

Student Guidelines for Obtaining Honors in Psychology

Requirements for Departmental Honors in Psychology

To receive departmental honors in psychology a student must:

- complete all requirements for the psychology major,
- successfully complete a senior honors thesis,
- have at least a 3.5 cumulative g.p.a. (all courses),
- and must have at least a 3.5 g.p.a. in all psychology coursework.

Purpose of the Senior Honors Thesis

The Senior Honors thesis is an independent research project. It is designed to give qualified undergraduates an opportunity to experience all aspects of conducting research such as designing a study, reviewing the literature, collecting data, performing statistical analyses, and writing up a research paper in APA style. It is also hoped that this process will allow undergraduates who are considering an advanced degree to develop stronger and more individualized relationships with several faculty mentors while they are enhancing their knowledge in a focused area within psychology. It is expected that students who complete this project will receive a special designation on their degree (i.e., Psychology with Honors). It is also hoped that this process will enhance the likelihood that USA psychology majors will be accepted into advanced degree programs.

Qualifications

To register for PSY 499, Senior Honors Thesis, students must meet the following qualifications:

- must be majoring in psychology,
- must have a psychology and cumulative g.p.a. of 3.5 or better (requests for exceptions to this requirement must be submitted in writing to the departmental chair), and
- must have completed Psychology 320.

A student must complete a minimum of 6 semester hrs. of PSY 499, but may receive credit for up to 9 semester hours. This is generally done over two semesters. It is not necessary to be enrolled in the University Honors Program to receive Honors in Psychology

The Thesis Process

The student will be guided by a thesis committee consisting of at least two faculty members. One faculty member is their thesis chair and will supervise the research project. The student should expect to meet frequently with their thesis chair. The second faculty member is an outside reader. The committee will meet at least twice, once to review and approve the thesis proposal and a second time to review and approve the completed thesis. Students will make an oral presentation of their project at this second meeting.

The student should expect to make multiple revisions to their thesis document. The student should allow the second reader at least one full week to review the document prior to the thesis defense date. This process works best when the student begins to design and implement their honors project early in their junior year (or even before).

The thesis must be written in APA format. After approval, a final copy of the thesis with appendices should be given to thesis chair, outside reader, and departmental secretary.

Students will be given a grade of P (in progress) until the thesis is completed and the student has completed an oral presentation and defense of the thesis. Students who do not successfully complete their thesis prior to graduation will receive WD's on their final transcript.