The Women's & Gender Studies Honors Program:
Information Sheet (revised 3/15)

Overview
The Honors Program presents an opportunity for highly academically-motivated students, many of whom are bound for graduate school, to complete two semesters of intensive research and writing on a research topic of the student’s choice related to Women’s and Gender Studies. Honors students are supervised and supported by a faculty committee comprised of the Honors advisor (typically a member of the WGS faculty) and two additional faculty members who share expertise in the student’s selected topic area.

Students who are accepted into the Honors Program enroll in two consecutive semesters of what’s called an “Honors Tutorial.” WGS 498: Honors Research Tutorial (described more specifically below), is taken during the Fall semester and involves writing an extensive research proposal backed by a critical literature review and, assuming, that the Honors advisor and student agree that progress is satisfactory, begin the initial research phase of the project. At the end of the Fall term, if the student’s committee agrees that the Honors student has made satisfactory progress in WGS 498 (earning no less than a B), then s/he may enroll in WGS 499: Honors Paper Tutorial for the Spring. In WGS 499, the student completes her/his research, writes and revises the full paper and gives a public presentation of the research. (described more specifically below)

At the end of the Spring term, if the committee agrees that the final paper is worthy of the grade of A or A-, the student will be awarded departmental Honors and publicly recognized at the Honors Convocation.

Application Process and Eligibility Requirements:

1. If you are interested in the Honors Program, the first thing you should do is meet with your departmental advisor to see if you meet the initial eligibility requirements set out below. You should plan on doing this no later than the middle (though the sooner, the better) of the Spring semester prior to the Fall semester of the Honors Research Tutorial (WGS 498).

Initial Eligibility Requirements
To be eligible for Honors work, a student must
1) be a Women’s & Gender Studies Major
2) have completed no less than 21 credit hours (7 courses) of WGS coursework
3) have a WGS GPA of 3.3 or higher
4) have an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher

2. If you meet these initial requirements, you then need to take the following steps:

- Identify and develop your research idea;
- Identify an Honors Advisor (described more specifically below)
- Put together an Honors Committee (described more specifically below)
• Complete the brief application (attached)

3. Once you have done accomplished the above, you must contact the WGS Department Chair for acceptance to the Honors Program and clearance to enroll in WGS 498. This process should be completed no later than the end of the Spring term prior to the Fall when work would begin.

**Detailed Descriptions of the Program Components**

**The Honors Advisor:** When a student applies to do an Honors Tutorial, s/he needs to identify a faculty member who is willing to work with her/him during the entire year on the extensive research and writing. Admission to the program is dependent on the identification of an appropriate faculty advisor. The student’s departmental advisor can be helpful in recommending people who might be interested in the selected topic and have the expertise to guide the research. In most cases, the faculty advisor should be one of the fulltime members of the Women's & Gender Studies faculty. However, some of the department-based faculty who have close relationships with the Women’s & Gender Studies Department might be willing to serve as advisor (or perhaps co-advisor), if the student has already worked with them, or if their expertise is essential to the research.

**The Honors Committee:** Together, the Honors advisor and Honors student will recruit two additional faculty members to serve on the Honors Committee. The committee’s role is to help support and evaluate the student’s work throughout the year. Once identified, generally, the committee members are appointed by the Honors advisor (if the advisor is a member of the WGS fulltime faculty) or the Department chair, if not. The candidate will have an opportunity during the first semester to meet informally with the committee (either face to face or “virtually”).

**The Fall Honors Research Tutorial: Literature Review, Preliminary Research and Research Proposal.** When accepted to the Honors Program, the student will work on an extensive critical literature review on the topic, begin drafting a research proposal and work closely with her/his supervisor to begin the actual original research. The student and advisor will meet regularly during the fall to support her/his progress.

Before the end of the Fall semester, the student will be expected to produce a thorough research proposal that

- States the research question/s
- Provides the larger theoretical context for the research question/s
- Critically reviews the relevant literature and points to the potential contribution this research will make
- Describes study methods, such as, but not limited to, ethnography, textual analysis, literary criticism, oral historical analysis, visual cultural analysis and/or quantitative/statistical analysis.
NOTE: If the research involves human subjects, the student will need to apply for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and consult the Honors advisor immediately to discuss the procedures necessary to secure IRB approval. For more information, see: http://www.umb.edu/research/orsp/compliance/irb.html

The Research Proposal will be submitted to the Honors advisor approximately one month before the end of the semester. The advisor will recommend revisions to the proposal and upon the completion of the second draft; the student will submit the proposal to the full committee for their review. The committee will meet to discuss the student’s progress on the basis of the proposal, and if they think s/he is sufficiently prepared to go to a full-scale Honors Paper, s/he will be admitted to the second semester Honors Tutorial (WGS 499). At that time, the student will devote her/his self to conducting her/his research, even working during the Winter break if possible.

(In the event of a negative recommendation, if the student disagrees with the committee recommendation, the student may request a meeting with the committee to discuss project progress and any extenuating circumstances more fully. The committee will then vote a second time, and that vote will be binding.) In most cases, students who complete the Preliminary Paper and receive a grade of B or better will be recommended for admission to the second semester's work.

The Spring Honors Paper Tutorial (WGS 499) Completing the Research and Writing and Presenting the Final Paper.

During the second semester, the student will work intensively on the research, conduct a rigorous analysis of the findings and organize this information into a major research paper. This paper should include a revision of the information presented in the research proposal plus

- a full description of methods of research and analysis employed
- a presentation of the research findings
- an interpretation of their significance for feminist scholarship.

The student will be expected to produce a good working first draft by mid-semester, for her/his advisor's comments. A second draft will be completed and shared with the full committee. If the committee agrees that the paper is nearly done, the student and the committee will schedule the Honors Conversation.

Honors Papers Presentation and Submission of Final Paper
The Honors Conversation is a celebratory WGS event open to the public (and advertised on campus). The committee will be in attendance and the student may invite family and friends to attend as well. During the Honors Conversation the student presents her/his research and fields questions and comments from those present. Committee members may suggest or require final revisions to the paper at this time.

Shortly thereafter, multiple copies of final version of the paper are submitted to the advisor: one for each committee member, one for the advisor and one for the WGS archives. We ask that the student spiral bind the copy intended for the archives.
The Awarding of Program Honors. In order to be awarded Program Honors, the student must have completed the first semester of Honors work with at least a B; and receive the grade of either A- or A on the completed Honors Paper. (The student will still get credit for the first semester, even if s/he does not enroll in the second semester; and for the second semester, even if s/he did not achieve Program Honors.)
Application for Honors Program in Women's & Gender Studies

Date________________________________

Name___________________________________________________________________

Address_________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Phone/email_____________________________________________________________

Number of Women's & Gender Studies credits taken thus _______ GPA_______

WGS GPA____________

Future Educational Goals:__________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Preliminary Research Topic_______________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Possible Honors Advisor________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Have you completed long research papers before? (Please indicate when and with what faculty member.)__________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________