

Senior Capstone – Psychology Honors Thesis

PSYC 494-HO2 Fall 2025

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| Instructor | Dr. Carlee Beth Hawkins | Email | carhawk@siue.edu |
| Office | AH 0132 | Phone | 618-650-2253 |
| Office Hours | Mon & Wed 12-12:30pm Tues & Thurs 12:15-12:45pm | Class Info | MW 1:30-2:45 AH0333 |
| GTA | Alexis Belfiore | TA email | abelfio@siue.edu |

Course Description

Psychology is a science. The honors thesis is a year-long independent scientific project. This course will help you complete your honors thesis for the psychology major. We also explore career interests related to psychology and prepare for the graduate school and/or job application process. **Prerequisite: high performance in PSYC111, PSYC220, and PSYC221**

Course Materials (textbook required and must be purchased)

Textbook: Seligman, R., & Mitchell, L. (2022). *A student guide to writing an undergraduate psychology honors thesis* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.

SPSS software: Version 26 <https://www.siue.edu/its/labsclassrooms/vlab/spss.shtml>

7th edition APA resource: Reliable online source or physical manual (happy to advise)

SPSS resource: Reliable and cited online source or physical manual

PSYC 220/221: Your notes and any course materials from PSYC 220/221

Course Objectives

1. Complete a thesis from start to finish, including:
 - Understand what a thesis is and why the honors thesis is unique
 - Work independently, including motivating and disciplining yourself
 - Seek out help from committee chair, classmates, and professors
2. Practice and improve on the following skills:
 - Time management and self-care
 - Research competence and savvy
 - Written and oral presentation
 - Interpersonal communication and multicultural competence

Course Requirements and Grading

| <u>Assessment</u> | <u>Point Total</u> | <u>Percent of Grade</u> | <u>Grade Breakdown</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Progress Reports (10*10) | 100 | 20% | 90% – 100% = A |
| Article Summary | 25 | 5% | 80% – 89% = B |
| Career Project | 25 | 5% | 70% – 79% = C |
| Peer Review | 25 | 5% | 60% – 69% = D |
| Introduction Project | 50 | 10% | below 60% = F |
| Practice Proposal | 50 | 10% | |
| Thesis Proposal | 100 | 20% | |
| Thesis Defense | 100 | 20% | |
| Final Paper | 25 | 5% | |
| Total points | 500 pts | 100% | |

Course Calendar **This calendar is a draft and subject to change**

| Date | Topic | Reading | Assignment |
|----------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Aug 18 | Intros and ideas | | |
| Aug 20 | What have I got myself into? | Text Chs 1 and 2 | |
| Aug 25 | What is a study, really? | Text Ch3 | |
| Aug 27 | Guest – '25 honors student | | |
| Sept 1 | NO CLASS – LABOR DAY | | |
| Sept 3 | Guest – '25 honors student | Text Ch4 | Progress Report #1 |
| Sept 8 | Journal articles | Text Ch6 CLASS article Teams | |
| Sept 10 | Writing group – summaries | | Progress Report #2 |
| Sept 15 | Literature reviews & outlines | Text Ch7 | Article Summary |
| Sept 17 | Literature reviews & outlines | | Progress Report #3 |
| Sept 22 | Writing Introductions | | |
| Sept 24 | Careers & grad school discussion | | Progress Report #4 |
| Sept 29 | Writing group – Introductions | | Introduction Outline |
| Oct 1 | Method and hypothesis | Text Ch8 | Progress Report #5 |
| Oct 6 | Method and hypothesis | Text Ch9 | Career Project |
| Oct 8 | Presenting findings | Text Ch13 | |
| Oct 13 | Method and hypothesis | | |
| Oct 15 | Brief presentations | | Progress Report #6 |
| Oct 20 | Writing group – Introductions | | Introduction Draft |
| Oct 22 | Results and planned analysis | Text Ch10 | Progress Report #7 |
| Oct 27 | IRB | Text Ch5 | Peer Review |
| Oct 29 | Writing group – Proposals | | Sign up practice |
| Nov 3 | Results, Tables, Figures | Text Ch12 | |
| Nov 5 | Discussions and final papers | Text Ch11 | Progress Report #8 |
| Nov 10 | Practice props | | |
| Nov 12 | Practice props | | Progress Report #9 |
| Nov 17 | Practice props | | Paper to committee |
| Nov 19 | Practice props | | Progress Report #10 |
| Nov 24 | Thanksgiving – NO CLASS | -- | -- |
| Nov 26 | Thanksgiving – NO CLASS | -- | -- |
| Dec 1 | Practice props | | |
| Dec 3 | Reflections, goals, resources | | |
| Dec 8-12 | NO CLASS – FINALS | | Full Thesis Proposal |
| Apr 30 | Thesis defense with committee | | Full Thesis Paper |

Course Truths

- Completing a thesis is both incredibly rewarding AND incredibly challenging
- You must work hard in this class and PUSH yourself out of your comfort zone
- You WILL need help in this class from your committee, classmates, and professor
- You CAN do this!! How do you climb a mountain?

Course Policies and Expectations (students are responsible for knowing these)

- **Late policy.** Late assignments will receive a 5% deduction. If your assignment will be late, it is your responsibility to set a new reasonable due date and notify me of when that is.
 - **NOTE.** If you are having personal struggles that prevent you from completing your work regularly, please come to office hours or email me.
- **Illness policy.** If you have any illness symptoms that cannot be explained by a chronic condition you have, PLEASE stay home. You can make up the class material.
- **Attendance policy.** I expect you to attend 90% of our classes in person, meaning you can miss 3-4 classes (out of 29 total). When you miss, talk to a classmate. If you make up your work when you miss and engage while you're in class, occasional absences should be okay.
- **Open door.** My office is AH0132. If my door is open, you're welcome to drop in for help. If my door is closed, please do not disturb me unless we have a set appointment.
- **MY SIUE email.** I am much better reached in person than by email. Stop by my office hours or see me before or after class. You can also ask questions in class.
- **YOUR SIUE email – before class.** In case of illness and childcare issues, I may need to move class online. Please check your email before leaving home for class.
- **Blackboard and Teams.** We will use Blackboard for submitting assignments and grades. We will use Teams for announcements, course materials, and online writing groups.
- **Submitting your work using Turn It In.** Writing assignments will be submitted electronically through Turn It In, a plagiarism detection service to which the University subscribes. You should save your TurnItIn receipt as proof that you submitted your work on time. If you have issues with TurnItIn, you can also email me your paper for a timestamp.
- **Grades.** Student grades will be posted regularly on Blackboard. If you believe there is a discrepancy in the grade posted and the grade you received on an assignment, it is your responsibility to provide me with the graded assignment to justify any grade changes.
- **Academic honesty.** Academic dishonesty occurs through plagiarism, prohibited genAI use, and prohibited help (see below). Typically, first offenses will receive a warning and learning plan unless they are egregious. A second offense will receive a 0 on the assignment and will be reported to the Provost's office. A repeat offense will result in failing the class and additional reporting. Academic dishonesty cases may involve:
 - **Plagiarism.** Do not plagiarize. See department policy below.
 - **genAI.** This is a level-0 genAI class, meaning that no genAI use is NOT allowed and "students will create their own, original work without the use of GenAI for any manner." (see <https://prodev.illinoisstate.edu/ai/usage/> to review genAI levels). For this class, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) applications (including ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) to produce content for course assignments and assessments is a violation of SIUE's academic policy and is prohibited.
 - **Giving and receiving help.** You are encouraged to brainstorm research ideas or discuss your project with classmates. However, your work should be your own.

Required Technology

We will use Blackboard and SPSS in this course. It is your responsibility to address any computer or internet problems that might occur. Such problems are not an excuse for delays in meeting expectations or for missing course deadlines. Support for using Blackboard and SPSS is available by calling 618-650-5500, or by visiting <http://www.siue.edu/its/bb/>. At a minimum, you will need the following software/hardware to participate in this course:

- computer with an updated operating system (e.g. Windows, Mac, Linux)
- updated Internet browser (Apple Safari, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox)

- DSL or Cable Internet connection or a connection speed no less than 6 Mbps. A secure, encrypted Wifi (requiring a login and password) is acceptable. Note that some Blackboard components will not work properly on free wifi from places like Starbucks or McDonalds.
- Microsoft Office, including Word (SIUE students get Free Office 365)
- Other useful software is available at <http://www.siue.edu/its/software/index.shtml>
- SPSS on your home computer or you can use computers on campus

Student Services

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lovejoy Library Resources • Academic Success Sessions • Tutoring Resource Center • The Writing Center • Academic Advising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Aid • Campus Events • Counseling Services • List of Student Resources • ITS (tech and Blackboard help) |
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University and Psychology Department Policies

- **Psychology Department policy on plagiarism.** Plagiarism includes presenting someone else's words without quotation marks (even if you cite the source), presenting someone else's ideas without citing that source, or presenting one's own previous work as though it were new. When paraphrasing from another source or your own work, at the very least, the student should change the wording, sentence syntax, and order of ideas presented in the paper. Additionally, you should not submit a paper, or parts of a paper, written to fulfill the requirements of one class for the requirements in another class without prior approval of the current instructor and appropriate citation. Ideally, the student will integrate ideas from multiple sources while providing critical commentary on the topic in a way that clearly identifies whether words and ideas are those of the student or are from another source. Plagiarism is one type of academic misconduct described in SIUE's Student Academic Code (<http://www.siue.edu/policies/3c2.shtml>). University policy states that "Normally a student who plagiarizes shall receive a grade of F in the course in which the act occurs. The offense shall also be reported to the Provost." (<http://www.siue.edu/policies/1i6.shtml>). The University policy discusses additional academic sanctions including suspension and expulsion from the University. To insure that you understand how to avoid plagiarism, we encourage you to review the information on plagiarism provided on the Department of Psychology web page at <http://www.siue.edu/education/psychology/plagiarism.shtml>.
 - We will cover how to properly read and cite sources in class. You are responsible for understanding what plagiarism is; if you have any questions at all, you should discuss them with Dr. Hawkins BEFORE you turn in a plagiarized paper. A lack of knowledge of appropriate citation and referencing format will not excuse you from point deductions from written assignments or disciplinary action in the case of plagiarism.
- **Psychology Department policy on Incomplete Grades, Pass-No Credit Option, and Withdrawal.** It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from a course through the Enrollment Office by the dates set by the university if the student is not intending to complete the course. Students who do not withdraw and have not completed the course will receive an Unauthorized Withdrawal (UW). Only under special circumstances may a faculty member agree to give the student an Incomplete (INC) grade in order to allow the student to complete the remaining work for the course no later than the end of the following semester. An INC is never automatic but must be approved by the instructor. If an instructor agrees to give a student an INC grade, the instructor and student will fill out a form (Memorandum of Incomplete Grade) indicating why an INC is being given. One copy of the completed form will be given to the student, one copy will be given to the instructor, and one copy will be

kept by the Department of Psychology secretary. If the work is not completed by the specified time, the grade will be changed from INC to F.

- **Psychology Department writing policy.** As a student in this course, you will be expected to display university-level writing, which includes completing course assignments that meet the following basic writing criteria. Specifically, all written assignments completed for this course should include:
 - clear transitions from sentence to sentence and idea to idea (e.g., paper is organized/flows well);
 - verb tense consistency;
 - clear and unambiguous sentences and ideas;
 - writing that is free of typos, spelling errors, and major grammatical errors;
 - properly formatted citations and references (if relevant).

This is by no means an exhaustive list of basic writing skills, but will give you an idea of what we are looking for in our papers. If you feel you need help with your writing, you are encouraged to seek assistance from the writing center on campus

(<http://www.siue.edu/is/writing>) or utilize one of the many online resources they have identified to help students (<http://www.siue.edu/is/writing/resources.shtml>).

If your graded written assignments fail to meet the basic writing requirements listed above (and any others found to be appropriate by your instructor), the instructor will stop the grading process and return the paper to you with the grade of 0. You will have 48 hours to return the assignment in an acceptable form; if it still fails to meet the basic writing criteria, the grade of 0 will remain.

- **SIUE Statement on disabilities.** Students needing accommodations because of medical diagnosis or major life impairment will need to register with Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support (ACCESS) and complete an intake process before accommodations will be given. The ACCESS office is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1270. You can also reach the office by e-mail at myaccess@siue.edu or by calling 618.650.3726. For more information on policies, procedures, or necessary forms, please visit the ACCESS website at www.siue.edu/access.
- **SIUE statement on diversity.** SIUE is committed to respecting everyone's dignity at all times. In order to learn, exchange ideas, and support one another, our virtual and physical classrooms must be places where students and teachers feel safe and supported. Systems of oppression permeate our institutions and our classrooms. All students and faculty have the responsibility to co-create a classroom that affirms inclusion, equity, and social justice, where racism, sexism, classism, ableism, heterosexism, xenophobia, and other social pathologies are not tolerated. Violations of this policy will be enforced in line with the SIUE Student Conduct Code. The [Inclusive Excellence, Education, and Development Hub](#) is an excellent resource for students for support and community. Any person who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment can contact Lindy Wagner, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Inclusive Excellence, Education and Development at (618) 650-3179 or linwagn@siue.edu.
- **Pregnancy and newly parenting policy.** This policy and procedure are established to ensure the protection and equal treatment of pregnant students, students with pregnancy-related medical conditions including as a result of the termination of pregnancy, and students who become new parents including parents adopting or fostering to adopt for the first 12 weeks a child is in the home, in accordance with Federal and State guidelines and regulations. "New Parents" refers to a parent who has recently welcomed a newborn or adopted a child or is fostering to adopt a child and needs support to mitigate the disruption in academic progress within the first 12 weeks of parenting or a parent that needs support due to medical necessity attributed to pregnancy or delivery of a child; care of newborn; or lactation within the first year of child's life or legal adoption/fostering. Visit [Policies & Procedures - Student Rights](#)

[and Conduct - Newly Parenting Policy - 3C15](#) to view the full policy and learn how to request accommodations through the Office of Equal Opportunity, Access, and Title IX Coordination (EOA).

- **SIUE nondiscrimination policy.** Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) is a public comprehensive University committed to creating and maintaining a diverse community in which students, faculty, and staff can learn and work together in an environment free of discrimination and free from any form of illegal harassment. Such actions violate the dignity of the individual and the integrity of the University as an institution of learning. SIUE prohibits discrimination against employees, applicants for employment and students on the basis of age, color, disability, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status. Discrimination in any form will not be tolerated; management and supervisory personnel, at all levels, are responsible for taking reasonable and necessary action to prevent discrimination.

Academic Integrity

Students are reminded that the expectations and academic standards outlined in the Student Academic Code (3C2) apply to all courses, field experiences and educational experiences at the University, regardless of modality or location. The full text of the policy can be found here: <https://www.siue.edu/policies/3c2.shtml>.

Recordings of Class Content

Faculty recordings of lectures and/or other course materials are meant to facilitate student learning and to help facilitate a student catching up who has missed class due to illness or quarantine. As such, students are reminded that the recording, as well as replicating or sharing of any course content and/or course materials without the express permission of the instructor of record, is not permitted, and may be considered a violation of the University's Student Conduct Code (3C1), linked here: <https://www.siue.edu/policies/3c1.shtml>.