Psych 499 A-B-C
Orientation meeting
Friday May 5, 2017
Today’s Session

- **REG Coordinator & Ethics Administrator**
  - Michelle Manios, PAS 3013, regadmin@uwaterloo.ca

- **Psych 499 Coordinator**
  - Richard Eibach, PAS 3053, reibach@uwaterloo.ca
General Remarks

The Honours Thesis is a unique opportunity

- apprenticeship in how to conduct research from developing a hypothesis through to writing an empirical paper
- individual interaction and collaboration with faculty member and graduate students
- capstone experience for undergraduate honours degree
- essential preparation for graduate studies
• **Finding Information on Psych Dept. Webpage**
  – Current Undergrad Students
    • Courses
      – Psych 499 A/B/C
• **Information on:**
  – Honours thesis handbook (updated)
  – Orientation meetings
  – Deadlines & Important dates
  – Oral Presentation Schedule
  – Contact information
  – And more….. (e.g., where to find a sample thesis)
Agenda

- Supervisors
- Course format
- Common problems
- Additional opportunities
Finding a supervisor

- Contact faculty members after you’ve enrolled in Psych 499A
- You might have to ask several different profs
- Ordinarily, make email contact first with:
  - Unofficial transcript
  - Statement of interest (why do you want to work with this particular faculty member)
  - What terms you hope to enroll in Psych 499A/B/C
  - Request an appointment to meet in person
• **Selecting a thesis topic**
  
  – Consider an on-going project in the faculty member’s lab or suggest an idea of your own

  – **If suggesting your own topic,**
    
    • Be prepared to explain why this topic interests you
    
    • What you’ve already read on this topic
    
    • Topic needs to be narrow enough to develop a clear research question and specific, testable hypotheses
• **Supervision styles**
  
  – Some are structured, others less so
  
  – Up to you to establish and maintain regular contact with supervisor
  
  – Plan accordingly if supervisor is going on sabbatical
  
  – Be sure to clarify and manage expectations
    
    • How often will you check in (virtually or f-to-f)?
    • Level of independence expected
    • Deadlines
• Supervisors are useful to you beyond the thesis
  – Letters of reference
  – Information about:
    • applying for scholarships
    • applying to grad programs
Course Format

- Psych 499 enrollment requires a Psych cumulative average of 82%

- Only contact potential supervisors when you’re officially enrolled in 499A
Course Format

• **There are 3 components:**
  – 499A: literature review, research question(s), & thesis reviewer nominations
  – 499B: research design, proposal, & presentation
  – 499C: data collection, analysis, & final write-up

• **Psych 499 can take 2 to 5 terms**
  – Many students complete in 2 terms (499A/B in term 1, 499C in term 2)
  – Up to 5 terms might be necessary for coop students

• **Be flexible**
• **Registering for 499A vs. 499A&B**
  • Email name of thesis supervisor by **May 10** to Nadine Quehl: nquehl@uwaterloo.ca

• **499A only** –
  ➢ Submit **progress report** to Richard Eibach’s mailbox by noon on **August 11th**
  ➢ Email Thesis reviewer nominations to Richard (reibach@uwaterloo.ca) by **July 25th**
  ➢ Complete your presentation the following term
- **499A&B** –
  - Email Thesis reviewer nominations to Richard (reibach@uwaterloo.ca) by May 11th
  - If you COMPLETE 499B, then you do NOT need to hand in 499A progress report
  - If you do not complete 499B even though registered for it, you MUST complete progress report
  - TIP: book 499B presentation slot early!

• At the end of **499C** you will submit your final thesis
Thesis reviewer nominations

- Email the following to Richard, reibach@uwaterloo.ca
  - brief description of thesis topic (approx. 50 words)
  - names of 3 faculty members who you’re nominating as reviewer

Richard will contact faculty members to find out if they’re available

Reviewer responsibilities:

- read and attend 499B proposal presentation and provide feedback
- read 499C thesis paper
- help assign final grade
• **Progress Report 499A**
  - 5-10 pages
  - General statement about research area
  - A brief description of relevant literature
  - The research question
  - Outline of further steps
• **Research Proposal 499B**
  – Due 2 business days before your oral presentation date (Thurs 4:30pm for a Tues presentation)
  – 10-15 pages
  – Title, Abstract
  – Concise background literature & clear statement of research questions/hypotheses
  – Method (measures/experimental procedures)
  – Expected Results
    • Plans for data analysis & Proposed timeline to complete project
  – Approved by supervisor (signed) and submitted to mailbox of your thesis reviewer
Oral presentation for 499B
- 50 min; talk 20-25 min; remainder for discussion
- Use PowerPoint; Practice in advance
- Explain your rationale, purpose, methods, and hypotheses
- Not formally graded
- Reviewer will ask general questions, probe your knowledge, make suggestions
- Attend other students’ presentations to familiarize yourself with format

(Note: Oral presentation before data collection)
Course Issues

• 499C
  – Ethics approval (or end of 499B)
  – Data collection
  – Analysis
  – Write up (more on next slide)
Final thesis paper

- **Final Report 499C**
  - Due by **August 14th**
  - 20-30 pages
  - Title, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review & Hypotheses, Method, Results, General Discussion, References, Tables & Figures, Appendices
  - Submit an electronic version to Nadine Quehl: nquehl@uwaterloo.ca
  - Graded by Supervisor who comments and suggests a grade range, and 499 Reviewer, who comments and assigns final grade
    - same grade applied retroactively to 499A/B/C
Common Problems

• Don’t allow enough time for:
  – ethics clearance
  – data collection
  – data analysis
  – writing multiple drafts of the final product

• Final product is not APA format or is missing:
  – abstract
  – introduction/overview before literature review
  – clear and specific statement of hypotheses
  – writing for a general psych audience
You are responsible for following research integrity standards and university policies

- Information/resources about responsible research conduct, FAQs etc.
- https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-integrity/training-and-resources
See **Research Integrity Tab** on Office of Research Ethics’ Website for:

- Research Integrity Framework
- Frequently Asked questions
- **Highly recommended**: CITI Canada’s free, online course provides valuable RCR training that you can access with your UW email:
  - [https://www.citiprogram.org/index.cfm?pageID=265](https://www.citiprogram.org/index.cfm?pageID=265)
- Review UW’s Graduate academic integrity module
  - Useful information about properly identifying sources, collaborating with integrity, honestly recording/reporting findings
    - [https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/graduate-students-and-academic-integrity](https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/graduate-students-and-academic-integrity)
Conference Opportunity

• **Ontario Undergraduate Psychology Thesis Conference**
  – an informal forum for students in Ontario to present a summary of their theses
  – either orally or in poster format
  – to a friendly and enthusiastic audience of peers and to discuss your work with others who have similar interests

• **Typically end of April or early May (abstract due earlier)**

• **No registration fee for presenters or faculty members and lunch is provided**

• **Opportunity to network with Psychology students and faculty at other universities**

• **Participants report that the event is very worthwhile and enjoyable**

• **Looks great on graduate school applications**
Who Can Answer Questions

- **Nadine Quehl, Psych 499 course administrator**
  - Paperwork (enrolment, extensions, etc.)
  - Scheduling 499B presentation
  - Email: nquehl@uwaterloo.ca

- **Richard Eibach, Thesis Coordinator**
  - Should I be taking the thesis?
  - Issues with your supervisor
  - Email: reibach@uwaterloo.ca

- **Your thesis supervisor**
  - Research question & literature, designing your study, analyzing data, writing final product
• **Thesis Awards**
  
  – Recognize exceptional performance throughout all stages of the thesis project
  
  – Awarded annually in June for theses completed the prior three terms
  
  – Nominated by Supervisor
2–Minute Thesis Option

• **Consider creating a short "video snapshot" of your work.**
  – Great way to tell others about your thesis & your experience at UW
  – Create a 1-2 min. video where you explain what you researched and what you found out
  – Use a smartphone or Department’s video camera

• **Logistics**
  – Make your video after you submit 499C paper (within 2 weeks please)
  – You are responsible for emailing your video to Nadine Quehl (nquehl@uwaterloo.ca)
  – We will review, upload to the Psych Dept. website, and let you know when you can share the link with others

• **Note: Completing a video is optional**
  – Whether or not you choose to capture your thesis on video will in no way affect your grade in PSYCH 499 or eligibility for thesis awards