Overview of the Bloustein Honors Research Program (BHRP)

Spring 2020
How to decide whether the BHRP is right for you: 
**Interests and career goals**

- You have a strong interest in a specific research topic, issue, or population.
- You are considering pursuing a research career.
- You are considering attending graduate school.
- You want to improve your writing skills.
- You want to improve your analytic skills.
How to decide whether the BHRP is right for you:

**Practical issues**

- You are able to take constructive criticism.
- You are interested in working collaboratively in a peer (classroom) setting.
  - You are willing to work very hard!
How to tell that the BHRP is **NOT** right for you: Motivation

- You just want the “honors” designation on your transcript.
- You think research entails Googling something.
- You have no idea what you want to study or why.
- Your parents want you to do it, but you’re not interested.
- You think it will look good on your med school/law school application.
- You want to get out of the internship requirement.
How to tell that the BHRP is **NOT** right for you: 
**Practical Issues**

- You need to take 15 or more **OTHER** credits/semester for the academic year in order to graduate
- **AND** you have paid work or other commitments for more than 15 hours/week.
- You ignore feedback and constructive criticism.
What does the BHRP entail?

• Formal, supervised, year-long research project during senior year
  • 6 credits; 3 each in fall and spring
• Work on an individual research project with a faculty mentor
• Structured classroom instruction for the BHRP cohort
  • Integrates concepts and skills from earlier courses
  • Applies them to individual research project
• Feedback from course instructor and mentor
• Peer learning through discussion and peer-editing
What does the BHRP entail?

• **Weekly Time Commitment**
  • 3-hour class meeting
  • 1-hour meeting with mentor (in person, by phone, or video chat)
  • 2-3 hours to read assigned class materials
  • 4-5 hours of independent work on your individual research project, including but not limited to:
    • IRB application development and revision
    • Literature searches
    • Reading and synthesizing literature
    • Collecting and analyzing data
    • Planning, drafting, writing, or revising the research paper
  • 1 hour of peer editing on some (but not all) weeks
  • **Outside of classroom = ~7-10 hours per week**
How is the BHRP different from an independent study?

• An independent study:
  • Offers one-on-one mentoring **without**
    • formal instructor
    • peer-to-peer collaboration
  • Is more exploratory, requires less commitment to a particular topic
  • Can be for one semester only
  • Can be done earlier than senior year
  • Can be done without honors eligibility
Who is eligible for the BHRP?

• Only open to students declared in the following majors:
  • Health Administration (501)
  • Planning & Public Policy (762)
  • Public Health (832)
  • Public Policy (833)
  **Unfortunately, not currently offered to Urban Planning and Design (971) majors.

• Seniors – Graduating May or August 2021
  • January 2021 graduates are not eligible

• Prerequisites:
  • Research Methods (10:775:395)
  • Required writing course for Bloustein major
How does the BHRP fit into graduation requirements?

• The BHRP can replace the 6-credit internship requirement for students majoring in:
  • Health Administration (501)
  • Public Health (832)
  • Public Policy (833)

• The BHRP can replace Senior Seminar and the 3-credit Internship with Seminar for Planning and Public Policy (762) majors.
What will you produce as a BHRP scholar?

- Summaries of individual articles/sources
- Annotated bibliography
- Outlines of sections of a research paper
- Rough drafts of each section of the paper
- Revised drafts of each section
- Research poster
- Slides for a research presentation
- Final paper (30-40 pages long, excluding tables and references)
Where will you present your BHRP research?

• Rutgers Undergraduate Research Day
  • Opportunity for feedback from a diverse audience to incorporate before the thesis defense

• Formal thesis defense at the Bloustein School
  • Joint BHRP/SEBS George H. Cook Honors Scholars and BHRP/Honors College joint students must also present there.

• Poster session at the Bloustein School
What general skills will you learn?

Integrate prior skills and concepts

• Human subject research ethics
• Research methods
• Literature review
• Scientific writing

Learn new skills

• Drafting and revising
• Peer review and editing
• Public speaking
• Poster presentation
### What do the course instructor and mentors do?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Course Instructor</strong></th>
<th><strong>Faculty Mentor</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaches <strong>all</strong> BHR students</td>
<td>Oversees <strong>individual</strong> student projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaches <strong>general</strong> research skills</td>
<td>Teaches <strong>project-specific</strong> concepts and skills:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review of research methods</td>
<td>• Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Writing, revising, peer editing</td>
<td>• Literature on the topic</td>
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<td>• Presentation</td>
<td>• Data</td>
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<td>• Professional development</td>
<td>• Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides detailed feedback on outlines and drafts</td>
<td>Provides detailed feedback on outlines and drafts</td>
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Identifying possible mentors

• Must be a full-time faculty member (tenure-track, tenured, or non-tenure track):
  • At the Bloustein School
  • In another department*

• As a preliminary step, find their faculty webpage on the Bloustein website: https://bloustein.rutgers.edu/faculty/
  • Read up on their work to identify areas of overlap.
  • Any instructor not listed on the website is not eligible to mentor.
  • A list of Bloustein faculty who have agreed to mentor will be available no later than May 1, 2020.

• Does not have to be a professor you’ve had in class.

*Subject to approval by the BHR Director and Instructor
Identifying potential mentors

- Look for areas of overlap
  - Topic areas of interest
  - Methodological interests
  - Populations of interest
- Must choose at least three (3) faculty members you’d be interested in having as your mentor.
Matching of students to mentors

• Matching of students to mentors will occur after admissions process is complete.

• Do NOT prearrange or assume a match with a particular mentor.

• Many mentors will have several applicants and will probably supervise no more than two BHRP students.
  • To provide more individualized attention for those selected
What kinds of data can be used for the BHRP?

**Primary data**
- Data you collect as part of the project
  - Will probably be **discouraged**
    - Time consuming
    - Difficult to get a large, representative sample
  - Exceptions possible, with prior approval by the mentor and BHRP director
- Requires IRB protocol submission by mid-summer, approval by mid-September
  - Expect a round of revisions and 2nd review

**Secondary data**
- Existing data collected by governmental or research agencies or academics
  - More feasible within the one-year time frame
  - Often provide representative data
  - Can often be used to study the research question
What kinds of methods can be used for the BHRP?

- Quantitative analysis
- Qualitative analysis
- Meta-analysis
BHRP Application Timetable

- April 2020: Application system opens
- May 2020: Have completed Research Methods course (10:775:395)
- May 2020: Have completed CITI/Human Subjects Certification course
- June 1, 2020: Application priority deadline
  - Identify three possible mentors
  - Choose a preliminary topic
  - Propose a method of analysis
- July 2020: Acceptance letters sent out
- No later than early August 2020: Submit human subjects (IRB) application for project
- No later than September 2020: Receive IRB approval of project
Two Routes to Admission

**Standard Route**
- Overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Major GPA or 3.6 or higher

**Alternate Route**
- For those who did **not** reach one or both GPA criteria for the standard route.
- Must include a statement explaining:
  - their academic record.
  - how they have **overcome** any issues that led to the poor grades.

NOTE: Urban and Planning Design majors are not currently eligible to participate in the BHRP.
BHRP Application Components

From the Student

- Statement of research interests (1-2 pages)
  - Tentative topic area/population of interest
  - Name of proposed mentors and reasons for choosing them
  - Proposed methods
    - Quantitative or qualitative
    - Primary or secondary data

- Statement of educational and career goals (1 page)
  - How would BHRP fit into these goals?
BHRP Application Components
Supporting Materials

• 2 evaluation checklist forms from your:
  • Research Methods instructor
  • Writing instructor
• Letter of recommendation from a full-time Bloustein faculty member
• Unofficial transcripts from all college(s) attended
Does BHRP work in tandem with the Honors College?

- Honors College students who are academically affiliated with SAS or SEBS are eligible to apply to the BHRP during their senior year. Acceptance is not guaranteed.

- The BHRP will fulfill the Honors College’s Capstone Project Option #1 (“Departmental Honors”).

- Students must follow the same protocols of other Honors College students, including submission of a formal capstone proposal to the Honors College by June 1st of their junior year.

- Should also apply to the BHRP at or before the priority deadline of June 1st of their junior year.
Does BHRP work in tandem with the George H. Cook Scholars Program (GHCSP)?

- SEBS students pursuing the Public Health major are eligible to apply to the BHRP or, during their junior and senior years, the GHCSP.

- SEBS students who participated in the GHCSP during the junior year may:
  - elect to follow the GHCSP senior-year track (with partial participation in the BHRP), or
  - elect senior-year participation in the BHRP (with partial participation in the GHSCSP).

- Please see the BHRP website for more information on integrating the two capstone programs.
Good Luck!

For further questions and information, please see the website: 
https://bloustein.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/bloustein-honors

Or email us at: honors@ejb.rutgers.edu