
**Faculty of Health
Department of Psychology
PSYC 4001A 6.0:
SPECIALIZED HONOURS THESIS
Thursdays from 2:30-5:30pm in BSB 207
Fall/Winter 2019-2020**

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Steele

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Course Time & Location: Thursdays 2:30-5:30pm in BSB 207

Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology), with a minimum grade of C.
- HH/PSYC 2020 6.00 (Statistical Methods I and II) or substitutes
- HH/PSYC 2030 3.00 (Introduction to Research Methods) or substitutes
- HH/PSYC 3000 3.00 (Professionalism and Communication in Psychology)
- HH/PSYC 3010 3.00 (Intermediate Research Methods)
- HH/PSYC 3031 3.00 (Intermediate Statistics Laboratory)
- Students must have been accepted into the Specialized Honours Program in order to enrol in this course.

Course Credit Exclusions

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

Course Website: <https://moodle.yorku.ca/>

Course Description

Throughout this course, each student will carry out an individual piece of psychological research in consultation with a thesis supervisor, resulting in a final written thesis. In addition, students will attend a seminar designed to provide additional resources and experience. Students will practice presenting their ideas and research results to others and will learn more about how to do so effectively. Students will also have the opportunity to learn about how 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 be accepted and excel in graduate school.

Another important goal of this course is 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 small; 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 covered in order to ensure that their individual needs are met to the greatest extent possible.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Use data analytic software for analysis of psychological data.
2. Design, execute, analyse and interpret results from a study examining a specific research question.
3. Express in written form psychological findings using APA style.
4. Express in written form, a research study in psychology.
5. Recognize limits of conclusions based on inferential statistics.
6. Critically identify limitations of individual research endeavors.
7. Apply ethical principles of the CPA code of ethics to their own research.

Specific Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, students will demonstrate

1. Enhanced presentation skills
2. Increased research skills
3. 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.

Strongly Recommended Text:

1. **Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Edition)**



Other Texts to Consider:

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

Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - [Grading Scheme for 2019-2020](#))

Late Work/Missed Tests or Exams

If you have a reason for missing a deadline or presentation (e.g., illness), which is confirmed by supporting documentation (Attending Physician Statement which can be found at: <http://registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/attending-physicians-statement.pdf>), you may request accommodation from me and/or your thesis supervisor. This might require that you take deferred standing (<http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing>). Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty. **If you do not have data collected in time to present on poster day or do not have a thesis ready to provide to a second reader, you will receive a grade of '0'. Please make your thesis supervisor aware of this and plan accordingly.** If you have any concern that you might not meet these deadlines, please contact me immediately to set up a meeting.

Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to: [Fall/Winter 2019-2020 - Important Dates](#)

	FALL (F)	YEAR (Y)	WINTER (W)
Last date to add a course without permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Sept. 17	Sept. 17	Jan. 19
Last date to add a course with permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	Oct. 1	Oct. 22	Feb. 3
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	Nov. 8	Feb. 3	March 13
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript – see note below)	Nov. 9 - Dec. 3	Feb. 4 - Apr. 5	March 14 - Apr. 5

***Note:** *You may withdraw from a course using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as "W". The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.*

Academic Integrity for Students

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Integrity Quiz](#).

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with ***Student Accessibility Services (SAS)*** to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. **Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.**

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

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Course Materials Copyright Information

These course materials are designed for use as part of the PSYC 4001 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#).

Course Requirements and Assessment:

Thesis Proposal:	10%	Due to supervisor by December 12
Poster Day:	5%	Mon April 6 from 10:30-12:30pm (poster needed for class on April 2)
External Thesis Evaluation:	20%	Full thesis due by Wed April 15 @ noon (feedback within 1 week)
Supervisor Thesis Evaluation:	50%	Due by Mon April 27 @ noon
Seminar Participation:	15%	Details provided below

A **Thesis Proposal** which includes the Introduction (literature review) and Method sections must be **submitted to your supervisor no later than Thursday December 12th** or by another date coordinated with your thesis supervisor (no later than January 15th). This work is graded by the thesis supervisor and is worth 10% of the final course grade. This deadline will ensure that you begin writing in the first term and that progress is made in your research project; it also will allow you to receive feedback from your 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 course director will assess a pass (5/5) or fail (0/5) grade. Poster Day is tentatively scheduled for Monday April 6th from 10:30am-12:30pm in Vari Hall. 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, sometimes referred to as the “second reader”, who evaluates the final product (the written thesis) and not the process (e.g., the amount of work and/or thought that was involved in getting to the final product). The seminar course director is responsible for assigning a second reader to each thesis and the grade is worth 20% 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, you will be required to submit a full draft of the thesis by **Wednesday April 15th** at noon.

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.). The final version of your thesis is due to the undergraduate office and your supervisor no later than **12noon on Monday April 27th**.

Seminar Participation is a required component of the Specialized Honours Thesis course. As such, the course director will contribute 15% towards the student's final grade. Students' oral presentations (2 – worth 5% each) as well as their attendance and contributions during class discussions (5%) will be graded. If you must miss a class, please let me know in advance.

CLASS SCHEDULE (Fall)

Thursday September 5th - Introduction / Orientation

We will meet one another and have an open discussion as a group about how this seminar course can best meet your needs. We will talk about getting started into your thesis research and the thesis write-up. We will also start taking about: pre-registration of studies and replicability as well as thinking about graduate programs, preparing to apply for graduate programs (personal statements and GREs), and funding post-graduate studies.

Thursday September 12th – Day in the life of a graduate student

In the first half of this class we will talk about writing a research proposal to use for scholarship applications. For the second half of the class, graduate students here at York University will come and speak about their experiences applying to and being in graduate school in psychology. Topics to be covered include: becoming a competitive applicant, writing the GREs, deciding on programs/schools, applying for funding, as well as interviewing and ultimately accepting a position in a research intensive graduate programs. **Please come prepared with any questions.**

Thursday September 19th – Getting started with your introduction

During this class we will talk generally about 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 research paper that you have read for your thesis project (or in another class). Pay particular attention to the introduction – and what made you interested (or not) in the topic. Please bring both papers to class, along with notes about why you think the one succeeds and the other fails to communicate clearly. We will also review the format of both the thesis proposal and the final thesis at this time.

Thursday September 26th – Formulating good research questions

During this class each student will be asked to discuss their thesis with the class for 5 minutes. What is your main research question? What data will you collect to answer this question? 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 about your research project and how to present your work succinctly.

*****Many scholarship applications are due December 1st (tri-council agencies), but some may be due as early as October. These take time to put together and should be started as early as possible. Please see the moodle site and/or visit the Graduate Office (2nd floor of the BSB) for more information.***

Thursday October 3rd – Dos and Don'ts for Interview Day, Personal Statements, and Resumes/CVs

Once you are accepted into a graduate program, you will be expected to visit the school and interview with students and faculty. We will discuss what can help you to make a strong favorable impression on potential supervisors and how to learn everything that you will need to know in order to decide on the right graduate program for you. We will also talk about some important points to consider when creating your personal statement and CV and when you are being interviewed for a research position or place in a graduate program. Please come prepared with any questions that you might have. **In advance of this class, please bring your CV (resume) to class that day for discussion. If you are uncertain of what to include in your CV, or how to format your information, please come with questions.**

Thursday October 10th – Optional Individual Meetings

Individual meetings are available at this time for anyone with specific questions about graduate programs or their thesis. For everyone else, this is a time to get a head start on your thesis project.

Thursday October 17th - OFF (Fall Reading Week)

Thursday October 24th - OFF (*optional* - personal statement due)

Please use this class time to work on your thesis and to finalize your personal statement, particularly if you will be applying to graduate programs this year. If you would like for me to read through your statement and provide feedback, please provide me with your statement by this date. I will aim to provide feedback within 2 weeks.

Thursday October 31st – Effective oral presentations

In this class we will move from informal communication to formal communication. 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 or ineffective and email me the link to this talk by **Monday October 28th**. Please come prepared to engage in discussion and share your thoughts on that TED 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 7th - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)

During this class 1/4 of you will be asked to do a 15 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions.

Thursday November 14th - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)

During this class 1/4 of you will be asked to do a 15 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions.

Thursday November 21st - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)

During this class 1/4 of you will be asked to do a 15 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions.

Thursday November 28th - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)

During this class 1/4 of you will be asked to do a 15 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions.

Thursday December 12th - Thesis Proposal Due (Worth 10% of your final grade)

Please provide your thesis proposal (including the introduction and method sections of your thesis) to your thesis supervisor by this date (or by another date arranged with your supervisor – no later than January 15th).

CLASS SCHEDULE (Winter)

No Classes in January and February - Individual meetings are available during class time when requested.

Thursday March 5th - The results are in! How to present research results.

In this class we will talk about how to share your findings. We will review how to create a great poster presentation. We will also discuss how to best present your results visually, in a presentation and in your thesis, as well as how to discuss null findings. Finally, we will talk about how to write a solid abstract.

Thursday March 12th - Research Presentations (Worth 5% of your final grade)

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 19th - Research Presentations (Worth 5% of your final grade)

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 26th - Research Presentations (Worth 5% of your final grade)

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 April 2nd - Presenting your poster to a broad audience

Please come with your poster presentation as a one-page handout for the class. Be prepared to answer the question “So, what is your research about?” in both a two-minute summary and a five-minute summary. Time yourself. You will want to start by stating your research question (a) In this study, I(we) was(were) interested in examining XX; next explain how you did this (b) We had x participants complete..., and finally (c) explain what you found, how this fit with your hypotheses, and why this is important. To move from a shorter to a longer explanation, you might provide more information on the method, results, theory behind the study and/or implications of the findings.

Monday April 6th - Poster Day from 10:30-12:30 in Vari Hall

Wednesday April 15th - Thesis due for Second Reader by 12noon (worth 20% of your final grade) - Ideally your thesis supervisor will have provided feedback on *at least* one draft of your thesis before the thesis is submitted to the second reader. You should receive feedback by Friday April 24th that you can work to integrate into your final thesis.

Monday April 27th - FINAL thesis due by 12noon (worth 50% of your final grade)

A hardcopy of your thesis is due to the Undergraduate Office (BSB 292) by 12noon. A final softcopy should also be submitted to your supervisor by this date.