Psych 499 A-B-C
Orientation meeting
Tuesday May 3, 2016
Today’s Session

• Psychology Library Liaison
  – Tim Ireland, tireland@library.uwaterloo.ca

• REG Coordinator & Ethics Administrator
  – Michelle Manios, PAS 3013, regadmin@uwaterloo.ca

• Psych 499 Coordinator
  – Richard Eibach, PAS 3053, reibach@uwaterloo.ca
• **The Honours Thesis is a unique opportunity**
  
  – apprenticeship in how to conduct research
  
  – including how to: formulate a hypothesis, design a study, collect data, and analyze and write up the results
  
  – individual interaction/collaboration with faculty member and graduate students
  
  – capstone experience for honours degree
  
  – essential preparation for graduate studies
General Remarks

• Finding Information on Psych Dept. Webpage
  – Current Undergrad Students
    • Courses
      – Psych 499 A/B/C

• Information on:
  – Honours thesis handbook
  – Deadlines & Important dates
  – Oral Presentation Schedule
  – Contact information
  – And more….. (e.g., where to find sample thesis)
Agenda

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

- Contact faculty members after you’ve enroled 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 enrol in Psych 499A/B/C
  - Request appointment to meet in person
Selecting a thesis topic

- Consider an on-going project in the faculty member’s lab or suggesting 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
- Plan accordingly if your 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 graduate programs
• Psych 499 enrolment requires a Psych cumulative average of 82%

• Only contact potential supervisors after you are 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 the thesis in 2 terms (499A/B in term 1, 499C in term 2)
  - But up to 5 terms might be necessary for coop

- **Be flexible**
• **Registering for 499A & 499A&B**

• Email the name of your thesis supervisor by May 11 to Ayala Stein: aystein@uwaterloo.ca

  ▪ **499A only** –

    ➢ Submit a progress report to Richard Eibach’s mailbox by noon on Friday, Aug. 12

    ➢ Email Thesis reviewer nominations to Richard Eibach (reibach@uwaterloo.ca) by Saturday, August 13

    ➢ You will complete your presentation the following term
Course Format

- **499A&B** –
  - Thesis reviewer nominations due by **May 11**
  - If you do not complete 499B even though registered for it, you MUST complete 499A progress report
  - If you COMPLETE 499B, then you do NOT need to hand in 499A progress report
  - TIP: book your 499B presentation slot early!

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

– Due by **May 11** if enrolled in 499A/B, or **Aug. 13** if just 499A

– Email the following to Richard Eibach, reibach@uwaterloo.ca
  
  – brief description of thesis topic (approx. 50 words)

  – names of 3 faculty members who you’re nominating as your reviewer

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

– **Reviewer will:**
  
  – read and attend 499B proposal presentation and provide feedback

  – read 499C thesis paper

  – help assign final grade
Progress reports

- **Progress Report 499A**
  - 5-10 pages
  - General statement about research area
  - A brief description of relevant literature
  - The research question (might not yet be fully formulated)
  - Outline of further steps
  - Approved by supervisor (need signature) and submitted to Richard Eibach’s mailbox by Friday, August 12 at noon
Research Proposal 499B

- Due 2 business days prior to your presentation date (e.g., Thurs 4:30 pm for a Tues oral)
- 10-15 pages
- Title, Abstract
- Concise background literature review & 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 some in advance to familiarize

(Note: Oral presentation before data collection)
• 499C

  – Ethics approval (or end of 499B)
  – Data collection
  – Analysis
  – Write up (more on next slide)
Due by August 13
20-30 pages
Title, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review & Hypotheses, Method, Results, General Discussion, References, Tables & Figures, Appendices
Submit an electronic version and print copy to Ayala Stein: aystein@uwaterloo.ca
Graded by the 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
• Reminder:
  - Lots to do in each phase, so don’t fall behind
  - Keep supervisor apprised of your progress and check in with them regularly
You are responsible for following research integrity standards and university policies

- Strongly recommend that you review UW’s Graduate academic integrity module
- Module provides useful information about properly identifying sources, collaborating with integrity, and honestly recording and reporting research 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)
- Further UW information/resources about responsible research conduct:
  - [https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-integrity/training-and-resources](https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-integrity/training-and-resources)
• **What do I do if I can’t enrol in Psych 499A because my average isn’t high enough?**
  
  – If close to required average, submit a 499A application to Ayala Stein

• **What do I do if I can’t find a supervisor?**
  
  – Approach faculty with a targeted request. Ask faculty members for ideas. Consult with 499 Coordinator (Richard).
Common Mistakes

• **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
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**
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 Ayala Stein (aystein@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
Who Can Answer Questions

- **Ayala Stein, Psych Undergrad Assistant**
  - Paperwork (enrolment, extensions, etc.)
  - Scheduling 499B presentation
  - Email: aystein@uwaterloo.ca

- **Richard Eibach, Thesis Coordinator**
  - Should I be taking the thesis course?
  - 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 at June Convocation for theses completed the prior three terms
  
  – Nominated by Supervisor