Option for Honors in LSJ

LSJ students interested in graduating with Honors have three options:

1. Interdisciplinary Honors—Requires completion of the UW Honors core curriculum
2. Departmental Honors—Requires completion of LSJ Departmental Honors requirements
3. College Honors—Requires completion of UW Honors core curriculum and LSJ departmental honors requirements

If you are interested in graduating with Interdisciplinary Honors or College Honors, please refer to the UW Honors Program Website.

LSJ Honors

Overview

The individual LSJ Honors option enables an LSJ major to explore a particular research question in significant depth with the assistance and guidance of a faculty mentor. This option is designed for students who are deeply interested in learning more about a particular topic, have a strong desire to conduct original, independent research, and are highly self-motivated. It is an especially good fit for students who believe they may wish to pursue an advanced degree in the social sciences.

If you are seeking a “hands on experience” or wish to work closely with a particular faculty member, but are not especially interested
in conducting original and independent research, please ask an advisor about other ways of obtaining the experiences you seek. (LSJ offers many other immersive and experiential learning opportunities, including study abroad courses, mixed enrollment courses, Philanthropy Lab, reading groups held in Washington State prisons, and more.) If your goal is to generate an exemplary writing sample for an application to law or other professional school, we recommend working with a writing center to polish an essay or paper you have written for one of your classes; conducting original research through the Honors Program is not needed for this purpose.

In addition to conducting original research, students accepted to the Honors Program are required to take a second LSJ Departmental Seminar (beyond the one already required for the major).

To pursue the individualized honors option, a qualified student must apply and be accepted to the LSJ Honors Program in Spring quarter. Admitted students will then complete a two-quarter honors thesis course in Fall and Winter quarters of the following year (LSJ 488 and 489, five credits each). Students who have been accepted to the Honors Program will be required to participate in a series of educational workshops in the fall quarter. These workshops will help you identify and hone an appropriate research question, choose the literature and data you will analyze, identify and justify the methods you will use to analyze those data, and develop your bibliography.

The subsequent research and development of the thesis that occurs in the Fall and Winter quarters will be supervised by an LSJ faculty supervisor and a faculty reader. Honors theses are also read and evaluated by a second faculty reader. Any UW Lecturer or Professor from any department or program may serve as a faculty reader. If you are accepted to the Honors Program, you and your adviser will work together to identify an appropriate reader. The reader must agree to serve in this capacity by the end of Fall quarter.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the LSJ Honors Program, students must have and maintain a minimum 3.75 cumulative grade point average in their LSJ courses and maintain at least a 3.5 overall GPA. Students who meet these criteria and have discussed the honors option with an advisor are welcome to apply to the Honors Program.

Application Process

LSJ majors will be notified of the application date in early Spring Quarter. Applications will typically be due in weeks 3-5 of Spring Quarter. When applying to the LSJ Honors Program, please submit the application online at: lsj.washington.edu/option-honors-lsj. You will be asked to answer a series of questions about your proposed research project and upload the following documents:

- An unofficial transcript; and
- A writing sample from another course that best represents your writing, research and analytical skills.

Options for Honors Faculty Supervisor

On the application form, you are asked to identify 2-3 faculty members who, based on their areas of expertise, would be an appropriate thesis adviser. Be sure to familiarize yourself with all of the LSJ faculty's research areas so that you are in a position to identify these possible advisers. The following LSJ faculty members are eligible to serve in this capacity:
Application Considerations and Guidelines

In your application, be sure to explain why you want to conduct original research. Your thesis proposal should also clearly identify the research question you wish to explore, and explain how you (tentatively) plan to answer that question. (A research question not only addresses an issue or topic you would like to learn more about, but also shapes the scope of analysis. Your question should be one that you can answer over the course of two quarters). It should also explain how you became interested in this topic and why it is important for scholars interested in law, rights, and justice.

In deciding whether to supervise your honors thesis, the committee will consider whether you have taken classes that support your research. The committee will also consider the following:

- Has the applicant identified an appropriate research question?
- Does the applicant have a strong enough grasp of the material to take this project to fruition?
- Does the topic relate to LSJ as a whole and to the courses the student has taken?
- Is the research plan feasible and doable in two quarters?
- Is a faculty member with the relevant expertise available to serve as the thesis adviser?

Enrollment

If a student is accepted into the Honors Program, they will be notified by the middle of Spring Quarter and enrolled in LSJ 488 for the following fall quarter.

Grading and Expectations

Honors theses vary in length, but are most typically 30-50 pages long. Theses should identify and seek to answer a clear research question that is relevant to socio-legal studies and/or questions related to the study of justice and rights. All theses should clearly explain why the question they investigate matters, and how the analysis contributes to our understanding of the topic explored. The thesis should be clearly argued and well-organized, and the argument presented should be supported with data and other kinds of evidence. (Data include the evidence that a scholar uses to justify their claim. It can take many forms. Some scholars conduct interviews, focus groups, case studies, or ethnographic observations. Other scholars administer surveys or work with existing datasets. Still others may look to the existing literature to construct an argument and build on what we already know).

The thesis should also draw on, and contribute to, a relevant body of literature. (Literature refers to analyses published by other
researchers. The UW library offers a list of research guides that can help you identify relevant academic literature. You may also consider using texts that you have read in your classes or conducting a Google Scholar search.)

LSJ 488 and 489 are graded with decimal grades (not CR/NC). The grade for both quarters is only assigned after completion of the second quarter, at which time the student receives the same grade for both quarters. If a student completes LSJ 488 but not LSJ 489, the X received for LSJ 488 will remain an X.

**Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>Spring Quarter</th>
<th>Fall Quarter</th>
<th>Winter Quarter</th>
<th>Spring Quarter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss possibility of applying with LSJ advisor</td>
<td>Participate in LSJ Honors preparatory workshops</td>
<td>Analyze data and draft thesis</td>
<td>Option to present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct preliminary research</td>
<td>Refine research goals and plan</td>
<td>Complete bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit application if appropriate</td>
<td>Meet with faculty mentor</td>
<td>Submit draft to mentor by 7th week</td>
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<td>Identify second reader</td>
<td>Submit revised thesis to mentor and reader by 9th week</td>
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<td>Commence literature review and data collection</td>
<td>Defend thesis by finals week</td>
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<td>Complete bibliography</td>
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**Identifying a Research Question: Resources for Students**

- “Developing a Research Question” on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QauomrFcrXk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QauomrFcrXk)
- What does a good research question look like? [https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-question-examples/](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-question-examples/)