Overview of the Bloustein Honors Research Program (BHRP)
Fall 2020

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
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:
  • 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
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 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 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.

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 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**

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 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 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
What kinds of methods can be used for the BHRP?

• Quantitative analysis
• Qualitative analysis
• Meta-analysis

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)
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

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
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

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
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

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 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?

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

*Currently available for download on the BHRP website

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

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/
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