

The psychology department supports psychology majors who intend to write an undergraduate psychology thesis by offering a *Psychology undergraduate thesis option*.

The option to write an undergraduate psychology thesis is offered only to qualified psychology students who are in the final year of their undergraduate psychology studies (senior year) and who have a very good grade record in their psychology courses (see prerequisites for students).

The option to write an undergraduate psychology thesis is voluntary both on the side of the psychology student and on the side of the psychology faculty. It is the responsibility of the student to find a faculty member willing to support and approve a thesis project.

Process

1. The student determines a possible topic for the thesis, based on his/her interests and prior background reading. It is also possible to approach psychology faculty members to see whether they have specific thesis topics they would be willing to supervise.
2. The student finds a thesis advisor. Usually, this is a member of the psychology research faculty (Thomas Oberlechner, Julia Pitters, Birgit Stetina). However, if approved by the psychology thesis coordinator, the thesis advisor can be any member of the psychology faculty who is qualified in the area of the chosen topic and who is willing to supervise the thesis process.
3. The student discusses his/her plans for the thesis with the possible thesis advisor to see if their chosen thesis advisor is actually willing to supervise the thesis. If necessary, the student may have to change and adjust his/her thesis topic and/or thesis advisor. If a student finds no thesis advisor who is willing to supervise the thesis (e.g., lack of advisor's time or interest, student not qualified enough to write a thesis), then writing a psychology undergraduate thesis may not be possible.
4. The student receives a thesis approval form from the thesis coordinator (Julia Pitters) or downloads it from the psychology homepage.
5. The student completes the thesis approval form and signs it.
6. The thesis advisor checks the completed thesis approval form for quality and practicability, and requires changes, clarifications, improvements where necessary. If the completed form is approved and the thesis advisor is willing to supervise the thesis project as described, the advisor signs the thesis approval form.
7. The thesis approval form is checked for quality by the thesis coordinator, including the choice of appropriate thesis supervisor.
8. The thesis approval form is signed by the department head.

9. The student takes the thesis approval form (which is now signed by the student, the thesis advisor, the thesis coordinator and the department head) to the academic advisor to enroll in PSYC 4825 Senior Thesis and PSYC 4875 Advanced Psychology Lab.
10. Unless approved otherwise by the department head, the thesis is conducted as a 4-credit semester course (2 bimesters) including Senior Thesis (3-credit course offered by thesis advisor) and Advanced Psychology Lab (1-credit course offered by instructor and faculty).
11. PSYC 4875 Advanced Psychology Lab
 - The Advanced Psychology Lab is offered every term and takes place once a month for two hours.
 - The Advanced Psychology Lab is frequented by thesis students as well as faculty members.
 - Students are required to attend four meetings within two terms and to give two 45-minute presentations about their thesis project. The first *set-up presentation* is due at the beginning of the first term, the second *result presentation* is due at the end of the second term.
 - Students are supposed to receive critical comments and advice about their thesis project from faculty and student colleagues and to deepen their presentation and discussion skills by actively attending faculty and other students' research presentations.
 - Students are asked to prepare for each session by reading the suggested literature.
 - Depending on needs and questions the instructor offers out of class meetings with the students.
 - The student will receive a pass or fail grade. Passing the Advanced Psychology Lab course is a basic prerequisite for passing the Senior Thesis course.
12. During the semester-long thesis project, the student receives regular supervision from the thesis advisor as established between student and thesis advisor.
13. At the end of the thesis project, the student submits one copy of the finished thesis (1) to the thesis advisor and (2) to the thesis coordinator. The thesis is written in compliance with APA citation guidelines. Copies are submitted either spiral-bound or hard-bound.
14. The thesis advisor provides a type-written thesis evaluation, including a grade for the thesis.
15. The thesis advisor sends the thesis evaluation to the thesis reader.
16. The thesis reader checks that quality standards are maintained in the thesis and the thesis evaluation.
17. The thesis advisor receives confirmation from the thesis reader.
18. The thesis advisor formally provides the student with the written thesis evaluation and finalizes the thesis project by entering the thesis grade for the course PSYC 4825 Senior Thesis.

For the Psychology Department
Julia Pitters, Thesis Coordinator; Thomas Oberlechner, Department Head



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