Psych 499 A-B-C
Orientation meeting
Tuesday Sep. 15th, 2015

University of Waterloo
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
  – Fall 2015-Spring 2016: Richard, PAS 3053, reibach@uwaterloo.ca
General Remarks

• **The Honours Thesis is a unique opportunity**
  
  – apprenticeship in how to conduct research from inception to completion
  
  – 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 mistakes
• Additional opportunities
• Finding a supervisor
  – Contact faculty members after you have 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 suggesting an idea of your own

- If suggesting your own topic,
  
  • Be prepared to explain why this topic interests you
  
  • What you have 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 your supervisor
  – 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
    • Due dates
Supervisors are useful to you beyond the thesis

- Letters of reference
- Information about:
  - applying for scholarships
  - applying to graduate programs
• Psych 499 enrollment requires a Psych cumulative average of 82%

• Only when you are officially enrolled in 499A can you contact potential supervisors
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 students

**Be flexible**
Registering for 499A vs. 499A&B

- **499A only** –
  - You will submit thesis reviewer nominations by Dec. 4 and a progress report by Dec. 22
  - You will complete your presentation the following term

- **499A&B** –
  - Thesis reviewer nominations due by October 2
  - If you do not complete 499B even though registered for it, you MUST complete 499A progress report
  - If you DO 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**
Course Issues

- **Thesis reviewer nominations 499A**
  - due by October 2 if enrolled in 499A&B, Dec. 4 if 499A
  - email 3 names of faculty members
  - brief (approx. 50 wds) description of thesis topic

- **Thesis coordinator will contact faculty members to find out if they are available to serve as the reviewer**

- **Reviewer will:**
  - read and attend 499B proposal presentation and provide feedback
  - read 499C thesis paper
  - help assign final grade
Course Issues

- **Progress Report 499A**
  - due by end of examination period
  - 5-10 pages
  - General statement about research area
  - A brief description of relevant literature
  - The research question
  - Outline of further steps
  - Approved by supervisor (need signature) and submitted to course coordinator
• **Research Proposal 499B**
  – Due 2 business days prior to your presentation date (Thurs 4:30 pm for a Tues oral)
  – 10-15 pages
  – Title, Abstract
  – Concise background literature & clear statement of research question(s)/hypotheses
  – Method (measures/experimental procedures)
  – Expected Results
    • Plans for data analysis & Proposed timeline to complete project
  – Approved by supervisor (signed) and submitted to 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)*
Course Issues

- *499C*
  - Ethics approval (or end of 499B)
  - Data collection
  - Analysis
  - Write up (more on next slide)
Course Issues

• **Final Report 499C**
  – Due by the end of examination period
  – 20-30 pages
  – Title, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review & Hypotheses, Method, Results, General Discussion, References, Tables & Figures, Appendices
  – Submitted to Theresa Bauer
  – 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
Course Issues

• Reminder:

  ➢ Lots to do in each phase, so don’t fall behind
• **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
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
  - Further UW information/resources about responsible research conduct:
    - https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-integrity/training-and-resources
• I can’t enroll in Psych 499A because average isn’t high enough.
  – If close to required average, submit a 499A application to Theresa Bauer

• I can’t find a supervisor.
  – Approach faculty with a targeted request. Ask faculty members for ideas. Consult with 499 Coordinator.
• **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 in March)**
  - 2016: Wilfrid Laurier University

- **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 Theresa Bauer *(tbauer@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

- Emily Mininger (in Sept), Theresa Bauer (after Sept), Psych Undergrad Assistant
  - Paperwork (enrolment, extensions, etc.)
  - Scheduling 499B presentation

- Richard Eibach, Thesis Coordinator
  - Should I be taking the thesis?
  - Issues with your supervisor

- Your thesis supervisor
  - Research question & literature, designing your study, analyzing data, writing final product