

Honor's Opportunities for...

Communication,
Political Science,
Social Justice & Human Rights,
and **Sociology**

majors in the School of Social & Behavioral Sciences
Arizona State University / West Campus

New College's School of Social & Behavioral Sciences (SBS) is an interdisciplinary school that explores the intersection of human behavior and science. By exploring the human mind and behavior, students and faculty seek to understand how we communicate with one another, how and why we organize into cultural and political groups as it relates to vital causes and issues, and ultimately how we make sense of our world and the many places we occupy within it.

Currently, the SBS includes five majors:

- Communication
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Social Justice and Human Rights
- Sociology

I ([Dr. Jeff Kassing](#)) am the Faculty Honors Advisor for all of the majors in SBS with the exception of Psychology. If you are interested in working with the psychology faculty in our school, please reach out to my colleague [Dr. Jessica Salerno](#) who serves as the Faculty Honors Advisor for the psychology major.

By way of introduction, my home discipline is communication and I am particularly interested and pursue two lines of research: how people express dissent in organizations and communication in the setting of sport (both mediated communication and human communication between for example coaches and athletes). I also co-direct the [Sport, Media, and Culture Lab](#) on ASU's West campus. Finally, I served in a multi-year term as the School Director which afforded me the opportunity to become familiar with the scholarly interests, areas of expertise, and research projects of our faculty.

The above disciplines are quite diverse, yet share much in common. They all reflect various aspects of human behavior (communicating, organizing into groups, acting politically, and protecting the rights of others). As such, the faculty in SBS are steeped in a tradition of interdisciplinarity. That is, you may find faculty in our unit that are interested in the same topic (e.g., gender) but come at it from multiple perspectives (communication, sociology, political science). For this reason, it is helpful to have someone who can direct you based on your interests to the right folks in the school to help advance your honors endeavors. That's where I may be helpful.

Honors Courses and Honors Enrichment Contracts

Stand-alone honors courses are unusual in the unit given the diversity of majors and the interdisciplinary focus of the school. But you can check BHC's webpage for a list of the current honors course offerings. You'll find it [here](#).

SBS students can also earn honors credit through Honors Enrichment Contracts and faculty in the unit routinely work with students in this capacity. This is an excellent way to extend your coursework in SBS into honors credit. To do so, you should confer with the instructor of a given course at the beginning of the semester about the possibility of attaining honors credit in the course via an Honors Enrichment Contract. If and when a mutually agreeable plan for a contract is developed you should then follow the appropriate steps for submitting the necessary documentation. While no two honors contracts are the same, they typically require students to engage with the course content in a more extensive manner or to examine additional material relevant to but not included in the course. It is the responsibility of the students to apply for the honors contract through BHC via the student's MyASU page. Faculty can only approve honors contracts after students have initiated the process. This [link](#) provides more information about the process and deadlines for Honors Enrichment Contracts.

The Honors Thesis/Creative Project

The Honors Thesis is your opportunity to work intensively on a specific topic. While it can sound daunting, it really should prove to be an extremely rewarding academic experience.

Here are some helpful suggestions as you begin to think about a thesis project.

- Consult the BHC honors thesis/creative project guidebook ([link](#))
- Attend a BHC Thesis Workshop ([link](#))
- Explore the Interests/Profiles of SBS Faculty ([link](#)) to identify possible thesis directors and/or committee members
- Review past thesis documents for ideas and parameters ([link](#))
- Attend thesis defenses to see how defenses work — BHC keeps a calendar listing the dates, times, and locations of upcoming defenses ([link](#))
- Talk to other students in BHC/SBS who are writing theses
- Visit with the BHC Faculty Honors Advisor to identify SBS faculty with whom you might work
- Explore the funding possibilities BHC makes available for those working on theses/creative projects ([link](#))

Contacts

For logistical questions (registration, scheduling, etc.), you should contact West campus BHC Program Manager [Liz Marini](#). She will be able to assist with these matters.

I invite you to contact me, Dr. Jeff Kassing (jkassing@asu.edu), to discuss:

- the nature/content of courses offered in SBS
- the expertise of faculty who might be well suited to work with you on honors contracts or honors theses/creative projects
- research opportunities that exist within SBS
- service learning or study abroad opportunities within SBS