
Ψ Department of Psychology Ψ Honors in Psychology Handbook

Honors in Psychology is offered to highly motivated students who want to complete an in-depth scholarly project in a mentoring relationship with a faculty member. We offer graduation with honors in psychology to recognize outstanding achievement and contributions above the standard requirements for the major. The scholarly activities involved in achieving honors in psychology provide additional preparation for graduate-level study in psychology.

Ψ Honors in Psychology

Working toward Honors in Psychology affords students a unique opportunity to design and carry out original research under the close supervision of a faculty member. It is designed for students who have a fairly good idea of a specific area of interest, would enjoy delving into that topic and thinking creatively about it, and are able to work well on their own (with some supervision, of course). Students are invited to apply for Honors in Psychology when they have demonstrated strong academic achievement in their courses (see eligibility requirements). If you are not sure whether you should apply to earn Honors, please talk with your academic advisor, a member of the Honors and Student Research Committee, and/or any other trusted faculty member.

January 2008

Ψ In the Beginning

Selecting a topic. Begin with a topic that you are passionate about. Your topic may be something that you are simply curious about, or something you “always” choose to investigate in courses that allow you to choose topics. Your topic may be an extension of a project started in a psychology department course (e.g., PSY290, PSY40x, or HDV400).

Selecting a faculty sponsor. Students must work with a faculty sponsor who is willing to supervise their project. Factors to consider when selecting a sponsor include: the faculty member’s area of expertise (content, methods; see the departmental handbook for descriptions of faculty research interests); faculty availability, and faculty interest (in your topic). You should also consider whether this faculty member is someone with whom you are likely to feel comfortable and with whom you can work effectively. Students may select a second faculty member to provide additional expertise to the project.

- A good approach when seeking a faculty sponsor is to have an idea of what you want to do, then meet with the faculty member and present your idea.
- Just because your topic does not match a faculty member’s specific expertise does not mean that she or he will not work with you. Faculty members can and do supervise projects that are outside of their own research interests, as long as it is a topic with which they have some familiarity.

Once you have found a faculty member who is willing to supervise your project, meet with that person to set up a schedule of regular appointments. Make sure that you both have a clear understanding of expectations.

Ψ Types of Projects

Topics can range from independent research (experimental, correlational, or qualitative) to a program evaluation to a detailed, critical analysis of literature. The scholarship must exceed in both depth and breadth the scope of a typical research paper for a class. The Honors and Student Research Committee recommends that each student work with her or his faculty sponsor to refine the original idea into the type of project most appropriate to the topic that meets the student's interests and meets the goals of honors in psychology.

Ψ Models of Projects

The best models of projects are those published in the primary literature in the field of study. However, the scope of published work often exceeds the scope of what is expected of undergraduate students. Several models of Honors theses by previous students are available for review in the Psychology Department Office. These are successful theses produced by students in previous years. It is also important to familiarize yourself with the standards that will be used to evaluate and approve all thesis projects. These standards are available in the Psychology Office and on the Department website.

Ψ Structure and Guidelines

Eligibility requirements

- Students must earn a grade of "B" or better in both PSY280 and PSY290.
- Students must have an overall GPA of 3.4 or higher and an in-major (Psy/HDV) GPA of 3.5 to graduate with honors.
- Students must have a committee of at least one full-time, tenured or tenure-track, SUNY Oswego Psychology Department faculty member.

Application process

During the academic year, applications will be reviewed by the Honors and Student Research Committee and returned to the student within 2 business weeks of submission. Students should contact any member of the Honors and Research Committee if they have any questions about their application. The application contains the following documents:

- Application form to the Honors and Student Research Committee (use the form at the end of this handbook, or obtain from the Department Office).
- Student's personal statement describing her or his professional goals and aptitude for scholarly work.
- Letter of support from a faculty sponsor who will supervise the work. This letter should describe the general area of research and the student's qualifications.
- Letter of support for pursuing Honors from a second faculty member.

Proposal process

The Honors and Student Research Committee (HSRC) will review all honors thesis projects at the proposal stage. It will work closely with the student and faculty sponsor to guarantee that the proposed project will meet the established standards for conferral of Honors in Psychology. A written proposal will be submitted to the Honors and Student Research Committee that includes a statement of the problem, literature review, and methods section. Within 15 business days of receipt of the proposal, the Committee will provide a written review and if necessary schedule a meeting with the student and faculty sponsor to review possible revisions. The Board will consider up to three revisions as part of the review and approval process.

Coursework

- Students are expected to complete at least 6sh of PSY490H.
- Students must also enroll in and complete PSY475H during the fall semester of their senior year.

Maintaining your standing in working toward Honors in Psychology

To remain in Honors, students must maintain the GPA requirements, make substantive progress on their project, meet their faculty sponsor's expectations and requirements, and maintain their academic advisor's approval to remain in Honors.

Completion process

- When the student and the student's committee consider the project complete, it should be submitted to the HSRC. The HSRC committee will review the project within 2 business weeks and 1) identify it as sufficient, or 2) ask for revisions. A project may be deemed insufficient if still incomplete or unsatisfactory at the time of graduation.
- Only students whose projects are identified as sufficient will graduate with Honors.
- Projects must be submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the last class day of the semester. Projects will not be accepted after this date.
- Students must present their work in a "public" venue. Acceptable venues include poster and paper presentations at professional conferences, paper presentations at Quest, or Psychology Department colloquia.

Ψ Sample Time Frames: *Please keep in mind that these are examples.*

4 semester empirical project:

- 1st semester:** identify idea; recruit faculty sponsor; develop idea by reading literature and writing introduction; submit application for Honors
- 2nd semester:** refine introduction; prepare literature review and choose methods; submit proposal to the HRSC; take PSY490H (2 credits); submit protocol to Human Subjects committee at end of semester
- 3rd semester:** recruit sample and collect data; enter data; take PSY490H (2 credits); take PSY475H
- 4th semester:** analyze data; write results & discussion sections; submit thesis to HSR Committee; present research; take PSY490H (2 credits)

2 semester project: for example, an extension of PSY40x or HDV400 project. *Note: In order to register for PSY475H in the Fall, a student must have selected a faculty sponsor, applied for Honors and been accepted the previous Spring term.*

1st semester (Fall): develop a project from previous course such as PSY40x or HDV400; prepare literature review and choose methods; submit proposal to HSRC; submit protocol to Human Subjects Committee; take PSY490H (3 credits); take PSY475H

2nd semester (Spring): collect and analyze data; write discussion; submit thesis to HSRC; present research; take PSY490H (3 credits)

Ψ Honors in Psychology Application Form

Please print the following information:

Name: _____

Year in college: _____

Major(s): _____

Current Overall GPA: _____

Minor: _____

Anticipated graduation date: _____

Course/Semester taken Instructor / Grade

PSY280 _____ / _____

PSY290 _____ / _____

Faculty sponsor: (please print name)

Advisor's Signature: _____

Student's signature: _____

Date of Signature: _____

Proposed topic:

Ψ Additional documents:

1. Students must also attach a short statement (approximately 1 page typed) explaining: (a) why they are interested in achieving Honors in Psychology, (b) their professional goals and (c) why they believe that they are an appropriate candidate for earning Honors.
2. Two statements of support from Department faculty. One must be from the Faculty sponsor and the other letter must be from a faculty member who supports your application.

This form, your personal statement, and letters of support from two faculty members must be submitted together to the Honors and Student Research Committee Chairperson (Dr. Bacher is Chairperson for the academic year, 2007-08).

