

Overview of the Bloustein Honors Research Program (BHRP)

Fall 2020

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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

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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

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Who is eligible for the BHRP?

- Only open to students declared in the following majors:
 - Public Health (832)
 - Planning & Public Policy (762)
 - Public Policy (833)
 - Health Administration (501)
 - **HA majors must take Research Methods (10:775:395) in lieu of - or in addition to - Data Management in Healthcare (10:501:395) to be eligible for BHRP.**
 - Interested students should contact their EJB advisor regarding this requirement.

**Unfortunately, BHRP is not currently offered to Urban Planning and Design (971) majors.
- Seniors – Graduating May 2022 or August 2022
 - January 2022 graduates are **not** eligible
- Prerequisites:
 - Research Methods (10:775:395)
 - Required writing course for Bloustein major

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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What is the weekly commitment for BHRP?

- 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**

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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.

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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

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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, BHRP director, and BHRP instructor
- 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

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What kinds of methods can be used for the BHRP?

- Quantitative analysis
- Qualitative analysis
- Meta-analysis

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What will you produce as a BHRP scholar?

- Annotated bibliography
- Summaries of individual articles/sources
- 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)

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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, BHRP/Honors College Scholars, and BHRP/SAS Honors Program Scholars must also present there.
- Poster session at the Bloustein School

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What do the course instructor and mentors do?

Course Instructor

- Teaches **all** BHRP students
- Teaches **general** research skills
 - Review of research methods
 - Writing, revising, peer editing
 - Presentation skills
 - Professional development
- Provides detailed feedback on outlines and drafts

Faculty Mentor

- Oversees **individual** student's project
- Teaches **project-specific** concepts and skills to their student:
 - Theory
 - Literature on the topic
 - Data
 - Methods
- Provides detailed feedback on outlines and drafts

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Identifying potential 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/>
 - Any instructor not listed on the website is not eligible to mentor.
 - Read up on their work to identify areas of overlap.
 - A list of Bloustein faculty who have agreed to mentor will be available in May 2021.
- Does **not** have to be a professor you've had in class.

**Subject to approval by the BHRP Director and Instructor*

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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.
 - Must explain *why* you chose them

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Matching of students to mentors

- Matching of students to mentors will occur **after** admissions process is complete.
- Do **NOT** email, 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

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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.

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BHRP Application Components From the Student

- Statement of **research interests** (1-2 pages)
 - Tentative topic area/population of interest
 - Name of 3 potential mentors and reasons for choosing them
 - **IMPORTANT: You must propose a research topic that fits within each mentor's research expertise.**
 - Proposed methods
 - Quantitative or qualitative
 - Primary or secondary data
- Statement of **educational and career goals** (1 page)
 - How would BHRP fit into these goals?

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BHRP Application Components Supporting Materials

1. Evaluation checklist form* from your Research Methods instructor
2. Evaluation checklist form* from your Writing instructor
3. Letter of recommendation from a full-time Bloustein faculty member
4. Unofficial transcripts from all college(s) attended

Items #1-#3 must be emailed directly from the instructor to honors@ejb.rutgers.edu

*Currently available for download on the BHRP website

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BHRP Application Timetable

- April 2021: Application system opens
- May 2021: Have completed Research Methods course (10:775:395)
- May 2021: Have completed CITI/Human Subjects Certification course
- June 1, 2021: Application priority deadline
- July 2021: Acceptance letters sent out
- For those selected into the 2021-2022 BHRP:
 - **No later than** early August 2021: Submit human subjects (IRB) application for project
 - **No later than** September 2021: Receive IRB approval of project

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Does BHRP work in tandem with other honors programs at Rutgers?

- We have explicit arrangements with:
 - The Honors College
 - The SAS Honors Program
 - George H. Cook Scholars Program (GHCSP)

Please visit our website to learn more about how these programs work together:
<https://bloustein.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/bloustein-honors/>

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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

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