

Syllabus PSYC 499 (Honor's Thesis)

Instructor information and additional details regarding each section of Psyc 499 is maintained in a file in the Department of Psychology office. All sections of Psyc 499 conform to the expectations below and the guidelines for an Honors Thesis in Psychology posted at <http://psyc.jmu.edu/ug/honorsthesis.html> .

Goals of the Course

Students who complete an Honors Thesis in Psychology will demonstrate that they can effectively:

- analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from primary sources to address psychologically relevant issues.
- develop and conduct a research project.
- write using APA style.
- communicate orally as they plan, conduct and describe their research findings.

Successful completion of honors projects in psychology not only fulfills requirements of the Honors Program, it also fulfills the capstone requirement for the Psychology Major. A thesis project that is not considered complete by the Honors Program will count as credit towards the psychology major, but will not fulfill the capstone course requirement for the psychology major.

Nature of the Course Content

The Honors Thesis is an individualized experience that is developed by each student under the supervision of a faculty member (the honors project advisor). Each student works out their own timeline with their honors project advisor, generally following the guidelines that appear at <http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/undergraduate/honorsthesis.html> for each of the three phases of the course: Psyc 499A, 499B and 499C.

Requirements of the Course

- Write a thesis proposal. The document should include the following sections: Introduction, Method, Data analysis / Expected results, Potential implications, References, Appendices, and IRB / IACUC Protocol
- Orally defend thesis proposal.
- Conduct the thesis research.
- Write the final thesis. The document should include the following sections: Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, References, and Appendices.
- Orally defend the final thesis.

Methods of Evaluation

The honors project advisor (thesis chair) will evaluate your work throughout the process. Your thesis committee members will also evaluate your work. In addition to completing all components of a thesis in a timely manner, you are expected to produce high quality products. If the thesis chair or committee members determine that any of the course products listed above can be improved, they may require you to repeat a requirement until a high-quality product is created. With this mastery approach, it is not uncommon for students to either earn the grade of "A" or withdraw from the process of completing an honors thesis. However, after providing students with feedback about their performance, and time within the enrollment term to complete revisions, the honors project advisor will assign the grade they feel is appropriate for the quality and quantity of work completed.

If a student does not complete Psyc 499 by the time grades are due, the thesis advisor will assign a grade of "I." When the necessary work is completed, the "I" grade will be changed to a letter grade.

Additional Information

- For additional information on the thesis process (including additional details about the thesis, thesis committee membership, ethical principles, and alternative timelines), please see the following link: <http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/undergraduate/honorsthesis.html>
- For additional course information (including section number, semester / year, instructor name), please see the PSYC 499 Registration Request Form you filled out to get approval to enroll in this course.
- For your project advisor's contact information, please see this link: <http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/undergraduate/directory.html>
- Course meeting times will be arranged with your honors project advisor.
- This course also conforms to the course expectations of the university with respect to such matters as academic honesty, adding/dropping courses, disability and religious accommodations and inclement weather as described at <http://www.jmu.edu/syllabus/index.shtml> .