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**Specialized Honours Thesis**  
**HH/PSYC 4001 6.0**  
**Fall/Winter 2015-2016**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Steele  
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Phone: 416-736-2100, ext. 22156  
Office: BSB 331

**Course Time & Location:** Thursdays 11:30-2:30pm in BSB 328A

**Pre-requisites:** At least 84 credits towards your degree  
PSYC 1010 6.0 (Introductory Psychology) with a grade of C  
PSYC 2020 (Statistical Methods I and II, or equivalent)  
PSYC 2030 (Introduction to Research Methods)  
PSYC 3010 (Intermediate Research Methods)  
PSYC 3031 (Intermediate Statistics Laboratory)

**Strongly Recommended Text:** Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)



**Other Texts to Consider:**

1. Zinsser, W. (2006). On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction. 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
2. Duarte, N. (2010). Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
3. Duarte, N. (2008). Slide:ology: The art and science of creating great presentations. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.
4. Reynolds, G. (2008). Presentation Zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery. Berkley, CA: New Riders.

**Course Description and Goals:**

Each student will carry out an individual piece of psychological research in consultation with a thesis supervisor and will write a thesis. In addition, students will attend a seminar design to provide additional resources and experience. Students will have the opportunity to practice presenting their ideas to others and will learn more about how to do so in an effective manner. Students will also learn about opportunities to broaden their interest in psychology through post-graduate studies. We will discuss how to create a strong graduate school application, and ultimately how to excel in graduate school.

Importantly a goal of this course is also to create a community where students can learn from each other and become socialized regarding what it means to be a graduate student in psychology. The requirements of this seminar course are relatively minor; however, the opportunities for individualized learning are great. To some degree it is up to each student to make use of this seminar to fully reap the potential benefits. Students are encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions, and request material to be cover to ensure that their individual needs are met as to the greatest extent possible. As the course instructor, in many ways, I can serve as secondary supervisors to - so please do not hesitate to share what you would ideally like to learn.

At the end of this seminar, students will demonstrate:

- Further developed oral/written presentation skills,
- Increased research skills
- Increased knowledge of how to excel in graduate school

By the end of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to conduct research, to present research findings (both verbally, in writing, and in a poster format), and to critically evaluate others' research ideas. In addition, students will demonstrate an advanced knowledge of what is required to create a strong graduate school application and ultimately to excel in a post-graduate studies.

### Grading and Due Dates:

<b>Thesis Proposal:</b>	15%	Due to supervisor in no later than <b>January 15<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Poster Day:</b>	5%	In early April from 12-3pm
<b>External Thesis Evaluation:</b>	10%	Due by <b>April 12<sup>th</sup></b> (feedback within 1 week)
<b>Supervisor Thesis Evaluation:</b>	50%	Due <b>April 22<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>Seminar Participation</b>	20%	Details provided below

A **Thesis Proposal** which includes the Introduction (literature review) and Method (proposed methodology) sections must be **submitted by the last day of the December examination period** and when this is not possible, **no later than January 15<sup>th</sup>**. This work is graded by the thesis supervisor and is worth 20% of the final course grade. This deadline will ensure that students begin writing in the first term and that progress will have been made in the development of the methodology; it also will give students the opportunity to receive feedback from their supervisor. It is highly recommended that some or all of the thesis data be collected by the end of the Fall Term.

**Poster Day** participation is mandatory. The supervisor will assess a pass (5/5) or fail (0/5) grade. Poster Day is held in April typically just prior to the examination period. The poster presentation will provide an opportunity to receive feedback about the thesis before submitting the thesis draft.

The **External Thesis Evaluation** will be provided by another faculty member who evaluates the final product (the written thesis) and not the process (e.g., the amount of work that was involved in getting to the final product). The Thesis Coordinator(s) will be responsible for assigning a second reader to each thesis and their grade will be worth 10% of the final grade. In order to give the second reader enough time to evaluate the work and provide his/her grade to the supervisor, each student will be required to submit a draft of the thesis by **April 12<sup>th</sup>**.

The **Supervisor Thesis Evaluation** accounts for 50% of the final grade and reflects an evaluation primarily of the final product, with consideration also being given to the student's contributions to the process (ideas, creating stimuli, recruiting and running participants, etc.).

**Seminar Participation** is a required component of the Specialized Honours Thesis course. As such, the instructor will contribute 20% towards the student's final grade. Students' oral presentations (2 – worth 5% each) as well as their contributions during class discussions will be graded (5%). Attendance will also count for 5% of the grade. If you must miss a class, please let the instructor know in advance.

## CLASS SCHEDULE (Fall)

### Thursday September 10<sup>th</sup>

Introduction / Orientation

We will have an open discussion as a group about how this seminar course can best meet your needs

### Thursday September 17<sup>th</sup>

There will be NO CLASS THIS WEEK. Instead, please take the time to read and prepare for your thesis project.

### Thursday September 24<sup>th</sup> (Optional)

Applying for research funding / day in the life of a graduate student / applying to graduate school

We will have 2-3 graduate students come and speak about their experiences as graduate students, the application process, and how to apply for research funding. Please be sure to attend if you are considering applying to graduate programs in psychology.

***\*\*Scholarship applications are sometimes due in early October***

***\*\*Ensure you have written the subject and general GRE in time for graduate school applications***

### Thursday October 1<sup>st</sup> (Optional – runs 12:30-2:30pm)

Conducting a good literature search. How do you find the articles that you need? This workshop will be conducted with librarian Adam Taves in the library. Please meet for 12:30 in the Scott Library Room 531. Attendance is strongly encouraged even if you have recently taken part in a similar session.

### Thursday October 8<sup>th</sup>

Plain language writing workshop with Matthew Shulman (Knowledge Mobilization Unit)

### Thursday October 15<sup>th</sup>

Informal presentation of your research topic / how to formulate a research question

During this class each student will be asked to discuss their thesis with the class for 5-10 minutes. The goal is to begin thinking about how to best explain your work to others, to learn what questions others have about your topic, and to get suggestions for how to present your work more succinctly.

### Thursday October 22<sup>nd</sup>

Writing effective research papers.

During this class we will discuss how to write clear, effective academic papers and how to avoid writing mistakes. **In preparation for the class I ask that each of you take note of one particularly well written and one poorly written paper that you have read for your thesis project (or in another class).** Please bring both papers to class, create an outline of the poor and good paper, and take notes about why you think the one succeeds and the other fails to communicate clearly. (APA format; what you liked and what you didn't, etc.)

### Thursday October 29<sup>th</sup> – OFF (Reading Day)

### Thursday November 5<sup>th</sup>

Effective oral presentations

In preparation for this class I ask that **each of you give some thought to what makes for a good academic talk.** Select a TED talk that you think is effective and come prepared to engage in discussion and share that talk with the class. If you find one that is less effective, please reflect on why. Try to focus on the talk itself more than the content.

**Thursday November 12<sup>th</sup> (Optional)**

Individual meetings for those who are interested; please contact Dr. Jennifer Steele in advance to schedule a time.

**Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup> (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

Oral presentations of thesis proposals

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation on your thesis.

**Presenters:**

**Thursday November 26<sup>th</sup> (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

Oral presentations of thesis proposals cont.

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation on your thesis.

**Thursday December 3<sup>rd</sup> (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

Oral presentations of thesis proposals cont.

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation on your thesis.

**CLASS SCHEDULE (Winter)**

**No Classes in January and February**

**Individual meetings during class time by request**

**Thursday March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Poster Preparation Workshop with Matt Shulman

**Thursday March 10<sup>th</sup> (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

Oral presentations of results & Research Snap-Shot

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation on the results and interpretation of your findings.

**Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup> - No Class**

**Thursday March 24<sup>th</sup> (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

Oral presentations of results & Research Snap-Shot

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation on the results and interpretation of your findings.

**Thursday March 31<sup>st</sup> (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

Oral presentations of results & Research Snap-Shot

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation on the results and interpretation of your findings.

**Poster Day: Early April (Date TBD)**