

UNIVERSITY SENATE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: Undergraduate Academic Council

Date: March 24, 2009

**Criminal Justice Proposal for
“Honors in the Major” Program**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the Criminal Justice proposal for an “Honors in the Major” program be adopted.
2. That this proposal be implemented immediately upon approval.
3. That this proposal be forwarded to the President for approval.

Rationale:

It was the hope that students in all undergraduate major programs would have the option of pursuing “Honors in the Major.” The School of Criminal Justice was one of the few majors lacking such a program. The Undergraduate Academic Council, after careful review of the proposal, approved it and hopes this will be made available to the students in that major.

Criminal Justice Proposal for “With Honors in the Major” Program

Description of the Proposed Criminal Justice Honors Program

The purpose of the honors program in criminal justice is to provide undergraduate students the opportunity for a fuller training in research and writing than are normally possible in the general undergraduate program.

Admission to the Criminal Justice Honors Program:

Students can apply to the honors program in the second semester of their sophomore year or the first semester of their junior year. Minimum requirements for admission include, Criminal Justice as a declared first major, an overall GPA not lower than 3.25 and a Criminal Justice GPA not lower than 3.50. Additionally, to remain in the honors program, all honors students must maintain 3.50 GPA in major.

Honors Program Curriculum

Junior Year:

Fall Semester

Students who have been admitted to the program may elect to begin taking courses that will be applied to the required 12 honors credit of coursework.

During this semester students may elect to take:

- a. A writing-intensive course with a special honors section –OR-
- b. One of the two foundations course in the master’s program (CRJ 470/507 or CRJ 471/540) – OR -
- c. Other courses proposed and approved by the faculty

(These classes can be taken at *any* time subsequent to the honors admission).

Spring Semester

All students in this entering cohort will take a three-credit “Great Ideas in Criminal Justice” course. This course will be run by the director of the honors program and include a series of lectures by faculty members in the School of Criminal Justice. Individual faculty members will be responsible for one lecture, focusing on their area of research. This course will provide the incoming honors students with the opportunity to meet faculty and to learn about the research being conducted in the School. (See attached Course Action Form for CRJ490)

Senior Year:

Students will select either the Independent Senior Thesis (CRJ482/CRJ492) or the Topical Senior Research (CRJ481/CRJ491) of the Honors Programs. Each Track will be six credits over two-semesters.

Topical Senior Research: RCRJ481/RCRJ491

This is a two-semester sequence which introduces well-prepared undergraduate majors to research. The first semester will introduce the students to a specific area of research within the field. During this term students will learn and synthesize the literature pertinent to this area. The second semester of this track will be spent actively engaging in a research project that relates to the prior semesters preparation. The research will be hands on and can include data collection, analysis, and project presentation. The SCJ will limit student enrollment in the course, perhaps 10-12, in order to maintain the seminar-like dynamic that students presently taking the course find valuable in their intellectual development.

Independent Senior Thesis: CRJ482/CRJ492

Students who have an interest in a specific topic or research method (e.g., legal research) may arrange to work for two semesters with an individual faculty member on an independent project. This track will also require students to engage in both a literature review and research project which will be directly overseen and guided by the faculty sponsor.

During the fall semester, senior year, students in this track will also participate in a cohort/thesis class overseen by the director of the honors program. While the students will be working individually with their chosen faculty members, the director will bring the students together bi-weekly for the continued benefits of the cohort effect and to prepare the students for thesis research and writing.

Students in both tracks will complete a thesis by April of senior year. This thesis will be reviewed by the committee created for this purpose. In order to graduate with honors in the major, the student's thesis project must be approved.