Program is the perfect place for students who relish thought-provoking conversations and are eager to wrestle with new ideas, insights and understandings. Connecting courses and concepts from across the academic disciplines, Honors is a forum for students and faculty members from diverse backgrounds to integrate their interests and expertise.



CSB/SJU Honors students form a community of learners who explore the world of ideas together and enjoy small, student-centered classes from their first year through their senior year. Honors students pride themselves on their shared love of learning and an exciting exchange of ideas that rarely ends when the class period is over. For many, their fellow Honors students and professors also become some of their closest friends in college.

### FIRST YEAR SEMINAR COURSE EXAMPLES

**Cultures in Crisis** Explores artistic texts that attempt to narrate the unspeakable. Students read the texts for their artistic "witness," as well as for what is at stake in the way they are told, sold, and read. Readings include Wright's *Native Son* and Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

**News of the World** Using *The New York Times* as the primary text, this course focuses on developing students' speaking, writing, thinking, and information literacy skills by engaging students in the study of current world events and international conflicts.

**The Fourth Seal: Epidemics and Society From the Black Death to AIDS** Views the history of epidemics from the Black Death of medieval times to AIDS in our time. The emphasis falls on the social, political and cultural reactions or often over-reactions to the plagues that have threatened society.

**Community** Through readings, writings and outside speakers, this course challenges the concept of community, asking questions about who a community welcomes in and shuts out and why, who it imagines as "the self" and "the other," the "we" and the "they."

### FIRST-YEAR HONORS

Like all first-year students, Honors students enroll in a First-Year Seminar (FYS) and generally take three other courses. However, Honors students also have course options open only to them. Almost all Honors students enroll in the Honors FYS, a class designed to help students develop skills in reading, critical thinking, speaking and interpersonal communication and writing. First-year Honors students can also enroll in other Honors courses.

### THE HONORS CURRICULUM

The Honors Program allows flexibility in meeting the requirements for All-College Honors at graduation. Generally, students take 32 Honors credits over their four years, the equivalent of eight four-credit Honors courses. Students who study abroad need only take 28 Honors credits. Honors courses are taught in a variety of disciplines, many of which also count toward Common Curriculum requirements.

Close student and faculty interaction and independent scholarship are cornerstones of the Honors Program. The opportunity to work in close partnership with professors while pursuing individualized research and creative projects is a natural outgrowth of this experience.

Students and faculty recognize that these ambitious undertakings are often prerequisites for admission to top graduate schools and are excellent additions to job applications. These independent projects give self-motivated students the chance to creatively approach topics of special interest, while extending their education beyond the classroom.



## EXAMPLES OF HONORS COURSES

**How to Solve It** Students solve novel problems/puzzles using frameworks developed by Polya, Schoenfeld, and others that could potentially be transferred to all sorts of fields.

**Philosophy of Music** Explores the nature of musical experience in the context of our world today. Presents divergent philosophical theories that are considered with respect to a wide range of music including Western “classical” music, music of non-Western cultures, and the popular music of today.

**Medical Professionals in the Modern World** Uses the burgeoning literature of medicine, written by, for, and about medical professionals to explore the full range of “professional” challenges facing today’s medical professionals. The course aims to cultivate the habit of moral reflection in future medical professionals.

**Harlem Renaissance** Studies the art of the Harlem Renaissance from a rhetorical perspective – analyzing a diverse body of texts from the 1920s and 30s – literature and poetry, film, the blues, painting and photography – to gain insight into the social truths they establish and contest.

**Spiritual Traditions/Islam** Focuses on Islam while examining broader questions of faith versus reason, the role and position of women, the rights of religious and cultural minorities, freedom of speech vs. religious respect, and multiculturalism vs. assimilation.

**Honors Intro to Economics** Students tackle a host of real-world issues through the lens of economic analysis and draw out the implications of this analysis for public policy.

## ALL COLLEGE THESIS

Some Honors students may choose to write an All-College Thesis in a discipline of their choosing, thereby earning four Honors credits toward All-College Honors. The All-College Thesis is an optional, yearlong project done in the last year of college in which students work closely with a faculty adviser while independently developing a higher level of expertise in a specific area. Past thesis projects have ranged from scientific research to historic inquiry to artistic exploration. The project culminates with a final thesis defense or presentation of the creative work.

## EXAMPLES OF RECENT THESIS PROJECTS

**The relationship between service-learning beliefs and leadership and morality** Designed and administered a survey to 401 CSB/SJU students to assess how leadership and morality are related to service-learning and other service-related experiences.

**How to effectively and accurately measure judicial activism** Examined how, exactly, judicial activism is measured, why scholars choose the variables they do to measure judicial activism, how they operationalize those variables, and what differences exist between alternate systems.

**Etiology, pathogenesis, and treatment of type II diabetes mellitus in low-income African Americans and East African immigrants** Examined the genetic, lifestyle, and environmental differences that explain the higher rates of T2DM and T2DM complications in low-income African Americans and East African immigrants.

**Teaching Chinese culture through children’s theater** Conducted six weeks of research in China focusing on Chinese history and culture; then developed, directed and presented an interactive theater piece at area elementary schools with the goal of helping learn about Chinese culture.

Full text of Honors theses is online at:  
<http://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/honors>

## GREAT BOOKS, GREAT IDEAS

The optional Honors Great Books seminar offers students an unparalleled learning opportunity. A year-long course, it focuses on the world’s greatest works of literature, philosophy and intellectual history. Authors represented include Homer, Sophocles, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Austen, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Plato, Flaubert, Faulkner, Woolf, Morrison, Pynchon and Rushdie. This roster of great literature is matched with a roster of eager and intelligent students who become an engaged learning community, enhancing one another’s understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of these great books.

## HONORS PROGRAM FAQ

**What is the Honors Program?** The Honors Program is a small group of students exploring the world of ideas together. CSB/SJU Honors students pride themselves a shared love of learning and an exchange of ideas that rarely ends when class is over.

### Are Honors courses more difficult?

More is expected of participants, and, in turn, they have more to gain. Students looking for a challenging experience will benefit from being surrounded by other students who share their view of learning.

**Who is invited?** Recipients of the CSB/SJU Trustees’ Scholarship are invited to join the Honors Program. Students wishing to participate are encouraged to register by the priority response date of May 1.

**What are the benefits?** Honors students say that the people they meet in the program and the wisdom they gain in the courses are reasons enough to join. Students who meet the requirements of the Honors Program will graduate with All-College Honors.

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information contact:

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**Learn more at** [www.csbsju.edu/honors](http://www.csbsju.edu/honors)

