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## Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College

### *Undergraduate Programs of Study:*

Humanities

Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Social Sciences

[To view the College's Course Descriptions, click here.](#)

## Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College

### Faculty:

Buller, J. L., Dean; Tunick, M., Associate Dean; Barrett, L.; Belogay, E.; Chandrasekhar, C.; Corr, R.; Dragojlovic, V.; Earles, J.; Edwards, H.; Ely, C.; Fewkes, J.; Fitchett, S.; Gosser Esquilín, M.; Harrawood, M.; Hóim, T.; Ivey, M.; Jakee, K.; Jiang, Y.; Karr, R.; Kirchman, P.; Lanning, K.; Lemeh, D.; Li, F.; McLaughlin, A.; Moore, J.; Njambi, W. N.; O'Brien, W.; Quintyne, N.; Rupright, M. E.; Smith, E.; Steigenga, T.; Strain, C.; Sweet, M.; Vázquez, M.; Vernon, L.; Weisser, C.; Wetterer, J.; White, D. R.

The Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences. The B.A. program is designed to develop the qualities of a free and responsible citizen, one who can reason clearly, read critically and analytically, argue persuasively in speech and in writing, and contribute to society in fundamental and innovative ways. By providing broad intellectual training in the liberal arts and sciences and specialized study in an area of concentration, the College prepares its students for graduate and professional schools, such as law and medicine, as well as for careers in business, science, education and government.

### Wilkes Honors College Curriculum

The College's curriculum has two primary components: the **honors core** ([www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics\\_core\\_graduation.htm](http://www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics_core_graduation.htm)) and the **concentration** ([www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics\\_majors.htm](http://www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics_majors.htm)). For the honors core, students take distribution courses in the liberal arts and sciences aimed at sharpening written and oral communication, enhancing problem-solving skills, and developing competency in a foreign language. Another component of the honors curriculum is a series of interdisciplinary seminars and team-taught courses, some of which introduce students to two of the areas of emphasis at the Wilkes Honors College, international and environmental studies.

In addition to completing the honors core, students choose a concentration. Concentrations may be traditional choices, such as biology, English, mathematics, philosophy, political science, and psychology or more interdisciplinary programs, such as environmental studies, international studies, or law and society. The concentration may have a specialized focus, such as American studies, or it may combine related disciplines, such as philosophy, politics, and economics. As part of the concentration, students synthesize their skills and knowledge into senior projects or theses. Students may concentrate in more than one area by fulfilling the requirements of each concentration. It is possible to minor in some areas.

Refer to the Minors heading appearing later in this Honors College section.

### The Honors Core

All students must successfully complete 120 credits to graduate. Of these, 53-78 credits are core or other graduation requirements. The honors core provides a broad-based education in the liberal arts and sciences through courses that emphasize critical thinking and writing skills. These courses introduce students to ways of thinking analytically about science, politics, history, ethics, culture, visual images, and literature. Some courses serve as introductions to a specific discipline. Others approach problems and themes in ways that cross traditional disciplinary boundaries.

### Liberal Arts and Sciences

The largest component of the honors core is the distribution requirement in the liberal arts and sciences. The honors core distribution distinguishes itself from the general education requirements at most universities by its emphasis on writing across the disciplines, by its use of conceptually thematic categories—Social and Behavioral Analysis; Culture, Ideas and Values—that encourage faculty to offer freshmen and sophomores innovative interdisciplinary courses, and by the freedom it allows students as it invites them to explore ideas and research beyond their own areas of concentration. The distribution requirement consists of the following elements:

#### Writing (3-7 credits, 3 courses)

One of the most important skills students acquire is the ability to communicate effectively. Good writing is inseparable from clear and coherent thinking. Honors College courses are writing-intensive and provide guidance in researching, composing, editing, and revising papers. Students undertake substantial writing in different disciplines and in formats as diverse as essays, research papers, lab reports, and debate briefs. A senior honors thesis or the written component of a senior honors project interweaves the research, analytical and writing skills acquired in the first three years. To augment the writing-intensive curriculum and prepare for the independent thesis or project, students enroll in three writing courses, at least one of which must be a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) course. If the student is required to take ENC 1123, then this course will count as one of the three core writing courses. Students will keep written projects from their Honors College courses in portfolios that are reviewed by the writing committee at the end of their sophomore year. These portfolios affirm that students not only meet, but exceed, the state of Florida's Gordon Rule writing requirements

and provide for both self-direction in the learning process and ongoing assessment.

**Mathematics (6-8 credits, 2 courses)**

One goal of the honors core is to help foster mathematical literacy. Mathematics is the language of science and technology and, increasingly, of the social sciences. By virtue of its precision, mathematics allows a clear understanding of the world and our place within it. Indeed, important health and environmental issues (acid rain, water management, greenhouse effect) cannot be understood without mathematical literacy. By taking two courses in mathematics, students sharpen their critical thinking skills, learning to distinguish evidence from anecdote and causality from correlation.

**Natural Sciences (6-8 credits, 2 courses)**

By taking two courses in two distinct disciplines within the natural sciences, students will gain an appreciation and understanding of the natural world as well as our place in it. At least one of these courses will include a laboratory section that will give students hands-on experience and allow them to understand the meaning of science in both theory and practice.

**Social and Behavioral Analysis (3 credits, 1 course)**

The courses in social and behavioral analysis familiarize students with different approaches to the study of individual behavior and social institutions and introduce them to some of the concepts and methods of the social sciences. The courses aim at an understanding of the reciprocal relations among people, societies, and institutions and encourage students to think critically and systematically about how these societies and institutions can best be arranged.

**Culture, Ideas and Values (3 credits, 1 course)**

These courses help students understand and think philosophically and critically about different value and belief systems across cultural and historical boundaries. Students will study primary works in the humanities that are devoted to the examination of questions such as "what is the life worth living?, what is the basis for distinguishing knowledge from belief?, what is beautiful?" Courses may consider how these questions have been approached throughout history or how different cultures have addressed these questions, or courses may grapple with these questions without regard to their historical or cultural context. In any case, students will be asked to articulate, evaluate, and defend moral, aesthetic, or other value judgments, such as judgments about how someone ought to live and claims about the validity of knowledge.

**Literature (3 credits, 1 course)**

Courses in literature are intended to develop students' appreciation and understanding of literature, looking at texts in their historical and cultural contexts or examining themes, approaches, and generic conventions across time periods.

**Arts (3 credits, 1 course)**

Courses in art, music and creative writing are intended to develop students' ability to create and appreciate the arts in all of their forms, to enhance sensitivity to artistic expression, and to increase familiarity with theories central to these forms. Courses may be structured historically, culturally, or thematically.

**Other Graduation Requirements**

**Foreign Language (8 credits, 2 courses)**

Learning foreign languages provides access to other cultures and worlds and to other ways of thinking. As this is an important objective of the Honors College, students are expected to take two sequential courses in a single language or demonstrate proficiency equivalent to two basic courses. Students are encouraged to incorporate the study of language in a study abroad experience.

**Honors College Forum (2 credits, 2 courses)**

Students meet the faculty and other leading scholars and artists who present their work and introduce the leading ideas and controversies in their areas of expertise. Students are expected to take this weekly 1-credit seminar each of their first two semesters.

**Interdisciplinary**

**Critical Inquiry Seminars (5-9 credits, 3 courses)**

The architecture of a traditional college curriculum, in which knowledge is broken into highly specific fields, disciplines, and departments, gives the misleading impression that human experience and human problems are neatly compartmentalized and that there is a clear division of labor, each discipline being assigned its own subset of problems and experiences. To help convey to students that knowledge and experience are not so easily partitioned and that many problems benefit from multiple perspectives, the Honors College curriculum includes a unique offering of symposia and team-taught seminars, all devoted to interdisciplinary critical inquiry. Students must take three critical inquiry seminars. These seminars are specially designated 1- or 3-credit, team-taught courses that explore problems from a variety of perspectives and reflect on the connections and shared concerns of scholars from distinct disciplines.

**International and Environmental Studies (2-6 credits, 2 courses)**

The increasingly global nature of contemporary issues and the increasing importance of addressing the effects of growth on our environment, coupled with the unique resources available in Florida for exploring these areas of inquiry, account for the Honors College's focus on international and environmental studies. Students are expected to take one course in each of these areas. These may be courses or seminars used to satisfy other Honors College requirements.

**Experiential Learning Requirement (3-12 credits)**

Life in the world beyond the campus provides students with invaluable experiences that complement their

programs of study. The experiential learning requirement applies to all Honors College students (including transfer and international students). Students may fulfill the requirement through participation in a study abroad program (minimum of 3 credits and five-week stay) or through an internship (minimum of 3 credits and 120 hours of internship experience). All internships and study abroad programs must be approved by the nonclassroom learning committee prior to student registration. Internship course work is graded S/U.

**Distribution Electives (6 credits, 2 courses)**

Many students arrive at college unfamiliar with the specialized areas of study within the social sciences and humanities. Students have the opportunity to discover and explore these by taking two additional distribution electives. While these will often be courses that satisfy the Social and Behavioral Analysis; Culture, Ideas and Values; Literature; or the Arts requirements, they may be courses from any two distinct disciplines, one within the social sciences and one within the humanities.

**The Concentration**

In addition to obtaining a breadth of knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences through courses in the honors core, each student chooses an area of specialization or concentration. The purpose of the concentration is to allow students to obtain deep knowledge of a focused area of interest. Students may have more than one major concentration or a major concentration and one or more minors. In addition to fulfilling the requirements for the concentration, each student will complete a thesis or senior project. Students in the Wilkes Honors College have the opportunity to concentrate in most of the traditional disciplines and to design their own interdisciplinary course of study in consultation with the faculty. Among the concentrations the Honors College currently offers are:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| American Studies            | Marine Biology        |
| Anthropology                | Mathematical Sciences |
| Biology/Pre-Med             | (Interdisciplinary)   |
| Chemistry                   | Mathematics           |
| Economics                   | Philosophy            |
| English                     | Physics               |
| Environmental Studies       | Political Science     |
| History (Interdisciplinary) | Psychology            |
| International Studies       | Spanish               |
| Latin American Studies      | Women's Studies       |
| Law and Society             |                       |

For details about requirements for the Wilkes Honors College and listings of course offerings and concentrations, visit [www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics.htm](http://www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics.htm).

**Minors**

The Honors College offers numerous minor concentrations. These require a minimum of 15 credits, including at least 9 credits at the upper level. Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA in courses taken for the minor concentration. Minor concentrations are available in:

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|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Chemistry             | Mathematics        |
| Economics             | Philosophy         |
| English Literature    | Physics            |
| Environmental Studies | Psychology         |
| History               | Spanish Literature |
| Law and Society       | Women's Studies    |

Students may also minor in business through course work at the Honors College and the Barry Kaye College of Business. For further information, visit [www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics\\_minors.htm](http://www.fau.edu/divdept/honcol/academics_minors.htm).

**Pathways to Graduate School**

**M.B.A. Program**

The Wilkes Honors College has an arrangement with the College of Business at FAU whereby students who have met all Honors College graduation requirements, maintained at least a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of course work, and achieved a score of 500 or above on the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) are guaranteed admission into FAU's M.B.A. program. This guarantee is given only to students who have been full-time Wilkes Honors College students for a minimum of six semesters and who have completed the core and concentration in the Wilkes Honors College.

**M.Ed. Program**

The Wilkes Honors College has an arrangement with the College of Education at FAU whereby students who have met all Honors College graduation requirements, maintained at least a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of course work, achieved a score of 800 or above on the GRE (Graduate Record Examination), and achieved a passing score on all four sections of the CLAST are guaranteed admission into FAU's M.Ed. Program in Curriculum and Instruction Plus Secondary Education Certification. This guarantee is given only to students who have been full-time Honors College students for a minimum of six semesters and who have completed the core and concentration in the Honors College.

**Medical School**

Admission to medical school requires a strong academic record, a competitive MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) score, and the completion of certain prerequisite courses. The Honors College offers all of these courses as well as assistance with MCAT preparation and with the application process.

**Law School**

Students considering careers in law will receive excellent preparation in the Honors College. Admission to law school requires strong analytical and writing skills, an outstanding academic record, and a competitive LSAT (Law School Admission Test) score. The Honors College's emphasis on writing and critical thinking will provide students with the skills law school admissions committees seek. In addition, advisors will provide law school information and assist with the application process.