

Great Books Honors

Faulkner University
A Christian University

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.

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Great Books Honors

If we let ourselves, we shall always be waiting for some distraction or other to end before we can really get down to our work. The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavorable. Favorable conditions never come. C.S. Lewis, “Learning in War-time”

Great Books Honors (GBH) at Faulkner University represents a university-wide honors track that accommodates all degree plans. Its design and content prove both challenging and transformative, and by participating in the GBH program, students accept a model for learning that will encompass and enrich the student’s entire degree experience. The driving force behind GBH is a Great Books methodology anchored by a Christian worldview. Great Books learning encourages an emphasis on primary texts (the classics, the enduring voices of Western Civilization), the importance of and application of interpretive questions, and a conversation-style classroom setting. The method represents an effective remedy for those students who find the traditional lecture model too passive and at times watered down.

In the Great Books Honors program, we read, write, think, discuss, and serve with the sense that there are eternal implications to all that we are doing.

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GBH Requirements

To be eligible to participate in the Great Books Honors program, the following requirements must be met:

GBH Requirements

To be eligible to participate in the GBH, the following requirements must be met:

- New, prospective students must:
 - Complete a short application and interview,
 - Have a high school GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale),
 - Score at least a 27 on the English component of the ACT or at least a 580 on the verbal component of the SAT, and
 - Receive official confirmation of acceptance.

- Continuing Honors students must:
 - Establish a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 during the freshman year and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 until graduation. A student whose cumulative GPA fails to meet this standard will not automatically be released from the program. That student's record will be reviewed term by term, and participation may be continued provided the student shows steady progress in raising the GPA to 3.0 and remains in good standing regarding the other requirements listed here.
 - Comply with Faulkner University Student Handbook regarding conduct and behavior.

- Prospective Honors graduates must:
 - Complete the five core courses with a 3.0 or greater GPA.
 - Complete the two contract courses related to major.
 - Complete the Senior Thesis/Project.

Bridge Course: Students who do not fully qualify for GBH may still apply for admission to the GB 1300 Introduction to Great Books course.

- To participate in GB 1300, students must:
 - Complete a short application and interview,
 - Have a high school GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale),
 - Score at least a 23 on the English component of the ACT and an overall composite of 25 (or the SAT equivalent), and
 - Receive written confirmation of acceptance.

GBH Students: GB Honors students strive to embody certain noble attributes. Such students are ...

- organized, having a greater sense of time management and ability to prioritize;
- ready to come to class mentally focused and prepared;
- committed to learning and curious about a wide variety of topics and issues;
- confident they can rise to the challenges of academics and life;
- willing to do the work, even when it is demanding;
- willing to seek help (from professors, peers, tutors, counselors);
- willing to accept and respond to constructive criticism;
- content to find a place in a community of scholars, working with and for others;
- critical thinkers, eager to ask questions and listen to others;
- eager to make connections among topics in their classes, world, and personal lives, to see the big picture of education and life;
- creative, enjoying the new patterns that emerge from old ideas;
- committed to growing "in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man";
- lifelong learners.

GBH Course Substitutions

In order to facilitate student participation in the Great Books Honors program, the university allows various substitutions for courses within any student's degree plan. GBH will make every effort to review a student's degree plan individually. Note, however, that it is primarily the student's responsibility to remain aware of the relevant degree plan requirements.

To graduate from the Great Books Honors program, students must complete the following course sequence:

- Great Books courses I-V
- Two Contract Courses (selected from one's major courses)
- Great Books Thesis

Faulkner University typically allows the following course substitutions:

- EH 1301 English Composition I and EH 1302 English Composition II (Introduction to Great Books eliminates EH 1301 or EH 1302)
- English Literature
- Western Tradition I and II (HU 2315/2325)
- Relevant HY/EH/BI courses
- Elective hours

The university and GBH program work hard to allow students to participate in the program. Therefore, certain exceptions or accommodations may be made on an individual basis. Upon occasion, though, it may happen that a student must take the relevant courses in the GBH program that cannot be substituted as a part of the student's degree plan. Such actions will prove necessary in order to graduate from the program.

GBH: A Liberal Arts Education in Christ

Great Books Honors at Faulkner University finds itself uniquely positioned to serve student-believers in their quest for spiritual formation under Christ. Students formed by our model not only enter the rest of their lives with deep insight into the most important ideas common to Western Civilization, with character and intellect shaped by the true, the good, and the beautiful, but do so with the certainty that all knowledge, indeed, everything that *is*, proves only possible as a result of the immanent and transcendent brilliance of Jesus Christ, and as such, restoration, of mind, of identity, and of community, may only pass through his narrow gate. The justification for such thinking lies in the inherent mission of true liberal learning to identify humanity as her subject, her virtues and deficiencies, her questions, and her search for meaning in sometimes strange and hostile environments. What one observes, as James Schall states in *On the Seriousness of Human Affairs*, is that by such activity “we are—by the important things, by God, by one another, by the games that fascinate us, by beauty and understanding—taken out of ourselves in order to discover what is in some sense also destined to be ours” (106). A Christian liberal arts education reveals Christ, who then re-introduces us to the world.

In whole, one may define a Christian Great Books Liberal Arts education as one that attends to a meaningful reality in a charitable community of texts and audiences via the authority of Jesus Christ. An explanation of its individual parts, however, furnishes a more complete and nuanced understanding. Schall, for instance, describes “liberal arts” as “those studies, those disciplines which, on going through them, enable us better to see what is there” (24). The engagement with such material involves a process that allows one greater and sharper perspective. One not only discovers the experiences and questions and conclusions of authors long since dead in ages long since past, but one discovers what one’s present neighbor in the seat across experiences, asks, and concludes in the discussion of the text. Greater perspective informs community and allows one to see the world and its inhabitants with a God’s-eye view. Important, too, is the focus on “what is there,” on the apprehension of reality with significant attention to accuracy. One can find confidence in the ability of the human person to *know*. Such confidence proves always necessary, but absolutely vital given the current culture and its immersion in doubt and skepticism. Jeffrey Davis and Philip Ryken draw attention to “arts” as “a way of knowing or doing something that leads to a whole set of options previously unavailable” (28). Again, the learning creates a broadening effect. It presents new knowledge that both suddenly and gradually introduces one to the immensity of existence and an infinite God. The process recalls the image provided by C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce*, where those who journey ever closer to God find themselves more real and more substantial. For this reason, then, the “freeing’ or ‘liberal’ arts” as they

are called embody "a way of life enabling us to be free enough to know the truth of things" (24) and thus effect His Kingdom work in always-changing conditions.

Implicit here is the notion that perspective increases in quality in proportion to the richness of the new material. Such is the link between reading and education and the importance of "great books" as the curriculum for liberal learning. Each of the Great Books courses introduces the student to works located in the particular culture of a particular time, from antiquity to the Renaissance to modernity, each with some immutable quality that bears relevance to the human condition. As Robert Hutchins says, "They were the books that had endured and that the common voice of mankind called the finest creations, in writing, of the Western mind" (xi). A student finds value in each period. These are works that remain historical but whose concepts prove universal. "The Greek and Roman experiences," Schall states, "remain in some sense normative" (30). In learning more about the universal, the student in many ways finds him or herself better prepared to engage the particulars of the day, often viewed as divorced from the previous experiences of humanity. At the same time, in stressing the importance of these works, one cannot discount the link between classical literature and biblical truth. David Lyle Jeffrey, for instance, maintains that "the rich tradition of liberal learning in the West has in fact remained at the most fundamental levels more biblical than classical" (1). A conversation with works from antiquity to the patristic writers and later becomes, in the end, a conversation about Christ: a world that needs him, a world that welcomes him, and world forever changed by his presence. Indeed, one must note the distinction between merely classical or liberal learning and *genuine* humane learning whose end purpose lies in the elucidation of God and His truth. "Christian liberal arts learning," Davis and Ryken explain, "rightly understood and done, sees God at the center of everything" (29). Any true knowledge of the human person should reveal, as Pascal describes it, "an infinite abyss" that may only "be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only God Himself" (244).

A Christian Liberal Arts education proves a welcome remedy to the generally poor state of the modern university, one which lacks "any principle of order" in its disciplines (Schall 38) and, as Leland Ryken laments, often reduces education to simply "getting a requirement 'out of the way'" (16). Great Books Honors locates learning firmly in the sanctity of Jesus Christ and applauds within the human person that "participation in the *imago Dei* [that] makes of the study of the humanities something almost sacramental..." (Jeffrey 3). Thus, the program, perhaps more than most, proves capable of answering three questions valued by a university for the development of an individual program: how one communicates one's discipline through the lens of a Christian worldview; how one prepares graduates to enter the world as Christian *professionals*; and how one prepares students for a life of service within the community.

Great Books Honors through the Eyes of Faith

Great Books encourages students to think Christianly about learning in the engagement of curriculum that concerns what it truly means to be human, which must always begin and end in Christ, as Clement of Alexandria states, "... our Educator is the holy God, Jesus, the Word guiding all mankind." The Great Books courses include Great Books Courses I-V (and a bridge course should that prove necessary), two contract courses, and a thesis course.

- **Introduction to Great Books:** This course acts as a bridge course to the honors program. Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought from the ancient world to the modern. The course thus accomplishes, at a slower pace and with shorter readings, what the entirety of the program attempts to introduce as a whole. The course will thus introduce the students to the most significant ideas in Western Civilization through a Christ-centered lens.
- **Great Books I:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the ancient world. Authors include, but are not limited to, Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Virgil and Augustine. Students thus become immersed in Greek and Roman culture, which as more than one Christian writer has affirmed, provides wonderful preparation on the contemplation of God. Further, it provides necessary information in the later Christianization of Greek/Roman thought by the Church following birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- **Great Books II:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Authors include, but are not limited to, Aquinas, Dante, Machiavelli, More, Luther, Calvin, and Shakespeare. Students thus become immersed theology, philosophy, literature, etc. characterized by the revealed knowledge of God in Scripture and the Living Word.
- **Great Books III:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the Enlightenment and Romantic era. Authors include, but are not limited to Descartes, Milton, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Wordsworth, and Austen. Students thus become immersed in concepts that begin to show the tendrils of modernization, especially empiricism, and its effect on Christianity.
- **Great Books IV:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of literature, philosophy, religion, and political thought of the modern world. Authors include, but are not limited to Kierkegaard, Marx, Dostoevsky, Sartre, Camus, Brecht, Auden, Eliot, Nietzsche, and Solzhenitsyn. Students thus become immersed

in the concepts of the modern world, which at times finds itself largely antagonistic to Christian thinking, with the increased de-spiritualization of culture's major institutions, relativism, and isolationism. The course prepares students for persons and ideas hostile to Christ. At the same time, it provides students, too, with the tools to address these concerns.

- **Great Books V:** Utilizing the discussion approach, this course explores works of Christian formation through the centuries. Authors include, but are not limited to, Irenaeus, Polycarp, Athanasius, Ignatius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, Ambrose, Gregory the Great, St. Benedict, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, The Cloud of Unknowing, Ignatius of Loyola, and Thomas a Kempis. The final course acts as a wonderful capstone to the actual GB courses, ending with some of the most significant Christian thinkers since the time of Christ. Students are then able to see the transformation of Christian thought over the years.
- **Contract Courses:** Here the student adopts two courses from his or her major. The course itself remains the same, but a GB supplement is added, with the coordination of the student, content instructor, and GB faculty. The model ideally brings the learning amassed from the Great Books Courses directly into the student's chosen major. In this way, the good, the true, and the beautiful the student experiences will be linked to the particulars of that degree, ensuring that the student will translate the Christ-like thinking into his or her profession.
- **Thesis Course:** The capstone for the honors track will take the shape of a thesis. Students will be assigned a final project that draws all that student's learning together and asks for the student to create a thesis that links faith and learning. The work will prove a tangible contribution to the whole community of faithful learners.

Another way the program will encourage the students to think Christianly about the material they will be learning is through a close sense of community. Students learn in an intimate environment that fosters relationship and forms into habit a charitable give and take in conversation. Honors students come from a wide range of backgrounds, and the nature of the program is to increase perspective by learning from thinkers from different ages and asking questions of the perspectives in a room full of different perspectives. The style itself represents one of the most humane, communal forms of learning possible.

Great Books Forming Christian Professionals

The wonderful benefit of the program is that it represents a co-enrollment program, meaning it touches students from all the specific colleges within the university. Again, the immediate focus of the curriculum is the understanding of the human person—and by extension, humanity's relationship to Christ. The GB model provides the students with the

tools to strive for all areas of excellence in any particular field, be it math, science, business, physical education, or another field. Again, the curriculum promotes this strive toward excellence, but so does importance of community within the program. The students learn to read, listen, and ask within group settings, increasing understanding and the visibility of Christ within the community.

Great Books Forming Community Servants

Given the intellectual caliber of those students involved, it becomes that much more important to cultivate within these students a deep sense of service and humility. The program has long since adopted the model demonstrated in John 13 when Christ, the Son of God, washes his disciple's feet. Whoever wishes to be first must be last. GB Honors also recognizes the danger inherent in the development of particularly clever persons. Lewis writes: "The better stuff a creature is made of—the cleverer and stronger and freer it is—then the better it will be if it goes right, but also the worse it will be if it goes wrong." Once more, the curriculum itself proves a humbling experience given the immense time and intelligence behind these works. More importantly, however, one must encourage the students not only to understand humility, but form properly humble habits.

GBH Advantages at a Glance:

- Smaller classes for many required general education credits.
- Opportunities for early, productive scholarship.
- Interdisciplinary courses to encourage students to synthesize material.
- Innovative classes that are taught differently, but are not more difficult.
- Discussion-oriented, interactive classes.
- Opportunities to enhance course projects through honors contracts.
- Close relationships with many bright, energetic students.
- Many opportunities to develop leadership skills and hone academic skills.
- Close relationships with faculty members committed to student success.
- Better letters of recommendation from faculty who know students well.
- Opportunities for social, spiritual, and service activities with peers.
- Special recognition at graduation and other gatherings.
- Advantages when applying to graduate and professional schools.
- Advantages when applying for jobs after graduation.
- Networking with national and regional honors organizations.

GBH Blog Policies

As part of their work in Great Books, students will create a blog. The blog will not only allow a venue one's reflections on these great works of literature, but will also provide an opportunity to engage in a community of learning. Students are encouraged to write, to write well, and to explore.

Blog Type

In order to maintain continuity with Great Books utilization of Google Apps for Education ([GAPE](#)), students are asked to use Google's Blogger to create an account. (Click [Google Blogger](#) to begin.)

Blog Content

The Great Books blog represents a *scholarly* endeavor. Do not confuse it with other social media. Thus, do not post ANYTHING that does not contain a clearly academic/learned element. (An image from a spring break mission trip: YES. An image of sleepy kittens: funny, but NO.) Please maintain a consistent, professional style. Do not clutter up the page with inane or useless posts or links. The blog will at times link to Faulkner social media and/or be used to advertise Faulkner Great Books pursuits, so make sure whatever is included appropriately represents a GB student and the university.

All material, image or textual, should be in keeping with the policies outlined in [Faulkner University's Student Handbook](#). Any student violating policies therein will be reported to the Great Books Honors Director and the Dean of Students.

Blog Community

Part of the benefit from creating a community of Great Books blogs is the opportunity for all students to engage in a spirit of charitable learning. In engaging with each other, we enjoy the opportunity to serve one another and grow in learning for the glory of God. Thus, students are asked to honor God and their fellow students in their posts and in their comments to other students' blogs. Charitable criticism and worldly antagonism or aggression are diametrically opposed.

Students are specifically asked to join one particular G+ community:

- The Great Books Honors College (private)

Students of course have the freedom to join other communities. Again, though, students should maintain the appropriateness of the blog described in the content section.

Blog Responses

Great Books students will at times be asked to post responses to their blog as part of a course assignment. In each case, students should follow the instructor's specific instructions. However, students should keep the following criteria in mind when composing their reflections. (Generally, students should distinguish between two types of blog responses, short responses with a specific aim, for instance, a student introduction, or long essay responses, which are described below.)

Interpretive Essay Responses

Clear Main Point

- Students are generally allowed the freedom to select the emphasis for their papers. Such flexibility allows the student to focus on an area of interest tied to that student's engagement with the particular work. The FOCUS for the paper, however, must concern the material found in the readings. Random responses will not be accepted. (I.E., if you're reading Plato, your response should be about Plato.)
- The student should express his or her particular emphasis with a clear, explicit main point. Standard writing 101: know what your main point is and what you need to do to prove it.

Content

- The content refers to the meat of the paper, the support. In this case, the content will almost entirely be made up of a discussion of the course reading. In order to show clear engagement with the text, you must do the following:
 - Read the work, slowly, in its entirety; you cannot respond without having read the work.
 - Quote and analyze the text; this is a HUGE component of the response. It shows not only a familiarity with the text, but it demonstrates your skill in identifying important concepts within the text and successfully introducing that material to your reader. To quote correctly, you will need to note the following:
 - Identification: students should identify the AUTHOR (Plato, Augustine, etc.) of the text and the TITLE of the particular text (*Apology*, *Confessions*, etc.); NOTE: titles should be indicated; typically, larger

works (books, plays, etc.) are italicized and smaller works (chapters, essays, etc.) are in “Quotes.”

- Signal phrase. All quotes should be introduced clearly to the reader. This allows the reader to understand that ORIGINAL material is about to be quoted. Ex. The author states, “...
- Quotations: Students must successfully quote the text. Failure to do this will result in points off.
 - CORRECT: Ecclesiastes 7:1 states, “All streams flow into the sea, / yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, / there they return again” (NIV). (NOTE: the use of / indicates line breaks in verse.)
 - INCORRECT: They live in holes. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort. (Lacks identification, setup, quotation marks, parenthetical.)
 - Parentheticals: Parentheticals () are used in various ways by different style guides. For blog purposes, Great Books students will follow the model proposed by MLA regarding parentheticals. Thus, a parenthetical should appear at the end of the quote and include the page number or the line number from which the quote was taken. (Most online sources, of course, will not have page numbers.) Since all Great Books students are required to read from the same text, this will allow students to easily identify from where the source was taken. (A works cited or bibliography is not required for a blog response, but it may be required in more formal, non-blog assignments.)
 - Analysis: a student’s job is not finished once he or she ends the quote. Students must be sure to effectively analyze the significance of the material just quoted. Good rule of thumb: introduce what you’re about to quote, quote, and then discuss why what you just quoted is significant.

Style

- Students are allowed more freedom when it comes to the style with which the blog response is written. Responses may be creative, with figurative elements and personal reflection. However, the bulk of the grade will come from focus, development, and interaction with the text. Quality is key. Students are encouraged to develop their writing ability: strong, vibrant language free of trite or overly complicated language, with a distinctly individual voice.

Mechanics

- It should go without saying: blog responses (all assignments really) must be free of errors and demonstrate a strong grasp of mechanics related to composition, including clear and correct sentence structure, appropriate word choice, and effective use of paragraphs with structure (introduction, body, conclusion, etc.) among other elements. Students will receive detailed feedback from the instructor. It will be the responsibility of the student to address any weaknesses in writing. The student may seek help from the instructor and/or [Faulkner University's Writing Center](#). Continued difficulty will necessitate a conference with the GB instructor and/or Great Books Honors Director.

(Students may also be called to post an essay or short response to both the blog AND a google doc in order to provide instructor comments.)

Currency

Students are asked to register their blog by adding their name and blog address to the list of Great Books blogs. Once the student successfully graduates or leaves the program, it's up to the student whether or not he or she decides to maintain or end the blog. If the student wishes to continue the blog in community with Great Books, that student should adhere to the standards embodied by the program and delineated in its policies here. Students who decide to end their blog should inform the Honors director.

Resources

The following resources are available for student use.

- [Google Blogger](#)
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(MLA\)](#)
- [Strunk's Elements of Style](#)

Noteworthy Blogs

- Robert Woods, [Musings of a Christian Humanist](#) (blog)
- Jason Jewell, [The Western Tradition](#) (blog)
- Joshua Fullman, [A musing Muse](#) (blog)
- Andrew R. Jacobs, [Read Well](#) (blog)

GBH Contract Courses

The GBH contract courses represent an important upper-level component of the honors curriculum at Faulkner University. They are designed to increase opportunities for honors work and promote close intellectual relationships between Great Books faculty, fellow Great Books students, and the wider university faculty. With the consent of the professor of record and GBH faculty, GBH students may undertake these studies and receive honors credit, which will appear as such on transcripts. In developing the contracts, the guiding principle should be the student's interest in a course and subject matter and the student's desire to relate the material to the Great Books core. (See example, page 14.)

Contract Course Procedure

The GBH student should approach the GBH director or relevant GBH faculty in order to begin the process of creating a contract course. Generally, students are encouraged to pursue one contract course per semester and only after the completion of GB I-V, though exceptions may be made given certain circumstances. (As always, it is the primarily the student's responsibility to manage his or her academic affairs.)

With this contract opportunity, an Honors student and select faculty agree in writing to a specific set of goals. Contracts should be carefully considered, reflecting the interests of both student and the goals of Great Books Honors. Honors contracts share some of the characteristics of guided independent study, except that contract research should closely relate to the subject matter, concepts, and methods of the course in which it is undertaken in close relations with the Great Books. The courses will generally involve some or all of the following characteristics: select readings from the Great Books chosen to enhance and deepen the student's understanding of course material; guided research involving use of resources to enhance assignments for the course; and written work designed to encourage the development of logical skills and communal thinking. Whatever approach is taken, each contract should include the following:

- Well-defined goals and objectives.
- Specification of the item(s)/text(s) to be examined.
- A timeline of activities spanning the entire semester.
- A schedule of meetings between student and instructor.
- Methods of evaluation.
- Additional responsibilities assumed by student and/or instructor of record.

Note the following important material related to contract courses:

- Honors contracts are available only to Great Books Honors students. Approval must be given before the contract is initiated.
- The contract must build from an upper-level course in the student's degree plan.
- No member of the general university faculty is obligated to enter into an honors contract, and therefore, general instructors may elect to refuse a student's request to develop a contract. If a general instructor agrees to allow a student to create a contract for the course, the instructor of record has the minimal role of confirming the Great Books component of the student's work within the general course work. Of course, some instructors may select to be more involved.
- The contract must be agreed to by the student, the faculty of record, and GB faculty.
- All Honors contracts should be initiated before the end of the semester prior to the semester in which a contracted course is going to be taken.
- After the semester begins, reasonable modifications in the contracts can be made by mutual agreement of the student, the faculty of record, and GB faculty.
- If the student fails to meet his or her agreed-upon goals or does not perform at the appropriate academic level, the GB faculty member may rescind the contract at any time. If the faculty of record of the specific course does not perform his or her responsibilities, then the student may appeal to the GBH director and request a different faculty member for oversight of the course.
- The designation of a course as an honors course in no way relieves the student of regular course responsibilities. In fact, these responsibilities must be accomplished with a final grade of B or better in order for the Honors designation to be awarded.
- Students may also rescind contracts. If a student finds it necessary to do so, he or she is obligated to notify the GB faculty and faculty of record in writing of this action and explain the reason for rescinding the contract.
- The grade awarded to the student is based on regularly required coursework and the GBH supplement outlined in the contract, which should count for a minimum 10% of the total grade. A grade of B or better is required in order for Honors credit to be awarded. Grades for regular course work are the responsibility of the content instructor, while the GB faculty is responsible for grading of the GBH supplement, although faculty are encouraged to collaborate in grading to the extent possible.

**Great Books Honors
Contracted Course Form
(EXAMPLE ONLY. Details may be modified.)**

Student:

Current Year/Semester:

Student's Major:

Course Designated Honors Within Student's Major:

Goals/objectives: The goal of this contract course is to build beyond the standard course material by engaging a work from an authority within the field, developing a clear understanding of that work and an appreciation for its social, historical, and spiritual significance, especially in light of its place in the greater conversation of Western Civilization.

Specification of the item(s) to be examined:

A timeline of activities spanning the semester:

- Rough draft due
- Final draft due

FINAL GRADE FOR PAPER AND COURSE:

LINKS: ROUGH DRAFT / FINAL DRAFT

A schedule of meetings between student and instructor: The student, course faculty, and GB faculty will consult through email and Google docs throughout the semester. A meeting with all three persons may take place during midterms.

Methods of evaluation: In addition to the normal coursework, the student will be required to write a 7-10 page paper on the above text. The process for composing this paper will include the submission of a rough draft and a final draft. The student will receive feedback during various stages of the process. The paper will represent 10% of the student's total grade.

Additional responsibilities assumed by student and/or instructor of record:

Any modifications of standard course recommended by the professor of record:

Great Books Honors Faculty:

Name:

Signature: (digital signature)

Faculty of Record:

Name:

Signature: (digital signature)

NOTE: When complete, all documents will be digitally archived by GB faculty.

Great Books Honors Thesis Guide

The Great Books Honors Thesis represents the culmination of the GB student's experience in the Great Books Honors program. Only GB students in good standing with the program will be allowed to take the course.

TIMING OF COURSE

GB students should plan to complete the thesis in a full year. The typical schedule would suggest fall to spring of the student's senior year, but the student may also plan for a spring to fall schedule. Generally, students should only take the thesis after having completed Great Books courses I-V and the two contract courses, though exceptions may be made depending on the particular circumstances.

THESIS COMMITTEE

The student's GB thesis committee is comprised of three faculty members: a Great Books faculty member, an English faculty member, and a faculty member from that student's content area (EH, ED, PY, etc.). The student should select the faculty members and formally request their involvement. Once the committee has been established, the student should then inform the Great Books faculty member, who will act as the thesis chair.

THESIS SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The Great Books Honors Thesis should meet the following requirements:

- A 35-50 page thesis on a topic in keeping with the ideals of the Great Books Honors program. (Page length excludes title and reference pages.)
- Must develop from an approved prospectus.
- Must include primary and secondary research.
- Must utilize approved style guide (MLA, though exceptions may be made)

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Thesis Topic: The selected topic should remain in keeping with the ideals of the Great Books Honors program. Students should look to the formal papers written in GB courses I-V and the contract courses for guidance, and in fact, students are encouraged to build towards their thesis over their time in the program. Note: while

students may draw from GB research and writing, the final project should read seamlessly and not as if the student cut and pasted from previous papers.

- Prospectus: Prior to enrolling in the Great Books Thesis course, the student will create a prospectus. The prospectus represents a detailed description of the student's thesis, including thesis statement, organization of material, and a detailed bibliography. The student will not be able to proceed with the thesis until the prospectus has been approved. (In many cases, the prospectus may be adapted for use as an introduction within the thesis.) Students may make amendments or additions to the prospectus in the thesis, but any change that dramatically departs from the prospectus must be submitted to the thesis chair for approval.
- Other points to remember:
 - Submissions should have an identifiable introduction, body, and conclusion and persuade the reader in some way.
 - Omit rhetorical questions used for the sake of taking up space.
 - The submission should read like a scholarly article, not like an article from an encyclopedia.
 - Citations should be used when necessary, and block quotations should be used only sparingly.
 - Sources should be academically sound. Dictionaries and encyclopedias are not "academically sound" sources after the fifth grade.

GRADES

- Thesis: a student's final grade on the project will be the average of the grades assigned by their committee members (GB, EH, and content area faculty). In order to graduate from the Great Books Honors program, the student must receive a "C" or better on the thesis and successfully complete the oral defense.
- Oral Defense: The thesis chair will coordinate the defense time at the end of the semester in which the student is enrolled in the GB course (generally, around week 13). The defense represents a conversation about the student's thesis project and a general gauging of its argument and material. It is possible for a student to pass the written work and receive a failing grade for the defense. If a student fails the oral defense, that student fails the course.

FAILURE AND MITIGATIONS/EXTENSIONS

If at the time of the defense, the student fails the thesis and/or defense, the student will repeat the schedule of activities the following semester. If at the end of that following

semester that student has still not passed the thesis/defense, the student will not graduate from the Great Books Honors program.

If a student fails a portion of the Great Books Thesis, that student can opt to receive an “Incomplete” pending approval of the faculty advisors and graduate from GBH once the corrective measures are taken. A student must present extenuating circumstances before such consideration will be given. Laziness and senioritis will not be rewarded.

DOCUMENTS

For archival purposes, the GB thesis chair will create and manage the various Google docs employed to write the thesis. (Students are of course encouraged to work from and maintain their own documents if they so choose, but final submissions will need to be posted in specific files.) In general, the student should expect to receive invitations to the following material:

- Prospectus
- Rough Draft
- Final Draft

NOTE: See the following page for a Thesis Contract, with detailed information on prospectus and general schedule of activities related to the thesis.

Great Books Honors Program Thesis Contract

In anticipation of completing the Honors Thesis, the student and faculty agree to the following stipulations:

- Completion of the thesis in its entirety will take place over no more than two semesters, usually in the final two semesters before graduation. Special circumstances, when warranted, may allow for an extension, provided the student and all committee members agree to the terms and that these terms are included as an addendum on this contract.
- The student will select his/her committee members, asking them in-person to serve on their committee and obtaining the requisite signatures before the end of the first semester of the student's third year. The committee must be made up of no less than three faculty members: a Great Books fellow, a content expert (usually in the student's major), and an English faculty. Additional faculty members may be requested by the student or by members of the committee.
- The student will compose a 7-10 page prospectus, detailing the need for this kind of research; providing a philosophical, theoretical, or critical perspective; outlining a general overview of the argument and structure of the thesis; and creating a Works Cited page listing sources compiled thus far. Each faculty member will review the prospectus, providing feedback and offering additional resources and/or direction. Two of the three committee members must agree that the prospectus sufficiently outlines a legitimate research project and must sign the Prospectus page, to be included in the student's thesis. The prospectus should be completed in the second semester of the third year.
- The student will complete a rough draft of no less than 20 pages in the final week of the penultimate semester before graduation. Each faculty member will review the draft and provide feedback. All feedback is due by Week 2 of the final semester before graduation.
- The final draft of the thesis is due in Week 10 of the final semester before graduation. The final draft should be between 35-50 pages and is the last opportunity for the student to complete the paper, appropriately respond to faculty feedback, and to polish the draft for publication. Each committee member will review the final draft and prepare questions for the student's defense, which will be conducted sometime in the final weeks before graduation. If the majority of the committee does not believe the thesis is defensible at this point, the student cannot go on to the defense.
- The defense is the culmination of the student's experience in the Great Books Honors program. It is a public event in which the student will showcase their thesis to the committee, interested parties of the university, and friends and family. He or

she will create a Powerpoint, or similar presentation program, to present their argument. After the presentation, the student will field questions first from the committee members and then from the public at large.

- Upon completion of the defense, each committee member will assign a grade and affix their signature, to be included in the student's thesis. The thesis will be archived with the Great Books Honors program.
- Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the student being unable to complete the project and thus not graduating with honors.

Timeline:

- Year 3-fall: Week 12: Selection of committee members and signatures
- Year 3-spring: Week 8: Prospectus due
- Year 3-spring: Week 11: Faculty submit feedback to the prospectus and signatures
- Year 4-fall: Week 15: Rough draft due
- Year 4-spring: Week 2: Faculty provide feedback to the rough draft
- Year 4-spring: Week 10: Final draft due
- Year 4-spring: Week 12: Defense of final project

STUDENT

_____	_____	_____
Date	[Name of Student]	Signature

THESIS COMMITTEE

_____	_____	_____
Date	[Name of GB Fellow, Chair]	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Date	[Name of Content Expert]	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Date	[Name of English Faculty]	Signature

COMPLETION OF PROSPECTUS

Date [Name of GB Fellow, Chair] Signature

Date [Name of Content Expert] Signature

Date [Name of English Faculty] Signature

GBH Membership and Graduation

Graduating with Great Books Honors

Every semester the Great Books Honors staff reviews the records of students who plan to graduate at the end of that term. A student who is a member in good standing at the time of that review and has completed all the requirements will graduate with Great Books Honors, with these honors noted in the graduation program and in transcripts. Graduates will also receive a Great Books Honors stole as part of the graduation ceremony. As a reminder, the following requirements are necessary for the successful completion of the program:

- Continuing Honors students must:
 - Establish a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 during the freshman year and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 until graduation. A student whose cumulative GPA fails to meet this standard will not automatically be released from the program. That student's record will be reviewed term by term, and membership may be continued provided the student shows steady progress in raising the GPA to 3.0 and remains in good standing regarding the other requirements listed here.
 - Comply with the University handbook regarding conduct and behavior.
- Prospective graduates must:
 - Complete the five core courses with a 3.0 or greater GPA.
 - Complete the two contract courses related to major.
 - Complete the Senior Thesis/Project.

Any GB student who remains in *good standing with the program* but fails to complete the GBH requirements will not graduate from the GBH *program*. That student may claim membership and participation in GBH coursework, but has simply not completed the program in its entirety. (Students are of course encouraged to finish all the GBH requirements, and every reasonable effort in terms of course substitutions, finance, or other factors will be made by the program to help the student achieve this goal.)

Regaining Membership after Release

A student may be released from GBH membership for failing to fulfill the requirements listed above. Sometimes a student is able to remedy the problem(s) that caused the release and may wish to be reinstated as an Honors member. If so, the student must submit a written request for reinstatement to the Director of the Great Books Honors program.

Great Books Honors Graduation Checklist

The following form may be completed for the student's benefit, but is not a required document.

I have completed Great Books courses I-V.

- Great Books I. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books II. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books III. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books IV. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Great Books V. Term completed: _____ Grade: _____

I have completed two contract courses.

- Contract Course One.
 - Course prefix, number, and title: _____
 - Term completed: _____ Grade: _____
- Contract Course Two.
 - Course prefix, number, and title: _____
 - Term completed: _____ Grade: _____

I have successfully completed the thesis/defense.

- Term completed: _____ Grade: _____

I have an overall cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above.

- Identify GPA: _____

CONGRATULATIONS!