The seven courses in the Spring schedule designated as honors sections are open only to students who have been admitted to the Honors Program or who have approval from the instructor. Honors courses differ from regular courses in devoting less time to elementary skills and information while stressing personal initiative and greater depth of learning. Benefits of honors courses include greater freedom of exploration, opportunity to work with other honors students, and credit toward graduation with honors.

Stand-alone Honors Courses and Colloquia

HONORS BIOLOGY, Biology 161H-HA: “Honors Colloquium in Cellular and Genetic Systems”
12:30-1:20 p.m. Wednesday with Prof. David Koetje; 0 credit for colloquium, 4 credit hours for Biology 161
Students who register for Honors Biology take this weekly one-hour discussion session in addition to a regular lecture and lab section of Biology 161. The weekly honors meeting is devoted to a study of various articles from Scientific American and the primary literature that are chosen to stimulate greater discussion and deeper understanding of topics addressed in the lectures of the course. The honors session is conducted in seminar style, which allows ample opportunity for discussion and personal initiative. To receive an honors grade in Biology 161, a student must participate in the extra weekly honors session and earn a grade of B (3.0) or better in the lecture and lab portions of the course. Participation in the honors section will provide a valuable base for further work in the natural sciences, especially for those who wish to graduate with honors from Calvin College.

HONORS ENGLISH, ENGL 101 DH: “Written Rhetoric”
2:30-3:20 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with Professor David Urban; 3 credit hours
The purpose of this course is to improve your critical reading, critical thinking, and writing skills. As the title of the course indicates, we will be focusing on written rhetoric: writing clear, persuasive prose in order to lead an audience to believe the truth, or at least the reasonableness, of your position. This course is also designed to help students improve their ability to write effectively for well-educated and academic audiences. Therefore, this course should be of value in all your other college courses. The class readings on various controversial topics will serve as models, both good and bad, of rhetorical strategies as well as the basis for raising issues for argument and debate.

HONORS ENGLISH, ENGL 220-AH: “Survey of American Lit I”
1:30-2:45 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday with Professor Donald Hettinga; 3 credit hours
"What then is the American, this new man?" wrote J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, in his pre-Revolution Letters from an American Farmer. The question resonates through the first centuries of American literature and is particularly relevant in these times in which the world is once again looking at this country and wondering what it means to be an American. In this course, we'll read literature in which writers examine that question, in which they are trying to find the language and artistic forms that would fit this new country.

HONORS HISTORY, HIST 151 BH: “History of the West and the World I”
12:30-1:20 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with Professor Frans van Liere: 3 credit hours
A survey of world history from the late Paleolithic to the beginnings of European overseas expansion (c. 1500 CE), highlighting the development of agrarian societies, the evolution of the world’s major religious and cultural traditions, human migration and intercultural encounters, and impulses from these as seen in gender and class relations, technological exchange, and political and economic interchange and conflict.

HONORS PHILOSOPHY, PHIL 153 DH: “Fundamental Questions in Philosophy”
10:30-11:20 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with Professor Matt Halteman; 3 credit hours
Philosophical inquiry serves many purposes under many different names. This course is an introduction to four different (but complementary) approaches to asking the questions “What is philosophy?” and “How is it relevant to
everyday life?” including to our efforts to wrestle with the deepest, most foundational questions we ask about God, ourselves, and the world around us. As a method of theoretical analysis (conceptual engineering), philosophy helps us to clarify the nature of things and to distinguish truth from falsity. As an approach to interpreting the meaning of life (hermeneutics), it awakens us to the open-endedness of human existence and to the importance of our particular communities for making sense of ourselves, others, and the world around us. As a spiritual discipline (care of the self), it aids us in our efforts to pursue the good life through mindful living and the cultivation of virtues. As a social coping mechanism (pragmatism), it helps us to make judicious policy decisions and to find solutions to social and political problems. The course is writing intensive, with regular informal writing exercises and two formal papers (a short expository paper and a longer term paper that may include original research). This course fulfills the core requirement in Philosophical Foundations.

HONORS POLITICAL SCIENCE, POLS 101 CH: “Ideas and Institutions in American Politics”
1:30 p.m.-2:45 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday with Prof. Kevin den Dulk; 3 credit hours
This honors course provides a study of American national politics by examining social context, constitutional foundations, processes, and functions while emphasizing close reading and discussion of original and foundational documents in American politics. This course meets the core requirement in Societal Structures.

HONORS PSYCHOLOGY, PSYC 151 DH: “Introductory Psychology”
11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with Prof. Blake Riek; 3 credit hours
The honors section of Introductory Psychology is similar to the regular sections in content and overall course requirements. However, the honors section provides greater opportunities for class discussion of critical issues, independent writing projects and supplementary readings on topics of special interest. The course focuses on relationships among our general understandings of the meanings of human personhood, especially understandings shaped by Christian faith; methods of investigation and practice in psychology; and major areas of psychological theory and research (e.g. brain processes, learning and memory, motivation, memory, thought and language, development, psychopathology, social psychology and psychotherapy). Enrollment in honors Psychology 151 is limited to 20 students. This course satisfies the core requirement in Persons in Community.

HONORS RELIGION: Qualified students may earn honors credit in Religion 121 (Biblical Literature and Theology), Religion 131 (Christian Theology), and intermediate and advanced courses by completing the requirements of an “honors track” in those courses. The honors track for Rel 121 and Rel 131 consists of: 1) a research/thesis paper (in place of the regular major writing assignment in the course); 2) a four-page review of a book relevant to the subject matter of the course; 3) meetings with the professor several times during the semester to plan and discuss the honors work; and 4) an overall grade of B+ or higher in the course. In intermediate and advanced courses the "honors track" includes a special research/thesis paper (in place of the regular course paper), supplementary reading, meeting with the professor, and a B+ overall in the course. Interested students should inform a professor early in the semester of their intention to complete an honors track in the course; no special registration is needed.