



Shattuck-St. Mary's Honors Program

The Shattuck–St. Mary’s Honors Program:

The SSM Honors Program is designed to offer a unique academic experience for a highly selective group of students in grades 9-12. Recognizing that developing one’s creativity and problem-solving skills is a primary goal of a successful SSM education, the Honors Program is designed to place strong emphasis on such development. Students are eligible to apply during the Fall Term of each academic year.

At graduation, students successfully completing the Honors Program requirements will receive a diploma noting “Honors with Distinction.”

The major components of the Honors Program include:

Honors Program Seminar

The seminar is offered as a one-term academic course meeting during a regularly scheduled class period. As part of the seminar, students are afforded the opportunity to discuss their ideas with students from other international schools via videoconferencing technology. Each term the seminar will challenge students to think about concerns that are facing not only the United States but the world. Topics may include: balancing civil liberties and security in the modern world, the West’s involvement in modern-day Africa, and human rights in the 21st century.

Speaker Series

The speaker series provides Honors students the opportunity to hear and interact with a range of unique individuals who are experts in their professional fields. This includes both on-and off-campus events. Students are required to attend a minimum of five of these events each year. Past events have included the Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College, adventure photo-journalist Beth Wald, and a talk by Dr. Sally Ride, the first American woman in space.

Capstone Project

The purpose of the capstone project is to allow students the opportunity to develop an understanding of subjects that are beyond the normal range of offerings at Shattuck-St. Mary’s School. This is an exciting experience for students who have a high degree of self-motivation and are eager to work closely with faculty members in their academic areas of expertise.

Examples of capstone projects include internships offering students “real world” experience. Based on each student’s interests and time availability, internships will be designed with the involvement of alumni, parents, and school-related contacts. Internships may take place locally or on a more extensive basis away from campus during school breaks. Faculty-sponsored research projects are another form of capstone project. Or, a student might undertake a significant community service initiative. There are numerous forms the capstone project may take. The essential components are that a student focuses on an area of interest and dedicates a significant effort to an endeavor outside the traditional classroom setting.

Honors Program Application

Students enrolled in grades 9-11 are eligible to apply. Honors Students are selected by faculty members of the Honors Program Committee.

The application process includes:

- A brief application (enclosed)
- A personal interview with the Honors Program Committee during the Fall Term
- Analysis of complete current transcripts and grades, including SSM’s fall mid-term grades
- Scores from any of the following: SSAT, PSAT, SAT I, SAT II, ACT
- Teacher recommendation forms (two teachers plus applicant’s advisor)
- Completed applications are due by October 15th.

Acceptance decisions regarding Honors Program applicants will be made during the Fall Term. Applicants will be notified prior to the start of Winter Term.

Honors Program Participation Expectations

- Students must apply and be accepted into the program by the Honors Program Committee
- Students must participate in at least one term of the Honors Program Seminar
- Students must attend a minimum of five lectures or speaker events per year
- Students must remain in good academic and social standing with the school
- Students must complete a capstone project by March 1st of their senior year.

Honors Program Capstone Project Requirements

Phase 1: Pre-requisites for the Independent / Honors Research Project

It is assumed that prior to initiation of an Independent Research Project at Shattuck-St. Mary's School, that the student candidate must prove his or her ability to design and implement the chosen Project both mentally and logistically. An appropriate instructor with expertise in the Project area will monitor the progress of the assigned candidate during the first term to determine the probable success of the Project proposed. This will be based on attendance to meetings with the instructor at least twice a week for guidance and advising throughout the term prior to submission of the Project proposal. Next, the student must turn in a proposal to the instructor which will include the suggested protocol prior to initiation of the Project and be graded on a pass/fail basis.

Students interested in conducting a Project in the science or social science area will need to submit a proposal which must contain an Introduction section based on the extensive literary research (at least ten or more different sources) ending with an objective indicating the purpose of the Project, a detailed protocol (Materials and Methods section) that may be followed including all the instrumentation and supplies needed, a section on how the data will be statistically analyzed (Results section), including the interpretation of the data collected (Discussion section) and its significance (Conclusion section). Lastly, students will need to indicate how the Project will be presented upon completion.

Students interested in conducting a Project in the humanities area will need to submit a proposal which must contain an Introduction section based on the extensive literary research (at least ten or more different sources) ending with an objective indicating the purpose of the Project, a detailed procedure (Methods section) with a timeline for accomplishing the task that may be followed including all the instrumentation and supplies needed. Lastly, students will need to indicate how the Project will be presented.

A passing grade must be received by the candidate on the proposal as determined by the instructor monitoring the Project in order to go to Phase 2. If the student receives a failing grade or the instructor deems that the Project in their estimation will not be successful based on their progress throughout the term prior to the Project initiation, then the instructor may terminate their part of the agreement with the candidate. In extenuating circumstances and / or at the discretion of the instructor, the student may revise their scientific proposal and re-submit if time allows and the instructor is amenable to the idea.

Phase 2: Logistics for the Independent / Honors Research Project

Once the proposal is accepted and possibly revised based on the discussion between the instructor and the student candidate, the next phase will be determining the logistics involved in the Project in order to assure success. This will entail consideration of pre-requisite courses that may need to be taken prior to the initiation of the Project and determination of the location where the Project will be conducted. If off campus, then transportation logistics will need to be worked out such that the candidate can achieve success in completing his or her Project. If the Project research will take place at a university or college in another State or Country, then prior arrangements with that person supervising the work will have to be confirmed before the end of the sophomore or junior year. Also, any pre-requisite courses deemed necessary by the supervisory instructor must be completed during the summer or the term prior to initiation of the Project. At this point, the instructor will evaluate his or her progress and determine if the logistics and arrangements have been made in order to assure success in the Project. As in Phase 1, if the student receives a failing grade or the instructor deems that the Project in their estimation will not be successful based on the students progress throughout Phase 2 of the Project, then the instructor may terminate their part of the agreement with the student.

Phase 3: Completion and Presentation of the Independent / Honors Research Project

At the completion of the Project, the student candidate will write up a research report and produce a PowerPoint oral presentation of the research to be given at an Independent Research Project Symposium seminar on campus or a final production of the completed work will be given during their senior year. The presentation will be evaluated by members of the Honors Committee, supervisory members, other invited members of the community and alumni of the SSM community. A final passing grade will be based on the presentation and on how well the candidate answers questions posed by the members present about their Project during their seminar. The student will work with the supervisory instructor and re-format the research report or production for publication in a SSM Independent Research Project journal. If student research or production is exemplary, then submission for publication in a peer-reviewed journal will also be available.

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