

Psych 499 - Honours Thesis Orientation meeting

Wednesday, January 11, 2023



University of
Waterloo



General Remarks

The Honours Thesis is a unique opportunity

- capstone experience for undergrad research intensive degree
- experience all of the stages of a psychology research project from developing a hypothesis to writing an empirical paper
- individual interaction/collaboration with faculty member & graduate students
- essential preparation for graduate studies

General Remarks

Finding Information on Psych Dept. Webpage

INFORMATION FOR

- Undergraduate Students
 - Courses
 - Honours Thesis (Psych 499)

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

- Course enrolment
- Supervisors
- Course format/tasks
- Common problems
- Additional opportunities

PSYCH 499A enrollment

Psych ave. of 82%, plus completion of

- ▶ PSYCH 391
- ▶ one of: PSYCH 389/390; (or PSYCH 392-399, 483, 484)

Finding a supervisor

You might have to ask several different profs

Ordinarily, first make email contact with:

- 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
- Unofficial transcript
- Request to meet to discuss further

Supervisors

Selecting a thesis topic

- Consider an on-going project in faculty member's lab or suggest a topic of your own
- If suggesting your own topic be prepared to explain...
 - why this topic interests you
 - what you already know about the topic
- Note: topic needs to be narrow enough to develop a clear research question and specific, testable hypotheses

Supervisor styles

- Some are structured, others less so
- Up to you to establish & maintain regular contact
- Plan accordingly if supervisor is going on sabbatical
- Be sure to clarify & manage expectations
 - How often will you check in & how?
 - Level of independence expected
 - Deadlines

Supervisors

Supervisors are useful to you beyond the thesis

- Letters of reference
- Information about:
 - applying for scholarships
 - applying to grad programs

Thesis reviewer

Reviewer responsibilities:

- ▶ read research proposal, attend 499B presentation, and provide feedback
- ▶ read final thesis paper
- ▶ help assign final grade

Thesis reviewer nominations Email the following to Richard, reibach@uwaterloo.ca Richard and Claudia clabahn@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

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)
- Or may extend across 5 terms for some coop students

Be flexible

Course tasks

By **Wednesday, January 18th** email the name of your thesis supervisor to Claudia Labahn: **clabahn@uwaterloo.ca**

If taking 499A alone first

- ▶ Email progress report to Richard Eibach by **April 28th**
- ▶ Email Thesis reviewer nominations to Richard (reibach@uwaterloo.ca) and Claudia (clabahn@uwaterloo.ca) **by April 28th**
- ▶ Complete your presentation in PSYCH 499B term

PSYCH 499A progress report

- 5-10 pages
- General statement about research area
- Brief description of relevant literature
- Research question
- Outline of further steps

Course tasks

If taking 499A&B concurrently

- ▶ Email Thesis Reviewer nominations to Richard (reibach@uwaterloo.ca) and Claudia (clabahn@uwaterloo.ca) by **Friday, January 27**
- ▶ If you COMPLETE 499B, then you do NOT need to submit 499A progress report
- ▶ If you do not complete 499B, you must complete progress report (follow PSYCH 499A only schedule)

PSYCH 499B Research proposal

- Due 2 business days before oral presentation date (e.g., Thurs. 4:30pm for a Tues. presentation)
- 10-15 pages, APA format
- Title Page, Abstract
- Concise background literature review & clear statement of research questions/hypotheses
- Method (measures/experimental procedures)
- Expected results & data analysis plan
- Proposed timeline to complete project
- Approved by supervisor and emailed to your thesis reviewer

Oral presentation

Oral presentation for 499B

- 50 min; present research design for 20-25 min; remainder for questions & discussion
- PowerPoint format
- Explain rationale, purpose, hypotheses, methods, & analysis plan
- Not formally graded
- Reviewer will ask general questions, probe your knowledge, make suggestions
- Practice in advance

(Note: Presentation before data collection)

PSYCH 499C tasks

- Before enrolling in 499C complete research integrity training module
 - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Canada Education Program - Responsible Conduct of Research
- Ethics approval (or end of 499B)
- Data collection
- Analysis
- Write up (more on next slide)

Responsible Research Conduct

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>

Responsible Research Conduct

Free training available to anyone with a UW email address

<https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-integrity/training-and-resources>

Take the training module on:

- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Canada Education Program - Responsible Conduct of Research
- Should complete this training before enrolment in PSYCH 499C

Final PSYCH 499C thesis paper

- 20-30 pages
- Title, Abstract, Intro, Lit. Review & Hypotheses, Method, Results, Gen. Discussion, Refs, Tables & Figures, Appendices
- Submit electronic version to Claudia Labahn:
clabahn@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 lacks one of these key components:

- abstract
- **introduction/overview before** literature review
- clear and specific statement of **hypotheses**
- writing for a **general** psych audience

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

Who Can Answer Questions

Claudia Labahn, Psych 499 course administrator

- Enrolment, extensions, etc.
- Scheduling 499B presentation
- Email: **clabahn@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

Responsible Research Conduct

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>