

Information about PSYC4000 6.0, PSYC4170 6.0, and PSYC 4175 6.0

Each year students ask if they should enrol in PSYC 40006.0 (Honours Thesis), PSYC 4170 6.0 (Advanced Research in Psychology) or PSYC 4175 6.0 (Advanced Community-Based Applied Research). Following are some points of information and answers to frequently asked questions that will help you make this decision.

- There are many more openings in PSYC 4170 than there are in PSYC 4000 or in PSYC 4175. On average we have about 500 students enrolled in PSYC 4170 and 75 students in PSYC 4000, and 25 in PSYC4175.
- It is not easy to find a supervisor for PSYC 4000. Each year there are approximately 35-40 professors who supervise Honours Theses.
- If you are successful in finding a thesis supervisor, then you will need to fill out the thesis contract (picked up from the undergraduate office) with the faculty member and hand the contract in to the Psychology undergraduate Office rooms 291/292 BSB. The office staff can open a space for you to enrol in PSYC4000.
- If you do obtain a supervisor try to make sure they fill in your contract with you prior to the beginning of the term.
- Some students have enrolled in PSYC 4170 because they did not know that their search for a supervisor would be successful. If you are one of those students you will need to inform the staff that you are also dropping a section of PSYC 4170. The staff will then submit your name and student number to the Registrar's Office so that you will not be charged for making a course change (i.e. dropping PSYC 4170 6.0 and adding PSYC 4000 6.0).

Do I need to do PSYC 4000 if I want to be accepted into a graduate programme?

The short answer to this question is no. Although the majority of students who are successful in being accepted into a graduate programme have taken PSYC 4000, some students who have taken PSYC 4170 are also successful. Both PSYC 4170 and PSYC 4000 normally involve independent research projects and this is the type of experience you typically need for graduate school.

What are the potential advantages of taking PSYC 4170 rather than PSYC 4000?

Because this is a regularly scheduled course, you always know when you will be meeting with your professor. PSYC 4170 is probably better for the procrastinator. Because there are regularly scheduled classes and deadlines, as well as other students who act as points of social support and social comparison, you are probably more likely to get things done on time. You also may be freer to pursue your own ideas in PSYC 4170 because you will probably not be asked to do something in the professor's area of research. Note, however, that sections of PSYC 4170 will vary because they have different course directors.

What are the advantages of taking PSYC 4000 rather than PSYC 4170?

PSYC 4000 will give you the experience of working in a professor's laboratory; the experience is somewhat akin to an apprenticeship. By doing PSYC 4000 you will have at least one professor that will become quite familiar with you and your abilities; this is helpful when it comes to getting a letter of reference for graduate school. Note again, however, that student experiences with PSYC 4000 will vary because different professors have different approaches.

What is PSYC 4175?

PSYC 4175 Advanced Community-Based Applied Research: This is a relatively new course taught by Dr. Michaela Hynie. There is only one section of 25 students and admission is by application. Because this course involves carrying research in community health organizations all candidates are carefully screened in terms of their preparation and suitability for this sort of placement. See the Supplemental Calendar for more information about the course, and contact Dr. Hynie by email for details.

Do I need to have a thesis project or hypothesis before finding a supervisor?

No. A professor does not expect you to have a clear-cut project in mind. What a professor wants to see is that you have an awareness of the basic issues in her/his area of research and a keen interest in pursuing research questions in this area. You will develop your thesis project together with your advisor over the course of a number of meetings with him or her.

Do I have to be an A student to find a supervisor?

It is obvious that professors will be interested in working with students who have stronger academic records. This does not mean, however, that these are the only students that they will work with. Some professors will recognize that certain life events may have had a deleterious effect on your grades. Also, some professors may be interested in certain contacts (e.g., ethnic communities, schools) that you have that would give her/him and you access to potential research participants.

How do I find a faculty member who will be willing to supervise me in PSYC 4000?

Finding a supervisor requires a considerable amount of work: < Go through the list of faculty members who are available to act as supervisors. A Faculty Area of Interest List can be found at:
<http://psyc.info.yorku.ca/files/2012/11/faculty-area-of-interest-fw13-14-updated-april1.pdf>

Another good source of information about faculty members' research interests is located at <http://www.yorku.ca/gradpsyc/faculty>. On this webpage, you will see different areas of research. Click on the one that interests you, then scan down through the names, read the Research Interests section, click on the personal web pages. Identify some of the faculty members who are doing research that interests you. Make sure you do not limit yourself to only one or two faculty members.

- < **Try to make an appointment** with the faculty members to discuss the possibility of doing an independent piece of research with her/him. E-mail is probably the easiest way of contacting a professor.
- < **Be prepared for your meeting** if you are successful in arranging one! Try to read a few of the professor's papers before meeting with her/him (track these down on PsychINFO).
- < **Be prepared for rejection** professors typically interview a number of students before agreeing to supervise one or two of them.

With perseverance you may be rewarded!