

## **PSYC 693H, Sect. 1: Honors in Psychology I**

**COURSE PRE-REQUISITES:** A cumulative GPA of 3.3, a psychology GPA of 3.5, at least one semester of PSYC 395, and acceptance into the Psychology Senior Honors Program. PSYC 693H must be taken in the first semester of the senior year.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS**

This course comprises the first semester in the two-semester sequence of Senior Honors in Psychology. There are two components to the course: laboratory work that you will conduct under the direction of your faculty thesis advisor, and this class, which you will attend with the other Psychology Honors students.

The classroom portion of the Honors course has the following goals:

- 1) to help you stay on schedule as you work on your Honors research project;
- 2) to learn about ethical considerations in the conduct of research;
- 3) to strengthen your writing skills with a specific focus on scientific writing;
- 4) to improve your critical thinking skills;
- 5) to strengthen your presentation skills; and
- 6) to increase your understanding of professional topics such as applying to graduate school and publishing scientific articles.

Staying on schedule: By the end of the semester, you should have the Introduction, Method, and Analysis Plan sections of your thesis completed. Most students will also have collected all data for their projects. To help you reach these goals, you will turn in drafts of the first sections of your thesis this semester. In the spring semester, you will complete all statistical analyses for your project; write final drafts of all sections of your thesis; defend your project before a committee of three; and present your research at the Psychology Department Honors Poster Session.

Learning about ethical considerations in research: If you have not done so already, you will complete online training for ethical conduct in research. We will read and discuss sections of the APA Manual related to ethical considerations in research, including ethical treatment of human and animal participants, ethical standards for reporting scientific information, and reducing bias in language.

Strengthening writing skills: This course will strengthen your writing skills using a number of methods. You will read sections of the APA Manual related to scientific writing, and we will discuss some sections in class. You will receive feedback on an article critique. You will submit drafts of your thesis Introduction, Method, and Analysis Plan for feedback from a classmate. You will serve as a peer reviewer of a classmate's drafts and turn in a written review of his/her work. Throughout the course, the APA Publication Manual will serve as an important reference for mastering APA style. All written assignments, including peer reviews, should be submitted at the Sakai site prior to 11 p.m. on the due dates.

Strengthening critical thinking skills: This course will strengthen your critical thinking through class discussion of issues such as experimental design, methodological rigor, and external validity. As you write sections of your thesis, struggling to express scientific ideas and findings logically will strengthen your critical thinking. As mentioned above, you will be expected to provide constructive feedback to classmates regarding their research topics, which will hone your critical thinking skills.

Strengthening presentation skills: This course will strengthen your presentation skills primarily by having you present your Introduction, Methods, and Analysis Plan to the class at the end of the semester.

Professional topics: We will discuss professional development topics such as applying for graduate programs, grant writing, and other topics of your choice.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Laboratory Work for PSYC 693H**

Expectations regarding your laboratory work will be negotiated with your thesis advisor. Ordinarily, students will be involved in this work 7-15 hours per week.

### **Classroom Component of PSYC 693H**

Class attendance and participation: You are expected to attend all class sessions and to participate actively in class discussions. If you need to miss a class due to illness or family emergency, please inform me via email, and contact a classmate to find out what you missed during that class session. One aspect of class participation will be attentiveness to your classmates' presentations during the final class sessions, and posing interesting and relevant questions to your classmates about their research.

Reading a senior thesis from a prior year: Senior theses from prior years are available through the Carolina Digital Repository. To access those theses, first go to the Psychology Department's Undergraduate Web pages to find a list of students who have completed senior honors in psychology in prior years. Those lists are available here:

<http://psychology.unc.edu/honors-program/>

Next, log in to the Carolina Digital Repository Website (<https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/admin/>) and enter either the author name or the thesis title of a thesis completed last year. Click on the appropriate links to view or download the thesis.

Critical review: You will write a critical review of an article that you choose. The article should be a current research report (not a literature review or a theoretical article) in your field, but not from your advisor's lab. Choose an article published in a scholarly journal in the last 3 years (2013-2015). You may use an article you have already read for your Honors Project. The review should be 500-750 words and should include a cogent summary of the article (underlying theory; hypotheses or research questions; methods; results; conclusions) as well as your analysis of its strengths and weaknesses with regard to methodology, theoretical contribution, etc. The review should be submitted at the class Sakai site, along with a pdf of the article you reviewed, by 11 p.m. on Sept. 28. The review should strictly adhere to guidelines in the *APA Publication Manual*.

Introduction outline: An outline of your introduction is due Oct. 5. More information about this assignment will be given in class.

Introduction, Method, and Analysis Plan drafts: A draft of your Introduction is due October 19, and a draft of your Method and Analysis Plan is due November 2. These drafts should be polished documents that represent your best effort. You may submit a revised version of these

drafts, using feedback you will receive from a classmate, by November 30. **Include a title page and reference section with each draft.** Carefully adhere to APA style.

Peer review: As mentioned above, you will serve as a peer reviewer of a classmate's written drafts and turn in a written review of his/her work by November 16. I will provide guidelines later in the semester regarding the types of feedback you should provide in this review.

Presentation of your project: During the last month of the semester, each student will present his/her senior research project to the class. Your presentation should include a cogent summary of the theory and prior research that led to your study; a statement of your hypotheses or research questions; a description of the research methods you are employing; and an organized summary of the statistical analyses you will use to test your hypotheses. Prepare Powerpoint slides to accompany your presentation, which will last 10-12 minutes with 3 minutes allowed for questions. I will provide additional guidance regarding these presentations later in the semester.

## **GRADING**

In collaboration with your thesis advisor, I will assign your course grade as follows:

Laboratory work (evaluated by your advisor):	50%
Class participation (including attendance):	10%
Critique of journal article:	5%
Introduction:	10%
Method and Analysis Plan	10%
Peer reviews of drafts of a classmate:	10%
Oral presentation:	5%

## **OTHER EXPECTATIONS**

Please note that all written assignments, including peer reviews, should be submitted at the Sakai site by 11 p.m. on the due dates.

I encourage any student with a learning disability to contact me at the beginning of the semester so that we can make any necessary arrangements for your success in this course.

As in all courses at Carolina, the Honor Code is in effect in this course. Any material (ideas, theory, prior research findings, etc.) that you use in written assignments or in your class presentation must be appropriately referenced, whether the original source is written or verbal. Five or more words taken verbatim from any source must be placed in quotation marks with the source appropriately referenced. Be careful when taking notes from articles and drafting sections of your thesis to avoid inadvertently plagiarizing the work of others. As you prepare drafts of your thesis sections, you are welcome to obtain help from your thesis advisor, your instructor, graduate students, or classmates. However, this work should be primarily your own. Other required work for the class (e.g., peer review and critique of journal article) should be completed independently without help from others. If you have questions about any of these matters, please ask.

Please visit me during my office hours to ask questions about careers or graduate study in psychology, or simply to get acquainted. Also, feel free to email with any questions. If you have other commitments during my set office hours, email to make an appointment at another time.

## **REQUIRED READING**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed., 2nd printing). Washington, DC: Author.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

- 8/24 Introductions; Course overview.
- 8/31 Planning for the year: The nuts and bolts of completing a senior honors thesis in Psychology. **Read a psychology honors thesis from a prior year.**
- 9/7 LABOR DAY—NO CLASS **Schedule of milestones is due.**
- 9/14 Scientific integrity, and ethics of research with human or animal participants. If you have not already done so, **complete the on-line ethics training appropriate for your research.** Read Chapter 1 and pages 70-77 in Chap. 3 of the *APA Publication Manual*.
- 9/21 Characteristics of a successful psychological researcher; what makes a good research study? Successful grant writing. Future directions for psychological research.
- 9/28 Structure of a manuscript; scientific writing. Read Chapter 2 of the *APA Manual*. **Article critique (with pdf of article) is due.**
- 10/5 Writing in APA style. Read pp. 61-70 and 77-86 of Chapter 3 and skim Chapter 4 of the *Manual*. **Outline of Intro is due.**
- 10/12 UNIVERSITY DAY; **CLASS MEETS ON WEDNESDAY THIS WEEK**
- 10/14 Applying to graduate school: Where, when, and how?
- 10/19 Guidelines for peer reviews. Open discussion—any issues you want to raise. **Draft of Introduction (including title page and references) due.**
- 10/26 Strategies for a successful scientific presentation.
- 11/2 Student presentations. **Draft of Method and Analysis Plan due.**
- 11/9 Student presentations.
- 11/16 Student presentations. **Written peer reviews due**
- 11/23 Student presentations.
- 11/30 Writing up your Results. Course evaluations. **Optional rewrite: Revised Introduction, Method, and Analysis Plan with title page and References**

Although I do not anticipate any changes to this syllabus, should any changes be made, you will be informed as soon as possible via email and/or in class.