

Chapter 2

The Nuts and Bolts

by Dr. Connie Hood and Dr. Rita Barnes

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Jeremy Crow ('10) helps you put it all together.

While primarily dedicated to scholastic and intellectual enrichment, the Honors Program supports a wide variety of student interests. For the new student, however, the activities, requirements, and mechanics of the Program can be daunting. This chapter will help you understand what's happening.



Mileposts in cursu honorum: Goals along the Way

The Honors Program's mission is to foster achievement in the following areas:

- Gaining academic breadth and depth through study in a series of limited-enrollment Honors classes at the level of general education courses and in interdisciplinary colloquia.
- Earning extra enrichment through non-classroom academic activities on the campus and beyond, such as university fora; service projects; and state, regional, and national conferences.
- Growing in areas of critical thinking, creative problem-solving, value structures, self-reflection, and interpersonal communication skills.

Through a portfolio of work, students who pursue graduation *in cursu honorum* will be expected to demonstrate that progress has been achieved in meeting these fundamental goals of the Honors Program.

How Do You Stay In?

So far, no one has been kicked out of Honors, but it is possible to become ineligible for Honors benefits. To be a full member, you must keep taking an Honors course each semester until you finish all requirements, and maintain a 3.5 cumulative GPA. (First-semester freshmen get a break: 3.1 works for *this semester only*.)

Honors Classes

We try to provide a challenging and diverse curriculum for our students, both within disciplines and in interdisciplinary colloquia, as well as through Honors contracts and independent Directed Studies.

Honors course sections are usually general curriculum courses which are taught with an emphasis on student involvement and in-depth discussion. Because of this, Honors sections usually have a smaller class size than their standard counterparts.

HELP! My GPA Just Dropped Below 3.5!

What Do I Do Now?

You don't have to drop out of the Honors Program if your grades drop, and we hope you won't! Read Appendix A, "Categories of Membership," in the Honors Charter.

- *If your average is temporarily between 3.1 and 3.5, you are an associate member.* You will not be eligible for early registration, HPEO, the Honors Council, and Honors Program awards, and you cannot vote in the Honors Council member elections. But you can participate in everything the ASG sponsors, including ASG awards, and you can sign up for Honors courses after full members register. Keep taking Honors classes.
- *If your average falls below 3.1, you are an affiliate member.* You, too, can sign up for Honors courses on a space-available basis and can participate fully in ASG activities, including being eligible for ASG awards.
- *No one except the Honors Office will know your average, and we will do what we can to help you get your grades back up to full membership status.* Remember,



take advantage of free peer tutoring from the Tutoring Committee!

Staying in the ASG and continuing to take Honors courses has many benefits: your resume will show that you worked to get the best out of your university education, the Honors directors will gladly write recommendation letters for you, and you will have many opportunities to participate in interest groups, leadership roles, and intellectual discussions—as long as you are willing!

For a former student's perspective, read Mike Renfro's reassuring "Portrait of the Artist as an Associate (or Affiliate Member)" on the following page.

Portrait of the Artist as an Associate (or Affiliate) Member

by Mike Renfro

So you've had a rough semester, for any number of reasons. Your grades suffered, and your cumulative GPA has dropped below a 3.5, or maybe even below a 3.1. Now what? Is there life after full membership? In a word, yes. But you probably want more than one word. So here are several:

Yes, there is life after full membership. Strangely enough, it's very much like the life you're used to. The sun continues to rise, the birds still sing, and Cookeville continues to have no night life.

Why should you stick around Honors after becoming an associate or affiliate member? Well, why did you stick around to begin with? Your friends were there? It looked good on your resume? You enjoyed the workshops, conferences, and other activities?

Here's what actually happens when your GPA drops below a cumulative 3.5:

1. You don't get early registration.
2. If you're on a work scholarship, you can't participate in HPEO.
3. You can't be nominated for Honors-specific awards.
4. You can't run for Honors Council or vote to elect members of the Honors Council.

Here's what doesn't happen:

1. Jack-booted guards at the Honors Lounge check your ID and pummel you severely for trying to hang out with your friends.
2. Your dorm assignment changes to the Associate/Affiliate Member Re-Education Facility.
3. You get a scarlet "A" branded on both your face and your transcripts.
4. Your recommendation letters all start with "X was a great student, until s/he turned into a *heathen freak!*"
5. Attractive Honors Groupies of the appropriate gender stop wanting to date you.

Here's what can happen after your GPA drops, if you want:

1. You take more Honors classes.
2. You participate in or chair an ASG committee.
3. You get to be a Big Sib.
4. You read papers at honors conferences.
5. You get nominated for (or win) any ASG award.
6. You realize that not a whole lot has changed.

Trust me on this one; I was in the ranks of the associate members before most of you were out of elementary school. I still took Honors classes (including both my colloquia), went on co-op, read papers for conferences, wrote reasons why Tech should start HPEO, organized recruiting efforts at Engineering Day, represented Honors and engineering students on a recruiting trip to Nashville, and got into graduate school. I even got to boss around the full members if I knew what was going on better than they did. Honestly, nobody outside TJ Farr room 204B (and possibly you) really cares if you're an affiliate, associate, or full member. If your GPA rises over a 3.5 later, great! If not, it isn't a crippling disease.

Honors students are not defined by cumulative GPA. Perhaps that quality defines "full members of the Honors Program in good standing," but those people aren't necessarily Honors students, in my opinion. Honors students are people who care about getting a quality education, both in and out of class. They think, they question, and sometimes they get in over their heads. Sometimes they even make mistakes and expect the wrath of God and the Honors Council to come crashing down on them. But it doesn't happen that way; everyone makes mistakes, even if they don't like to admit it.

If I had to cut this whole thing down to one thought, it would be this: if you participated in Honors classes and activities because you thought they were valuable in and of themselves, then don't let something totally irrelevant (like your GPA) stop you from continuing.

Honors 1010: Introduction to Honors

The first class you must take, since it will be your introduction to the Honors Program, is Honors 1010. Honors 1010 is a required one-credit-hour course that meets only two hours a week for ten weeks. In this small class, the focus is on discussion and on learning how to listen and question well. Honors 1010 introduces you to personality types (the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and other models), learning styles, analytical and critical thinking, current events and world issues, study skills, and other topics. You will also write an autobiography, construct a resume, and work with others on a worldview project (see Chapter Eight, "Honors 1010"). Throughout this class, you will get to know some of the faculty and students in the Honors Program.

Honors Contracts

For some majors, it's hard to fit Honors sections into a fairly fixed schedule of courses. If this is true for you, plan ahead to fulfill some of your 15-hour Honors courses in the disciplines with an Honors Contract. This is a written agreement with a professor in a non-Honors section outlining what you will do to make the course Honors-level work. Both the student and the teacher sign the agreement, and the student must have the contract approved by the Honors Director prior to the end of the previous semester.



Usually permission is not granted for contracts in courses in which an Honors section already exists (for example: English 2230, History 2010, or Math 1910) because the classroom experience is not the same in an Honors section as in a non-Honors section.

An Honors Contract in an upper-division course in your major can provide an opportunity to study an area of special interest in more depth. Such initiative tells a future employer or graduate school that you are a student who is focused and independent. You can print out contract information from the Honors website at <http://www.tntech.edu/honors/contracts/>.

Honors leadership courses (Honors 2010-2090)

This course designation is for a variety of leadership and personal development courses. These courses **do not** count toward *in cursu honorum* requirements, but they cover valuable pre-professional skills, such as self-esteem and goal setting along with balancing personal relationships during college.

Honors Colloquia (Honors 4013)

In order to graduate *in cursu honorum*, you are required to take two Honors colloquia. These are three-credit-hour, seminar-style courses created especially for the Honors Program. Colloquia allow professors to share their areas of academic specialization, creating opportunities for interested students. We usually offer two Colloquia each semester. They are unique; Colloquia cannot duplicate courses already offered in the TTU curriculum. In the past, topics have included recombinant DNA, race relations, brain chemistry, society and the environment, censorship, and Tolkien. A list of all past Colloquia is available on the Honors website at <http://www.tntech.edu/honors/colloquia/>.

We encourage professors to create Colloquia that are experimental in nature to help students find new perspectives. You're encouraged to talk to professors and to the Honors Council about Colloquia that would interest you.

Honors Directed Studies (Honors 4023)

Sometimes Honors students find that there is a topic they are passionate about, but that is not available as a course or Colloquium. To accommodate such situations, we offer Honors 4023, Honors Directed Study. First, find a TTU professor who

is willing to direct the project. Obviously, the project must be in the professor's discipline. The next step is to write a proposal with the professor, describing what material your study will cover and in what manner, how often you will meet, how you will be tested, and in what form you will present your results (a research paper or a project, typically). Your proposal must be approved by Dr. Barnes during the semester before you do the work. If you plan to go to graduate school, completing an independent study project prior to your senior year will look especially good on your record. Please note that funding limitations sometimes affect availability, so plan ahead (by considering to apply for the Ginkgo Grant, for instance). Visit <http://www.tntech.edu/honors/directedstudies/> for more information.

Honors Thesis Option (Honors 4033-4043)

If you have developed an especially well-focused research interest, explore the possibility of doing an Honors thesis. The thesis process (described in Appendix A, "The Honors Charter and By-laws") is a two-semester commitment to rigorous research. Writing a thesis will demonstrate your academic preparation and maturity to graduate schools, scholarship committees, and top employers. If your plan for a thesis is approved, your first semester (Research for Thesis) can substitute for one colloquium. Start your planning for a thesis *before* junior year if possible.

How Do You Graduate in *cursu honorum* ?

To graduate *in cursu honorum*, you must be a full member (with a cumulative 3.5 average upon graduating) who has taken Honors 1010, 15 credit hours of Honors courses from at least three different disciplines (-800 suffix courses), and two Honors Colloquia. An Honors Directed Study, Research for Honors Thesis, or Distinction in the Major (DITM) for Chemical Engineering may substitute for one colloquium. In addition, you must fulfill other requirements as explained in Chapter 16, "Graduating *in cursu honorum*." Many *in cursu honorum* graduates take additional Honors courses and Colloquia.

Make a basic plan of your Honors courses beginning your first year. If you already have so much AP credit that you can't find Honors sections of core courses for your 15-hour requirement, or if you cannot fit an Honors section into your schedule, contact the Honors Office so that we can help you plan a contract in one or more of your non-Honors classes for Honors credit.

Of course, some Honors students find that their intellectual interests and achievements are not necessarily reflected by their overall GPA. For this reason, associate members of the Honors Program who have completed all their Honors courses, while maintaining a GPA higher than 3.1 but below 3.5, will be recognized with a certificate as an Honors Associate.

The Honors Portfolio: Recommendations in the Making

All Honors students have their own Honors Portfolio, a handy collection of their work as an Honors student. If you keep your portfolio up to date each semester, it will be easy for professors and the Honors Directors to write specific (and thus effective) letters of recommendation. It will also be easy for you to write specific (and thus equally effective) applications for scholarships, internships, jobs, co-op positions, and graduate school.

When you want to put something in your portfolio, bring it to the Honors Office, and we'll place it on file. Examples of items that belong there are:

- The autobiography you write for Honors 1010
- A current resume (building from the one for Honors 1010)

- Research, essays, and other documentation of your best work at TTU, especially work related to your major field
- Letters of recommendation, notes, and comments filed on your behalf by faculty members, as well as award letters
- Completed Honors Program Enrichment Options (HPEO) forms
- Any other documents that reflect your achievements (recital tapes and other creative work, project plans, newspaper clippings or photos, articles you've written, etc.)

How Honors Works: People, Publications, and Perks

The Honors Program supports a multitude of activities besides courses. The Associated Scholars Guild (ASG), the student organization of the Honors Program, runs most Honors extracurricular activities (see Chapter Three, “The Associated Scholars Guild”). Here is a sampling of Honors Program opportunities—this list is always growing and evolving. Feel free to make suggestions!

Honors Council

The Honors Council, the governing body of the Honors Program, is composed of the Director, the Associate Director, seven other faculty members, and ten Honors students, one of whom serves as chair. The Council makes academic policy decisions, including approval of Honors Colloquia.

Elections are held for Council seats each spring, usually in April. All full members are eligible to run for a seat and vote. Those who wish to run must submit a resume and an Honors resume which includes paragraph describing why you feel well-suited for a seat on the Honors Council (See Chapter 13, “Writing a Resume.”) Flip to Appendix A, “The Honors Charter and By-laws,” for more information.

Mentoring by professors

One of the most beneficial opportunities you can create for yourself in college is finding a professor who will mentor you. Mentoring by a professor can mean many things, including working together on research and other projects, receiving career advice, and sharing the experience of working in your academic field. Mentors are role models who should act responsibly and maturely, be easy for you to talk to, and help you to pursue in-depth understanding as you explore and grow as a university student. The Honors Program strongly recommends that students form mentor ties with professors in their major fields beginning in their sophomore year. One of the Honors Directors can help you find a mentor.

Honors peer mentors

Peer mentors are returning Honors students with a wealth of Honors knowledge selected to assist teachers of Honors 1010 classes and other Honors courses. These mentors attend the course; get to know the students; send them e-mail; lead some of the course's projects; and give presentations about the Honors Program, HPEO, ASG activities, and so on. This is an excellent leadership and service opportunity, especially if you plan on pursuing a career in any field that relies on teamwork, such as engineering. Applications for students interested in being a peer mentor for the next school year are accepted starting in the mid- to late-spring semester.

Keeping in the know: somebody *did* tell you

A key to success in college—and in life—is being proactive and avoiding the phrase “nobody told me.” Here are some of the information sources Honors uses to combat this unfortunate utterance.

Nobody told me

There are times when a piece of crucial information passes in one ear and out the other. And everyone knows the feeling that, somehow, they were not properly informed of a deadline, a procedure, or an unbendable rule. Learning to cope with not knowing something is normal and socially acceptable. Blaming it on others, not so much. Rule of thumb: avoid using “nobody told me” (or worse, the passive “I was told”) as an excuse.

But I LIKE my e-mail!

If you've been using cutiepi314@gmail.com since 7th grade and just can't part with your ever-so-clever moniker, there is an alternative. You can forward your TTU Windows Live e-mail to your off-campus account with a minimal amount of pain.

Through TTU's Outlook:

- Click on "Options" and select "See All Options..." from the dropdown box.
- After selecting the "Connected Accounts" tab, scroll down to the Forwarding headline.
- Type in the e-mail address you'd like to use into the dialogue box, unchecking "Keep a copy of forwarded messages..."
- Select "Start Forwarding".

Through G-mail:

- Go to "Settings" to the tab "Accounts and Imports".
- After clicking on "Add POP3 e-mail account", enter your TTU e-mail address and click "Next Step".
- Use your TTU e-mail address and password in the Username and Password fields, enter "pod51000.outlook.com" into the POP Server field, and select "995" from the Port dropdown list.
- Check the "Always use a secure connection (SSL)..." box.
- Click "Add Account".

If you wish to remove forwarding, you can delete it from the two e-mail services rather easily.

Honors newsletters: Honorable Mention and Fresh!

The Honors Program and the ASG publish *Honorable Mention*, a newsletter that has been recognized as an outstanding publication by the National Collegiate Honors Council with a first-place award. The student editors are appointed after demonstrating skill and commitment to working on the newsletter as reporters, layout assistants, or proofreaders. *Honorable Mention* is sent to all Honors students, ASG members, and TTU faculty and administrators, as well as Honors alumni.

Honors freshmen publish *Fresh!*, produced twice each semester. *Fresh!* addresses items of interest to first-year Honors students. Editors of *Fresh!* are appointed on the basis of reliability and aptitude as we produce the first issue of the new year. Last year's editor serves as a student mentor for this year's *Fresh!* newsletter.

Honors Handbook

The *Honors Handbook*, the primary textbook for Honors 1010, is revised and updated every year. An unusual feature of this textbook is that it's almost entirely created by student editors, writers, designers, and proofreaders. See Dr. Barnes if you would like to join the staff this fall as we plan our next edition.

Technology

A proven antidote for befuddlement: read all e-mail from Honors and ASG. This includes messages from ASG (the online ASG Digest), Honors (messages from the Honors Office), Everyone (messages to the extended Honors community), Dr. Barnes, Mr. Clark, and Ms. Korczyk. E-mail is the primary communication tool in Honors, so if you don't already check your e-mail regularly, make it a part of your new daily college routine. You'll never know what important e-mails you might miss!

The Honors website is another source for basic information and forms. It also features photos of recent Honors and ASG events, scholarship information, course requirements, and links to conference and fellowship sites.

While we're on the subject of computers, Big Sibs can help you learn the ins and outs of the TTU network, such as reminding you to log onto the TTU internet server from your personal computer by logging into <http://bluesocket-1.tntech.edu/>, so ask them for help.

Honors Lounge/Seminar Room

T.J. Farr 204A, popularly known as "the Lounge," functions as the Honors Seminar Room when Honors classes or committee meetings are in session.

When Honors classes and other official activities are not in progress, the room magically transforms into its alter ego, the friendly neighborhood Honors Lounge, where students gather to study, check e-mail, and hang out. The Lounge also offers games, free periodicals, and often food. Come to the regularly scheduled movie sessions on Friday nights, and the movies and discussions on Saturday nights, too! Bring a friend, or come alone and make some new ones.

Because the Lounge is in an academic building, where classes are in session until 8:50 p.m, being quiet and considerate of others in the building is a must. Faculty, parents, and other visitors may drop in at various times, too. Take a look at the "Honors Lounge Code of Conduct" (Appendix F).

The wide variety of magazines and journals in the Honors Lounge range from *The New Yorker* to *Chemical Engineering* to *Newsweek*. These magazines, donated by faculty, are there for you to read, enjoy, and take home with you.



Lloyd and Esmerelda have obviously not read the Honors Lounge Code of Conduct.

Honors Housing

Now in its thirteenth year, Honors Housing occupies an entire residence hall, Murphy, and is home to more than 120 students who enjoy its community atmosphere, convenient group study rooms, and opportunities for spontaneous potlucks. You must take at least one Honors course in the disciplines per semester to remain eligible. Honors is also the only housing option using a roommate matching system. See Mr. Clark or the Honors Housing assistant if you have questions.

Honors Housing guidelines:

- Students currently living in Honors Housing have first priority to remain in their rooms for the following year. Other returning Honors students in good standing who would like to live in Honors Housing have second priority. Students must do all of the following:
 - a. Turn in all required forms to Mr. Clark by the announced deadline.
 - b. Be in good standing as responsible dorm residents.
 - c. Make official arrangements with the Office of Residential Life.
 - d. Fill out a new roommate matching form and Honors Housing agreement.
 - e. Take Honors classes each semester until course requirements are met.

Note: Returning students must notify Mr. Clark in writing on or before the published deadlines, and fulfill the above requirements in order to receive priority.

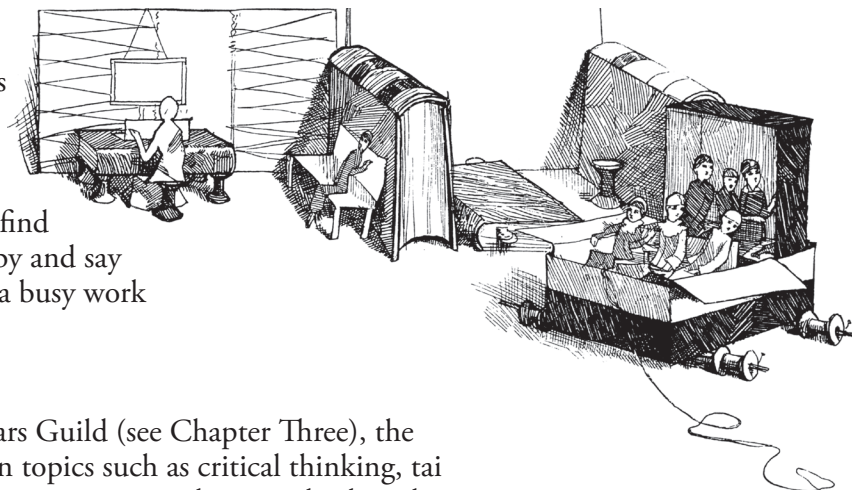
- Incoming Honors Program freshmen must do all of the following:
 - a. Fill out the online TTU application for on-campus residence halls and pay the housing deposit. Select Murphy Hall in the preference section.
 - b. Indicate their interest in Honors Housing on the Honors Program application form.
 - c. Complete an Honors Roommate Matching Form.
 - d. Complete an Honors Housing Agreement Form.
 - e. Engineering and Business students, as well as those interested in the new freshman dorms or the International hall, must also rank their housing preferences in order to complete their applications.
- Applicants will be matched as closely as possible. Efficient completion of your entire application means that you will enter the pool of available housing candidates earlier, thus increasing your chances for a good roommate match.

Don't bring food or drink near the computers

Keyboards with sugary drinks spilled in them are really disgusting. If you're like me (and I know I am), you would never be so clumsy as to spill anything or break any equipment, and this is one of those rules meant for "everyone else," but you have to follow it, too.

Honors Office

Next door to the Honors Lounge is the Honors Office (Farr 204B). This is the place to go to find out official information about Honors or to pick up/drop off Honors paperwork. Our Honors secretary, Patty Korczyk, will help you find an answer to your questions. Feel free to stop by and say hello, but remember that the Honors Office is a busy work environment even when it is quiet.



Workshops

In conjunction with the Associated Scholars Guild (see Chapter Three), the Honors Program offers many free workshops on topics such as critical thinking, tai chi, social intelligence, personal finance, resume writing, neurology, study abroad, personality types, and other subjects. Honors workshops vary in length, but most are around an hour long. You're encouraged to suggest workshop topics that interest you

and your friends. Many other lectures and events worth your attention take place across campus, as well, including workshops by ITS and the Counseling Center. All of these events, as well as concerts, plays, and many other University activities, may be used for HPEO credit. Keep an eye out for these events on the bulletin board in the Lounge or in your weekly ASG Digest.

Honors conferences

Tennessee Tech Honors students are very active in state and national honors conferences. Presenting a paper at a conference looks very impressive on your resume and gives you opportunities for fellowship, intellectual stimulation, and travel. The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) Conference for 2011 will be in Phoenix, AZ. Students from TTU also attend the state and regional conferences virtually every year, and we often take one of the largest and most active delegations in the nation. See Chapter 14, “Conferences: Honors on the Road,” for an extended discussion of conference-going.



National honors journals

NCHC publishes *The Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council (JNCHC)*, dedicated to scholarly discussion of theoretical and pedagogical issues. TTU Honors graduate Aaron Bibb (*in cursu honorum* '02) served on the NCHC Publications Board from 1999 to 2002. Dr. Connie Hood and Dr. Barnes have co-authored articles with Honors students and mentored others who have published articles in NCHC publications. If you are interested, talk to Dr. Barnes.

Outstanding honors awards

Since 1989, the Honors Program has recognized the achievements and service of Honors students and faculty with annual awards. Categories include Outstanding Honors Faculty Member, Outstanding Honors Freshman, Outstanding Honors Student of the Year, and Outstanding Honors Senior. The ASG presents its own awards; see Chapter Three, “The Associated Scholars Guild.”

The Outstanding Honors and ASG Awards rules and winners are in Appendix H of the *Honors Handbook*. A sample nominee resume appears in Chapter 13, “Writing a Resume.”

