

## HONORS COLLEGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND OUTCOMES

The Honors College of the University of West Georgia is designed for highly motivated students who have demonstrated superior academic achievement and express a desire to continue on that path. Students accepted into the Honors College become immersed in a learning community, where they are expected to be actively engaged in an on-going, interactive learning process with like-minded faculty and peers, both in and out of the classroom. To support and nurture such an environment, Honors classes are small, seminar-based, and taught by faculty members approved by the Honors College. Honors course work differs from general course work in both breadth and depth of exploration of subject matter, and as much as possible, inclusion of primary sources of information. Honors students are expected to exhibit and further develop genuine emotional and cognitive engagement in the learning process and reflect on the meaning of what they are learning in their own and others' lives, including a consideration of ethical ramifications when applicable. Ultimately, the goal of the program is to produce young adults who will become leaders and serve as transformation agents among their peers, in the campus community, and in the larger social world. To this end, all courses in the Honors College will incorporate one or more of the following learning outcomes:

- 1) Students will demonstrate the ability to examine topics and issues from diverse perspectives.
- 2) Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in higher order abstract, creative and critical thinking.
- 3) Students will demonstrate the ability to explore, and if feasible, experiment with possible applications of their learning toward the solution of "real world" problems.
- 4) Students will demonstrate the ability to explore and conduct discipline-specific independent research and creative activities using a variety of resources.
- 5) Students will demonstrate superior oral and written communication skills.

### **Differences between an honors section of a course and a non-honors section:**

For introductory courses (1000 and 2000 level), the differences are:

- capped enrollment at 16
- seminar-style format, instead of lecture, with in class discussions emphasized over monologue lectures
- due to greater emphasis on in-class participatory discussion, there is less need for 'busy-work' quizzes
- rather than standardized tests with scantrons, examinations are more likely to be short answer or essay based, so as to measure the communication skills of the students
- course content is presented in ways that encourage critical thinking skills

For upper division courses (3000 and 4000 level), the idea is that it should be taught as if it were a masters level (5000 or 6000 level) course.