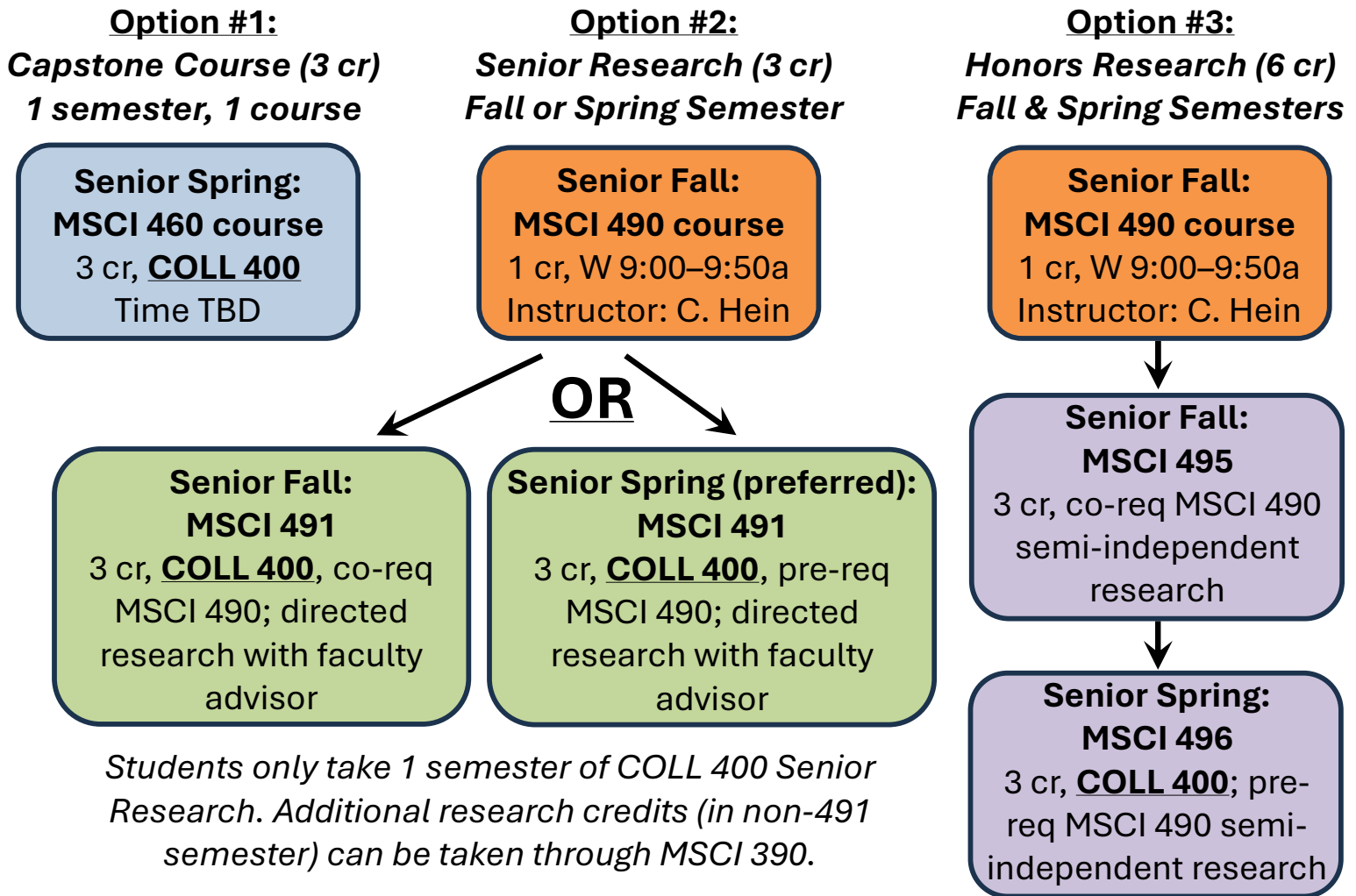


Coastal & Marine Sciences Degree Program

COLL 400 Capstone

Every student seeking to graduate from W&M must complete a 3-credit capstone (COLL 400) course, with a letter (A-F) grade. In Coastal & Marine Sciences, we offer three pathways to do so: a capstone class, senior research, or honors research. This flow chart is designed to help students decide which of these options is right for them. Page 2 details senior & honors research requirements.



Capstone Course: A 3-cr, non-research course will focus on applying coastal & marine sciences knowledge to policy or management. Will be open to all majors and to minors (with permission). Students can take this as a general elective in addition to senior/honors research.

Senior/Honors: Faculty mentoring senior/honors research at the Batten School (or other W&M schools with permission) will each have their own MSCI 491 and/or 495/496 sections, and they will provide associated grades. Dashed line above denotes a pathway for students to switch from Honors to Senior research.

Senior vs. Honors Research

Senior & Honors research both satisfy the W&M COLL 400 Capstone requirement and the W&M Major Writing Requirement. However, there are substantial differences (detailed below) between the two pathways that students & research advisors should consider. Students will generally declare Honors by June after their junior year; earlier declaration can allow for students to apply for Summer Charles Center Honors Fellowship funds, with applications generally due in February of Junior year). Students can later decide to switch to Senior Research or MSCI 460 to fulfill the Capstone.

	Senior Research	Honors Research
Research Type	directed research	semi-independent research
Prime Learning Objective	obtain experience developing and conducting directed research	conduct high-level, mentored research & graduate-level training
Pre-/Co-Requisite Research Course	Advanced Research in Coastal & Marine Sciences (MSCI 490), fall	Advanced Research in Coastal & Marine Sciences (MSCI 490), fall
Anticipated Final Written Product	senior thesis commonly for inclusion as part of broader study	honors thesis commonly publishable with undergraduate as lead author
Anticipated Final Oral Product	Brief, 15-min community presentation in Spring semester (April)	Extended (30–45 min) public presentation, followed by closed-door defense with committee
Honors Committee	None	Faculty committee to review thesis and conduct honors exam. Details below.
GPA Requirement	none	Minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA through end of junior year

Honors Thesis Notes:

- Coastal & Marine Sciences will only award “honors”, without further gradations.
- In rare cases, honors research can be completed prior to senior year and by non-majors.
- **Honors Committee:** composed of 3 faculty, including major research advisor. At least two faculty must be from the Batten School. Committee is charged with reviewing and approving the honors thesis and conducting the thesis defense.

Funding to Support Senior & Honors Research:

- **Charles Center Summer Research Grants:** ~\$4,000, 7 full-time weeks of research during the summer. Applications are typically due in mid-February annually.
- **Charles Center Honors Fellowships:** ~\$5,000, 10 full-time weeks of summer research for an honors thesis. Applications are typically due in mid-February annually.
- **Batten Experiential Learning Fund:** see the Stravitz Scholars Handbook for details.