POLITICAL SCIENCE HONORS PROGRAM: INFORMATION SESSION

19 May 2025



INTRODUCTION



Congratulations!



Structure of session:

Overview of Program

How to Apply

Comments from Dr. Keleher

Panel of current students: Ashley Evans, Ela Schulz, Jack Seevers



WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENTAL HONORS PROGRAM?

Research	Develop and execute your own research project over the course of an academic year
Mentorship	Work closely with a faculty mentor
Writing	Produce a written thesis (typically between 50 and 100 pages)
Presentation	Present your work at the end of the school year for friends and family

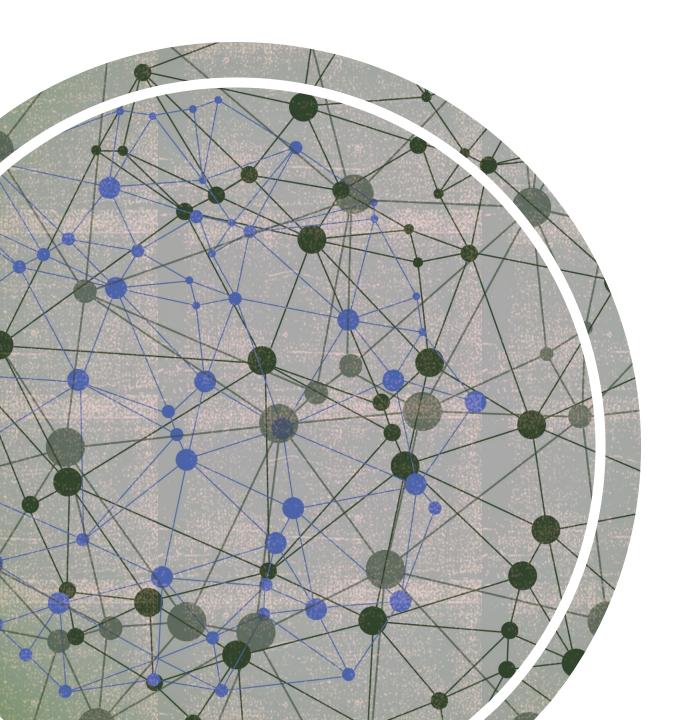




Many students view the program as a highlight of UCSB career

Graduate with distinction in political science

First-hand experience conducting research



VALUE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

- Build knowledge about the world
- Learn how to ask the right questions
- Learn how to theorize and assemble evidence
- Learn how to interpret results
- Long-term applications for careers in academia, NGOs, government, private sector companies



EXAMPLES OF PAST THESES RESEARCH QUESTIONS



Does economic inequality drive populist rhetoric?



Did the imposition of term limits in California increase diversity in the state legislature?



Do religious primes make people more supportive of peace in the Middle East?



What role does Machiavelli think religion should play in the State, and what are the implications of this view for the relationship between religion and politics in the US today?



PREVIEW: A YEAR IN THE HONORS PROGRAM



Fall 2025:

Deepen knowledge of social science research methods

Finalize research question and main argument

Write prospectus

Write lit review & first draft of theory



Winter 2026:

Collect original data & conduct research

Analyze results

Begin writing



Spring 2026:

Finish writing
Prepare presentation
Integrate feedback



PREVIEW: DEGREE CREDITS

Credits:

- Fall POLS 197A (4 units)
- Winter POLS 197B (4 units)
- Spring POLS 197C (4 units)

• Grading:

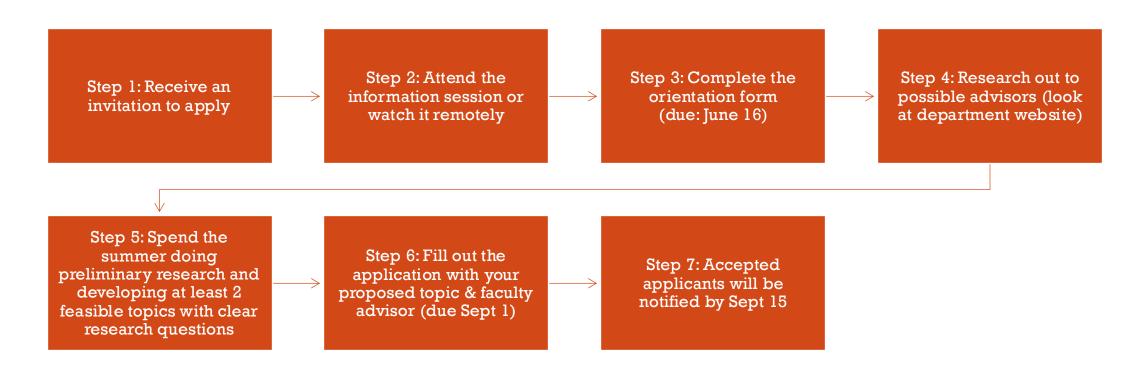
- Fall & Winter: Graded as "in progress: final grade submitted at end of spring quarter"
- Spring: Thesis grade is grade for all three quarters

• Major:

- Up to 8 units can be applied toward core concentration (with petition)
- 4 of 8 units may be applied to another non-core area (with petition)



HOW DO YOU JOIN?





ADVICE FOR CONTACTING FACULTY



Develop a tentative topic and do some preliminary research first



Reach out to faculty who work on similar topics/areas



Include a draft of your application or proposal



Reach out early

Preliminary email in June indicating interest Full proposal in early-to-mid August



Signature of faculty required for Sept 1 application





Develop a clear research question



Outline a plan for how you will conduct research



Identify a suitable faculty advisor



Demonstrate clearly why you want to be part of the program



- Develop a clear research question
 - Question: question mark on the end
 - Scholarly gap: you don't always know the answer
 - Importance: topic should have real-world significance
 - Empirical: feasible to collect evidence
 - Falsifiable: prediction could be proven wrong
- Outline a plan for how you will conduct research
- Identify a suitable faculty advisor
- Demonstrate clearly why you want to be part of the program



- Develop a clear research question
- Outline a plan for how you will conduct research
 - What kind of data will you use?
 - How will you collect it?
 - What kind of research method will you employ? (quantitative, qualitative, survey experiment, historical, textual)
- Identify a suitable faculty advisor
- Demonstrate clearly why you want to be part of the program



- Develop a clear research question
- Outline a plan for how you will conduct research
- Identify a suitable faculty advisor
 - Why is your faculty advisor a good fit for this project?
- Demonstrate clearly why you want to be part of the program



- Develop a clear research question
- Outline a plan for how you will conduct research
- Identify a suitable faculty advisor
- Demonstrate clearly why you want to be part of the program
 - No:
 - It will look good on my CV
 - I really like my advisor
 - My friends are doing it
 - Yes:
 - What makes you interested in research?
 - How will you motivate yourself throughout this process?
 - How will this help you build skills?





Think about your next year and how the honors requirements would fit into your plans



If interested in participating:

Identify some preliminary topics and write to possible advisors

Submit form of interest via email to Prof Morse by June 16 (three weeks from today) Email me
(jcmorse@ucsb.edu)
or Dr. Keleher
(keleher@ucsb.edu)
with any questions