

Honors Capstone
Psychology 494.003
Fall Semester, 2009

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Office & Hours AH-0125
Tuesday: 12:00 – 2:00, Wednesday: 9:00 – 10:00
If you cannot meet with me during these times don't hesitate to talk with me about scheduling another time to meet.

Class Meetings Monday and Wednesday 1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.
Alumni Hall (AH) 0401

Texts *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th Edition* (2001). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Suggested Resources:

- Your notes and materials from PSYC 220/221.
- An SPSS manual (e.g., Pallant, J. (2007/2005). *SPSS survival manual*. United Kingdom: Open University Press)
- Mitchell, M.L., Jolley, J.M., & O'Shea, R.P. (2007). *Writing for Psychology: A Guide for Students, 2nd Edition*. Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Course Description This course is designed to assist you in the development of your honors thesis. This course also provides information and skills to help you pursue career interests related to psychology and prepare for the graduate school application process.

Course Objectives It is my goal that by the completion of this course you will:

- Formulate a workable research question that can be developed into an Honor's thesis
- Identify a thesis chair and committee
- Work professionally with your chair and committee
- Demonstrate presentation skills through in-class presentations as well as your thesis proposal and defense
- Propose, conduct, and defend your thesis
- Understand the steps needed to prepare for graduate school in Psychology
- Develop a strategy for applying to graduate programs and/or job searching
- Develop a resume/vita as well as a personal statement/cover letter

- to market your skills and experiences
- Publicly present your thesis at a conference or research meeting (not required, but strongly encouraged!)

Expectations & Policies

- ✓ Demonstrate initiative and professionalism in working with your thesis chair. Among other things this means following through on your tasks, and being on time and prepared for meetings.
- ✓ Work professionally and openly with your fellow students. This includes providing feedback and constructive criticism to your peers.
- ✓ Be open to feedback and constructive criticism from your chair, committee, and peers! The thesis process is often ambiguous and at times frustrating. Your first draft of any section will likely not be your last.
- ✓ Attend class and participate in discussions/activities. Attendance is mandatory. You may miss two class periods without penalty. More than two class periods missed will result in a drop in your letter grade. Your final grade will drop one letter for each subsequent absence. Tardiness to class counts as ½ of one absence.
- ✓ Complete assigned reading as scheduled.
- ✓ Turn in assignments at the start of class on the due date. An assignment not turned in at the start of class is considered late and results in the loss of a letter grade for the assignment. One letter grade will be lost for each subsequent day the assignment is late.
- ✓ All assignments other than Thesis Progress Sheets must be typed, double-spaced and stapled (not paper-clipped). Papers that are not STAPLED will automatically drop a letter grade. Assignments must be handed in—e-mail copies will not be accepted unless previously arranged with me.
- ✓ As a courtesy to your classmates, please turn off all electronic devices during class. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers during class—or to a “non-ringing” mode. No headphones may be worn during class.
- ✓ Be on time for class. Consistently coming into class late—even “just a couple of minutes”— is very disruptive.
- ✓ Do not do homework for other classes, study for other exams, or sleep during class.
- ✓ Please do not pack up books and belongings before class is over. This very disruptive.
- ✓ Students with Special Needs – If you have special physical or educational needs, I am ready to accommodate you. You will need to speak with me during the first week of class, provide documentation of your need, and work with the Office of the Coordinator of Disability Support Services, Rendleman Hall Room 1218. According to SIUE safety and procedures policies, students with disabilities have the option of developing a written plan for evacuation in the unlikely event of an emergency that requires evacuation. If any

student with a disability would like to develop a written evacuation plan for this class, please contact the instructor.

- ✓ Remember that to remain in the Honors Academy you must maintain a 3.5 GPA in Overall and in Psychology

Department of Psychology Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the written or oral work of another without properly acknowledging the source of the information. Although it is necessary to examine the work of other writers and researchers to develop your own ideas and extend your knowledge, it is wrong to claim these ideas and words as your own. According to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville policy, "plagiarism is a serious academic offense. It may consist of copying, paraphrasing or otherwise using the written or oral work of another without acknowledging the source [by the proper use of quotation marks and reference citations], or it may consist of presenting oral or written course work prepared by another as one's own."

Furthermore, academic sanctions for plagiarism typically include receiving an F in the class where the plagiarism occurred. Additional sanctions may result from cases of plagiarism including suspension, being dropped your undergraduate or graduate degree program, and even expulsion from the University. (See

<http://www.siu.edu/policies/1i6.shtml>)

To insure that you understand how to avoid plagiarism, we encourage you to review the information on plagiarism provided on the Department of Psychology web page at

<http://www.siu.edu/PSYCHOLOGY/plagiarism.htm>.

University policy states that "Normally a student who plagiarizes shall receive a grade of F in the course in which the act occurs. The offense shall also be reported to the Provost."

(<http://www.siu.edu/policies/1i6.shtml>). The University policy discusses additional academic sanctions including suspension and expulsion from the University.

Department of Psychology SRA Policy

All students at SIUE are required to do a Senior Assignment in order to graduate. This is the class in which you will work on this project. In order to pass the Senior Assignment requirement, you must:

- 1) pass your Capstone course with a grade of C or better
- 2) propose and defend your thesis before your thesis committee, and
- 3) have your thesis deemed acceptable by the faculty (i.e., a mean rating of 4 or above on the faculty evaluation form).

In the event that you do not fulfill all 3 requirements in a given semester, you will need to retake the Capstone course and complete all three requirements in a subsequent semester. For example, if you receive below a C in the Capstone course, even if your thesis is deemed acceptable by the faculty, you will fail to complete the senior

assignment requirement and must retake Capstone in its entirety with a new project. If you receive a C or better in the Capstone course, but your thesis is deemed unacceptable by the faculty, this in most circumstances will result in having to retake Capstone in its entirety, unless the Capstone professor presents evidence to the contrary.

**Psychology
Department
Policy on
Plagiarism**

Plagiarism includes either presenting someone else's words without quotation marks (even if you cite the source) or presenting someone else's ideas without citing that source. If you plagiarize, your instructor cannot evaluate your understanding of the topic. When paraphrasing from another source, at the very least the student should change the wording, sentence syntax, and order of ideas presented in the paper. Ideally, the student will integrate ideas from multiple sources while providing critical commentary on the topic in a way that clearly identifies whether words and ideas are those of the student or are from another source. Plagiarism is one type of academic misconduct described in SIUE's Student Academic Code (<http://www.siu.edu/POLICIES/3c2.html>). University policy states that "Normally a student who plagiarizes shall receive a grade of F in the course in which the act occurs. The offense shall also be reported to the Provost." (<http://www.siu.edu/POLICIES/1i6.html>). The University policy discusses additional academic sanctions including suspension and expulsion from the University. To insure that you understand how to avoid plagiarism, we encourage you to review the information on plagiarism provided on the Department of Psychology web page at <http://www.siu.edu/education/psychology/plagiarism.shtml>.

**Policy on
Withdrawal
from Classes
and
Incomplete
Grades**

All withdrawals must be completed by the end of the 13th week of classes during fall and spring, and by the end of the 6th week of an 8-week summer term. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from a course by the dates set by the University if the student is not intending to complete the course. When students discontinue attending class and do not withdraw from a course they may receive the grade of UW (Unauthorized Withdrawal). The grade of UW will only be given when a student's grade based on the course requirements is an F. The grade of UW is calculated as an F in a student's grade point average.

The granting of a grade of I (Incomplete) is not automatic and is available only in cases when a student has completed most of the work required for a class but is prevented by a medical or similar emergency from completing a small portion of the work not later than the end of the following semester. An I is never automatic but must be approved by the instructor with appropriate documentation provided by the student. If an instructor agrees to give a student an I, the instructor will fill out a Memorandum of Incomplete Grade to be kept with the student's records. If the work is not completed by the time specified on the Memorandum,

the student's grade will be changed from I to F.

Course Grades

Your course grade will be based on your performance on assignments as well as your performance on your thesis. At minimum you are expected to propose your thesis this semester.

Thesis Proposal Practice Run: For your thesis proposal you are required to make a PowerPoint presentation. Because I want this class to be a resource to use in facilitating your thesis prior to your thesis proposal you will make a "practice run" of your presentation during class time.

Data Collection Practice Run: While you are developing your procedures you will use the class as a mock group of participants. This will give you an opportunity to walk through your procedures, practice manipulations (if any), and have others read your questionnaires. The purpose of this is to catch any glitches that might interfere with your data collection when you are ready run participants.

Thesis Defense Practice Run: If, during this semester, you get to the point that you are ready to defend your thesis, you will have a "practice run" of your results and defense presentation during class time.

Assignments

Key Articles Discussion:	15 points
Lit Review Draft/Outline:	30 points
Research Prospectus:	25 points
Proposal Meeting Practice Run:	30 points
Data Collection Practice Run:	10 points
Thesis Progress Sheets (5 points each):	50 points
Final Personal Statement/Cover Letter:	15 points
Final Vita/Resume:	15 points
Thesis Proposal:	49 points
Thesis:	63 points
Professionalism Evaluation (chair)	10 points
Final Exam:	20 points

Grading Scale

A: 298 – 332 points
B: 265 – 297 points
C: 232 – 264 points
D: 199 – 231 points
F: < 199 points

Tentative Class Schedule

August 24	Review Syllabus Introductions Capstone Intake Form
August 26	What goes into a thesis? Thesis timeline: What are the steps? IRB What is your research question? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DUE: Where are you now?• DUE: Questions about applying to graduate school
August 31	Individual Meetings
September 2	Individual Meetings
September 7	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
September 9	Literature reviews Key articles discussion Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• READ: “Conducting a Literature Review”: http://www.psichi.org/Pubs/Articles/Article_733.aspx• DUE: 2-3 Related articles• DUE: Copy of IRB Ethics Training Certificate DUE: Thesis Progress Report
September 14	Selecting a committee Thesis evaluation Overview of APA style
September 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DUE: Thesis Progress Report
September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DUE: Lit Review Outline/Draft for Discussion
September 23	Small group discussion of literature review outlines/drafts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DUE: Thesis Progress Report
September 28	Preparing for graduate school Overview of application process Letters of recommendation Resume/Vita and Personal Statement/Cover Letter

- September 30 • DUE: Thesis Progress Report
- October 5 Individual meetings
- October 7 Individual meetings
- October 12 Methods and Hypotheses
Research Design and Stats
 - DUE: Thesis Progress Report
 - DUE: Research Prospectus for discussion
- October 14 Setting up your SPSS database (bring disk/flashdrive and questionnaires)
- October 19 MPA Proposals
Using the PSYC 111 Participant Pool
 - DUE: Thesis Progress Report
- October 21 Personal Statement/Cover Letter and Resume/Vita Reviews in class
 - DUE: Draft of Personal Statement/Cover Letter and Resume/Vita
- October 26 Interviewing for graduate school and careers
Interview practice (bring resume and personal statement draft)
 - DUE: Thesis Progress Report
- October 28 Interview practice (bring resume and personal statement draft)
 - DUE: Final draft of resume/vita and personal statement/cover letter
- November 2 • DUE: Thesis Progress Report
- November 4 Proposal/Data Collection Practice Runs
- November 9 Individual meetings
 - DUE: Thesis Progress Report
- November 11 Individual Meetings
- November 16 Proposal/Data Collection Practice Runs
 - DUE: Thesis Progress Report
- November 18 Proposal/Data Collection Practice Runs
- November 23 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**
- November 25 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

November 30	Individual Meetings
December 2	Individual Meetings
December 7	Proposal/Data Collection Practice Runs Academic Careers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DUE: Thesis Progress Report
December 9	Moving toward a thesis defense Assessment
FINAL EXAM	Thursday, December 18, 12:00 – 1:40 p.m.