

**Honours Thesis in Psychology
Psychology 4842E
2014-15**

Meetings: Tuesdays 8:30 – 10:30 St. James room 302 (as scheduled below)

Course Coordinator

Dr. Jennifer Sutton

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Office Hours: TBA

Required Text

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition)*. Washington, DC: Author.

Available in the UWO bookstore and from online retailers.

Course Website and Email

On the Owl website, you will find the schedule for 4842E, a list of deadlines, ethics approval forms, and other course-related materials.

Please note that the primary form of contact for thesis students as a group will be email and posting of information on the course website. You **must**, therefore, make sure that your UWO email account is functioning. Not receiving an announcement because your email account is over quota, the message did not forward from your UWO account to a different email address, or because you did not check your email in a timely fashion will **not** be accepted as an excuse for missing a deadline or failure to complete a course responsibility.

You are responsible for checking Owl and your UWO email on a regular basis for information, including dates and times of class meetings, deadlines, format requirements for written and oral work, presentation schedules for the poster session, marks for various assignments, and other course and thesis information.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Design and implement a research study in psychology
- Plan and conduct data analyses appropriate to a study's design and hypotheses
- Present research background and findings in written and oral form appropriate to the field of psychology, and summarize a study in a research poster.

Course Description and Information

All honours psychology students registered in the 4th year of the Honours Specialization in Psychology at Brescia University College take Psychology 4842E. The major focus of this course is on the completion and presentation of an honours thesis research project in psychology. When you are designing your thesis project, you should note that Brescia does not have any funds available to support honours thesis research.

The Honours Thesis

An undergraduate psychology honours thesis is a major research project carried out by a 4th year honours psychology student under the supervision of a qualified psychology advisor (usually a full-time psychology professor). The psychology thesis is to be an empirical project that involves psychological data. It is not a purely theoretical paper, nor just a detailed review of the psychological literature. The student is expected to play a substantive role in all phases of the thesis research project, including conceptualization, preparing materials and methods, data collection and analysis, and write-up. Please note that if a proposed project is unsuitable for an honours psychology thesis, the Brescia Student Research Ethics Review Panel (SRERP), course coordinator and/or your advisor may require modifications or the development of an alternate project that is suitable.

At the end of the academic year you will hand in three copies of your written thesis. After marking, one copy is returned to you, one is kept by your advisor and one is given to the library. An Honours Thesis is considered an archival work; copies of Psychology Honours Theses are kept in the Beryl Ivey Library. Feel free to look at theses from previous years.

Meetings with Your Advisor

It is recommended that you schedule a regular meeting time with your advisor. A regular series of meetings, typically on a weekly basis, will help ensure the timely completion of each major phase of your thesis. To assist you in planning your time, an illustrative schedule for completing the various phases of your thesis project is presented below.

Your thesis advisor will be prepared to offer you help on various thesis-related concerns, such as conceptual and ethical issues, research design considerations, and data analysis and interpretation. During the initial phases of your project, your advisor may also recommend readings associated with your thesis topic. Throughout the year, your advisor will also be prepared to provide you with feedback on written work you may submit for comment. Expect to submit at least one draft of each section of your thesis.

In turn, as a student, you should recognize that there are many other demands on your advisor's time. Thus, you should be well prepared for each meeting with your advisor. As one specific example, you are expected to show initiative in searching for and becoming knowledgeable about the research literature in your thesis domain. As a further illustration, **in order to receive feedback on written work, you should ensure that this work is submitted to your advisor well in advance** (note: one or two days before the due date is not "well in advance") of the due date.

Thesis Class Meetings and Due Dates

Mandatory class meetings will be held Tuesdays in St. James room 302 from 8:30 to 10:30 pm. according to the following schedule.

➤ **Thesis students are expected to attend absolutely all scheduled class meetings. These meetings are not optional.**

Sept 9	Course overview, choosing a project, issues surrounding working with a supervisor, research questions and hypotheses
Sept 16	Ethics discussion (includes format and type of material to include in the Ethics protocol), introduction to participant pool software (SONA)
Oct 21	Ethics Protocol due , writing your Introduction
Nov 18	Introduction due , discussion of Research Proposal posters
Dec TBA	Research Proposal Poster Session (scheduled as an exam) location TBA
HOLIDAY BREAK	
Jan 13	Project progress reports, testing issues
Jan 27	Writing your results section
Feb 24	Results Section due , writing the Discussion section, preparation of the final thesis document
Mar 24	How to present a conference talk, wrap-up
Apr 8 (Wed)	<i>Note: no formal class meeting.</i> Final thesis due by 4pm: 3 pristine copies with no staples or paper clips, each copy in its own off-white file folder
Apr TBA	Thesis Conference. Scheduled during the April examination period by the Registrar's Office

COMPONENTS OF THE 4842E COURSE MARK

1. Ethics Protocol – due October 21

The Ethics Protocol will be reviewed and graded by your advisor and the Coordinator of the Department of Psychology. If there are concerns about ethics approval of the project, the Ethics Protocol will be forwarded for review by the full SRERP. *Please note that protocols can be handed in before this date, and they will be reviewed as soon as possible in order to expedite thesis progress.*

The Ethics Protocol consists of your research question, hypothesis(es), and a brief description of the procedural aspects of your proposed thesis study, followed by a copy of all materials to be used in the study. The ethics proposal is not a literature review - that comes later in the Introduction section. The format and type of material required in this protocol will be discussed in class. All students are required to hand in an Ethics Protocol even if the project has been approved by other ethics review boards. The Ethics Protocol **must** be approved prior to any data collection. It is a serious offense to involve participants in research that has not received ethics approval. The completed ethics protocol is worth 5% of your final grade in the course.

In addition, note the following from the Brescia SRERP guidelines (2006):

Instructors are responsible for ensuring that students planning to conduct research on human subjects are well informed about ethical guidelines for conducting such research. **All students must complete the online tutorial on ethics of the Tri-Council (found at: <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial/>).** **Students must submit to the instructor the tutorial certificate that they can print out at the end of their online session.** Note: the tutorial need only be taken once. If taking the tutorial is a requirement for several courses, the student will then submit copies of their certificate to the different course instructors.

A copy of your tutorial certificate must be submitted before ethics for your study can be approved.

Some studies may require a more complicated process for ethical approval, especially if they involve any form of deception or the use of special populations (e.g., children). If a more complicated ethical review is required, expect it to take longer to receive ethics approval.

With respect to **deception**, the guidelines used by the UWO Research Ethics Board for Non-medical research involving humans subjects (NMREB: 2002, page 3) state that, Under most circumstances, the NMREB will follow the principle that no deception should be involved in research. Therefore, if the research involves the practice of deception where participants are purposely misled as part of the research project, it must be justified as important and as the only alternative. Further there should be no foreseeable risk of harm or potential for the perception of harm or embarrassment by the subject and there must be a full explanation and “debriefing” soon after completion of the experiment.

Thus, you should carefully note that any proposed study involving deception may result in a more complicated and time-consuming ethical approval procedure.

2. Preliminary Written Thesis Introduction – due November 18

The preliminary Introduction will be graded by the thesis course coordinator (Dr. Sutton). This paper is worth 15% of your final grade in the course. We will review the type of material that should be included in the Introduction, and its organization, in class.

3. Research Proposal Poster Session – December exam period

Students will present their research proposal in poster form. The Research Proposal Poster will include sections on the Introduction, Methods, Statistical Analyses to be used and Expected Results. Details regarding poster preparation will be given in class. The location of the poster session is yet to be finalized, but in past years we have used the foyer next to the library. Posters will be graded by your thesis advisor and a second reader (another professor assigned by Dr. Sutton), with their averaged marks contributing 15% to the final grade in the course. The poster session will give each student an opportunity to talk to and gain feedback from others regarding her project, and also to meet her second reader, prior to handing in the final written thesis.

The Research Proposal Session is open to everyone at Brescia. This session will be announced in psychology classes and through various communication tools at Brescia.

It is also open to other Brescia faculty, and you are welcome to invite friends and family to view your poster.

4. Results Section – due February 24

In late February, students will turn in a preliminary Results section, including tables and figures formatted as in the final thesis. General feedback will be provided by the course coordinator to help you improve this section for your final thesis. The Results section assignment is worth 5% of your course mark.

5. Written Thesis – due April 8

The final version of the thesis is to be handed into a designated location (announced in class) on the last day of classes (April 8) by 4pm. There will be a class meeting to review the format and type of material to be included in the final thesis document. You will submit three perfect copies ready for binding, without staples or paperclips. Each copy should be placed in its own manila (i.e., neutral-colored) file folder. Include in your Appendices only necessary materials. Figures and tables should be inserted in the body of the thesis, paginated in sequence, following the page where they are first mentioned. Consult *the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for details of references and headings, as well as for writing style. Brescia University College will bind three copies of your thesis. These will be distributed after grading to your thesis advisor and the Beryl Ivey Library.

Students **must** follow relevant sections in *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2009; 6th Ed.) when preparing all course work, including the preliminary introduction, the Ethics Protocol and the final written thesis.

Your thesis will be evaluated and marked by your advisor and second reader. Your advisor and second reader will each assign a mark out of 20 for your thesis, and your advisor will assign an additional mark out of 10 that will reflect your initiative, effort and conscientiousness in working on and completing your thesis over the course of the year. These marks will be summed to give the mark out of 50 that the thesis contributes to your grade in the course.

It is very important that you submit your thesis copies on time so that they can be bound and graded in a timely manner. Late penalties will be applied; the late penalty is 10% per day late and the submission is not accepted if it is more than 5 days late (mark of 0 assigned; see Late Penalties section, below).

6. Thesis Conference – April exam period

A Thesis Conference will be held during the final examination period as scheduled by the Registrar's Office. The Thesis Conference will be conducted in a manner similar to a real scientific conference. Students will present a short talk (10 - 12 minutes) summarizing their thesis project followed by an opportunity for questions and discussion (3 - 5 minutes). All thesis students are expected to attend and participate in the entire Thesis Conference. The Thesis Conference is public so that others, such as friends, family, other faculty and other psychology students, can attend. The Thesis Conference provides an opportunity for you to gain experience in communicating your research in the manner used at scientific conferences and provides an opportunity for you to hear about the research conducted by your colleagues. Your Thesis Conference

presentation is worth 15% of your course grade with the marks assigned by your advisor and second reader averaged.

Summary of Assignments, Weight, and Due Dates

Component	Weight	Due Date
Ethics Protocol	5%	Oct 21 (in class)
Thesis Introduction	10%	Nov 18 (in class)
Research Proposal Poster	15%	Dec TBA
Results Section	5%	Feb 24 (in class)
Thesis	50%	Apr 8
Thesis Conference Presentation	15%	April Final exam period, TBA.

Completion of All Assignments

The assignments in this course are sequential and build upon each other. Accordingly, it is expected that students will complete each on time and in the proper sequence.

Late Penalties

Please note that all assignments must be completed by their due date. The registrar's office closes promptly at 4:00 pm; hence, any material submitted after 4:00 pm will be considered late and dated the following morning. Assignments that are due at a class meeting (ethics and Introduction) are due at the beginning of the meeting (1:30pm).

There are no extensions of any due dates in this course.

Accordingly, late penalties will be assessed for any course component not submitted on time. If you miss a deadline, ten percent (10%) of the worth of that assignment will be deducted for each day late, and if it is more than 5 days late it will not be accepted and a mark of zero (0%) will be assigned. Specifically:

For work due at the beginning of a class meeting that is submitted:

After class on Tuesday = -10%

Wednesday = -20%

Thursday = -30%

Friday = -40%

Monday following due date or later = not accepted, mark of 0 assigned

For the final written thesis due by 4pm Wednesday April 8:

After 4pm Wednesday and all day Thursday = -10%

Friday = -20%

Monday = -50% (weekends count as 2 days!)

Tuesday or later = not accepted, mark of 0 assigned

For academic accommodation to be considered for any course component, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the course coordinator and her academic advisor before or on due date or as soon thereafter as possible. **Documentation is required for all accommodation requests in this course and should be submitted to the academic advisor.**

Illustrative Schedule for Thesis Completion

1. Complete initial work on thesis topic: Early to mid Sept
2. Conceptualization of research question and hypotheses: By late Sept
3. Research methodology and ethics documents: Early-mid Oct; Ethics Protocol due Oct 21
4. Literature review, write Introduction: Late Oct/early Nov; Introduction due Nov 18
6. Preparation of Research Proposal poster: late Nov – early Dec; Research Proposal session in Dec exam period TBD
7. Data collection: Nov, Dec, Jan, Feb as required; should be completed by early Feb
8. Write methods section (do this while you are still running your study)
9. Data analysis & Results section: February, Results section due Feb 24
10. Thesis write-up: March; completed thesis due Apr. 8. Expect to submit multiple drafts to your advisor as you refine your thesis. Your advisor will require reasonable turn-around time to review and comment on thesis drafts.
Note: one or two days before the due date is not sufficient time for your advisor to offer you substantive feedback. Establish a time to submit for feedback early on in the process and stick to it.
11. Thesis Conference talk: April during exam period, date TBA.

Note: The above illustrative schedule provides a general guide for completion dates. Your thesis project may vary somewhat. As such, you may wish to establish with your advisor a specific timetable for completing each major phase of your thesis. When scheduling your project, you should note that some studies may require a more complicated process for ethical approval, especially if they involve any form of deception or the use of special populations (e.g., children). If a more complicated ethical review is required, expect it to take longer to receive ethics approval. If you require participants with specific characteristics expect it to take longer to recruit your sample.

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website:

<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> . If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill” is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html. The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm>. The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwo.com/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.