



**Department of Psychology**  
**Psychology 598 – Honours Thesis and Seminar**  
**Fall 2011-Winter 2012**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Christopher Sears	<b>Lecture Location:</b>	Admin 253
<b>Phone:</b>	403-220-2803	<b>Lecture Days/Time:</b>	MW 3:00-4:15
<b>Email:</b>	sears@ucalgary.ca		
<b>Office:</b>	Admin 262 or Admin 275		
<b>Office Hours:</b>	By Appointment		

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### **Course Description and Goals**

This course is required of all honours students and is intended to facilitate completion of the honours thesis and the development of research-related skills. The major goals of this course are to 1) develop your presentation skills, 2) increase your knowledge of the different areas of psychological research, 3) enhance your understanding of how psychological research is conducted, 4) increase your understanding of the ethical issues involved in psychological research, 5) learn about applying scholarships and graduate programs, and 6) help prepare you for graduate and professional level training.

The fall session seminars will consist of presentations on important information related to the honours thesis (e.g., the process of applying for ethics approval), information on graduate scholarships and programs, and instructions on how to give a proposal presentation. Each student will then give a proposal presentation (the details of which are described below). The winter session will begin with several information seminars, and then each student will give another presentation on their thesis research (the research presentation). All students will present their research at the Student Research Conference (April 27, 2012).

### **Prerequisites**

Restricted to students registered in the psychology honours program.

### **Required Text**

There is no required text.

### **Evaluation**

There are two components to the evaluation: 1) the honours project and written thesis (worth 90% of the final grade), and 2) seminar participation, including presentations (worth 10% of the final grade). Detailed information on both of these requirements is provided below.

## 1. The Honours Thesis

Students will complete a thesis research project under the supervision of a full-time faculty member or an adjunct faculty member. Graduate students may be involved in supervision, but they are not formally considered to be supervisors or co-supervisors. The thesis must involve original data collection and/or data analysis. Students should clarify supervisor's expectations for the thesis project before the course begins.

The thesis supervisor must arrange a second reader for the student's thesis. If the supervisor is an adjunct faculty member then the second reader must be a full-time faculty member in the Department of Psychology. The supervisor must email the name and email address of the second reader to [psycugrd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:psycugrd@ucalgary.ca) by October 1, 2011.

The completed honours thesis is to be submitted no later than Friday, April 20, 2012. Identical copies of the thesis must be submitted to the supervisor, the second reader, and the Psychology Department (Admin 275). Each copy must be bound with a clear plastic cover and a coil binding. The Psychology Department must receive both an electronic copy (email to: [psycugrd@ucalgary.ca](mailto:psycugrd@ucalgary.ca)) and a printed copy for the Department's Honours Thesis Library.

Students seeking an extension for completion of the thesis beyond April 20, 2012 must complete an Application for Deferral of Term Work and submit it to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts for approval (see the University of Calgary Calendar for regulations). A Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm deferral for health or personal reasons.

Ethics certification (if required) must be in place by January 31, 2012 or the student may be required to withdraw from the Honours program due to lack of satisfactory progress.

The supervisor and second reader will independently evaluate the student's thesis and will complete an Honours Thesis Feedback Form. They will jointly determine the student's thesis grade based on the thesis document, effort, independence, responsiveness to feedback, meeting of project expectations and deadlines, etc. They will also take into consideration the student's presentation grades and participation grades in the seminar. The supervisor must email Dr. Sears ([psychdir@ucalgary.ca](mailto:psychdir@ucalgary.ca)) no later than May 4, 2012, indicating the student's thesis letter grade; the supervisor and second reader's Honours Thesis Feedback Forms must both be attached to this email, and both the student and the second reader must be copied on the email.

## 2. Proposal presentation (Fall) and Research presentation (Winter)

Students will give two 12-minute oral presentations using PowerPoint. The Fall proposal presentation will outline the proposed thesis research (background research, research question, proposed methods, predictions). The Winter research presentation will describe the entire honours project (including results and interpretation, limitations, and ideas for future research). Each presentation will be followed by a question and discussion period. Dr. Sears will assign a letter grade for each presentation. The honours seminar will provide extensive information and guidance to prepare for these presentations. The supervisor will be informed

of the student's presentation grade at the end of each term. Supervisors will factor seminar presentations into the student's final grade.

### 3. Seminar participation

Participation during the seminar is required. Students will provide feedback on each other's proposal presentations, and will contribute to discussion periods and seminar activities. Students will receive points for seminar participation at the end of each term ( 5 = Excellent, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Satisfactory, 2 = Marginal, 1 = Very little participation, 0 = No participation). The supervisor will be informed of the student's seminar participation at the end of each term. Supervisors will factor seminar participation into the student's final grade.

### 4. Department of Psychology Student Research Conference

Each student will present a paper or poster at the Student Research Conference on Friday, April 29, 2011. Due to program constraints the number of paper presentations will be limited and will be adjudicated based on Fall proposal presentation grades if demand for papers exceeds availability. Paper presentations will be 12 minutes. Students giving poster presentations will be responsible for creating and printing their own posters. This conference is an important milestone in students' academic careers and an excellent opportunity to share their research with a receptive audience. Supervisors will factor conference participation into the student's final grade.

#### **Grading Scale**

A+	96-100%	Truly exceptional in all respects (note: this is a rare thesis grade)
A	90-95%	Excellent in all respects
A-	85-89%	Excellent in most respects
B+	80-84%	Very good in all respects
B	76-79%	Very good in some respects
B-	72-75%	Very good in some respects, with one or more exceptions
C+	67-71%	Satisfactory effort
F	Fail	0-66%

As stated in the University Calendar, it is at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and final examinations is between two letter grades.

To determine final letter grades, final percentage grades will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage (e.g., 89.5% will be rounded up to 90% = A but 89.4% will be rounded down to 89% = A-).

## Tentative Lecture Schedule Fall Session (this schedule will be updated frequently)

Date	Topic/Activity
M Sep 12	Introduction to the Honours Seminar / Student Introductions
W Sep 14	Applying for Graduate Scholarships / Research Ethics
M Sep 19	Applying for Research Participation Access (Dr. Boyce) / Research Ethics
W Sep 21	Applying for Graduate Programs in Clinical Psychology (Dr. Campbell)
M Sep 26	Applying for Graduate Programs in Psychology (Dr. Dyck)
W Sep 28	Proposal Presentation Workshop #1
M Oct 3	Proposal Presentation Workshop #2
W Oct 5	Proposal Presentation Workshop #2
M Oct 10	Thanksgiving Day, no seminar
W Oct 12	3 Proposal Presentations
M Oct 17	3 Proposal Presentations
W Oct 19	3 Proposal Presentations
M Oct 24	3 Proposal Presentations
W Oct 26	3 Proposal Presentations
M Oct 31	3 Proposal Presentations
W Nov 2	TBA
M Nov 7	TBA
W Nov 9	3 Proposal Presentations
M Nov 14	3 Proposal Presentations
W Nov 16	3 Proposal Presentations
M Nov 21	3 Proposal Presentations
W Nov 23	3 Proposal Presentations
M Nov 28	3 Proposal Presentations
W Nov 30	3 Proposal Presentations
M Dec 5	3 Proposal Presentations
W Dec 7	3 Proposal Presentations
Dec 12-21	Fall Term Exam Period

### Reappraisal of Grades

A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (e.g., term paper, essay, test) has been unfairly graded, may have the work re-graded as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor within 15 days of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall immediately take the matter to the Head of the department offering the course, who will arrange for a reassessment of the work within the next 15 days. The reappraisal of term work may cause the grade to be raised, lowered, or to remain the same. If the student is not satisfied with the decision and wishes to appeal, the student shall address a letter of appeal to the Dean of the faculty offering the course within 15 days of the unfavourable decision. In the letter, the student must clearly and fully state the decision being appealed, the grounds for appeal, and the remedies being sought, along with any special circumstances that warrant an appeal of the reappraisal. The student should include as much written documentation as possible.

## **Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct**

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. Consequently, plagiarism or cheating on any assignment is regarded as an extremely serious academic offense. Plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Students should examine sections of the University Calendar that present a Statement of Intellectual honesty and definitions and penalties associated with Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct.

## **Academic Accommodation**

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 403-220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than 14 days after the start of this course.

## **Absence From A Test/Exam**

Makeup tests/exams are NOT an option without an official University medical excuse (see the University Calendar). A completed Physician/Counselor Statement will be required to confirm absence from a test/exam for health reasons; the student will be required to pay any cost associated with this Statement. Students who miss a test/exam have 48 hours to contact the instructor and to schedule a makeup test/exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup test/exam may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Except in extenuating circumstances (documented by an official University medical excuse), a makeup test/exam must be written within 2 weeks of the missed test/exam.

## **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act**

The FOIP legislation disallows the practice of having student's retrieve tests and assignments from a public place. Therefore, tests and assignments may be returned to students during class/lab, or during office hours, or via the Department Office (Admin 275), or will be made available only for viewing during exam review sessions scheduled by the Department. Tests and assignments will be shredded after one year. Instructors should take care to not link students' names with their grades, UCIDs, or other FOIP-sensitive information.

## **Course Credits for Research Participation (Max 2% of final grade)**

Students in most psychology courses are eligible to participate in Departmentally-approved research and earn credits toward their final grades. A maximum of two credits (2%) per course, including this course, may be applied to an individual's final grade. **To get 2%** added to the final grade in a full-year course, like this one, you have to acquire **a total of 4 bonus credits** towards the course. These credits may be acquired in the Fall and/or the Winter Session. The demand for timeslots may exceed the supply in a given term. Thus, students are not guaranteed that there will be enough studies available to them to meet their credit requirements. Students should seek studies early in the term and should frequently check for open timeslots. Students can create an account and participate in Departmentally-approved research studies at

<http://ucalgary.sona-systems.com> The last day to participate in studies and to assign or reassign earned credits to courses is **Dec 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011**.

### **Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Please check this website and note the nearest assembly point for this course.

### **Student Organizations**

Psychology students may wish to join the Psychology Undergraduate Students' Association (PSYCHS). They are located in Administration 170 and may be contacted at 403-220-5567.

**Student Union VP Academic:** Phone: 403-220-3911 [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca)

**Student Union Faculty Rep.:** Phone: 403-220-3913 [socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:socialscirep@su.ucalgary.ca)

### **Important Dates**

The last day to drop this course with no "W" notation and **still receive a tuition fee refund** is **Sep 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011**. Last day for registration/change of registration is **Sep 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011**. The last day to withdraw from this course is **Apr 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012**.