

Senior Capstone – Psychology Honors Thesis

PSYC 494-HO2 Fall 2026

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Office Hours	Mon&Wed 12-12:30pm & 2:45-3pm	Time	MW 1:30-2:45
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TA	Emma Klein	Email	emmklei@siue.edu

Course Description

The honors thesis is a two-semester independent research project. This course will help you complete your honors thesis for the psychology major. We also explore career interests and prepare for the graduate school and job application process. **Prerequisite: As or Bs in PSYC111, PSYC220, and PSYC221; admission to Psychology Honors Academy**

Course Materials (textbook and notebook required and must be purchased)

Textbook: Seligman, R., & Mitchell, L. (2023). *A student guide to writing an undergraduate psychology honors thesis* (1st ed.). New York: Routledge.

Paper notebook. Any paper notebook no larger than 8x10 used solely for this class

SPSS software: Version 31 <https://www.siu.edu/its/labsclassrooms/vlab/spss.shtml>

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

SPSS resource: Reliable online source or physical manual

PSYC 220/221 notes: Your notes and 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
Introduction Outline	25	5%	60% – 69% = D
Brief Presentation	25	5%	below 60% = F
Practice Proposal	50	10%	
Thesis Proposal	100	20%	
Capstone Assessment	25	5%	
Thesis Defense	100	20%	
Final Paper	25	5%	
Total points	500 pts	100%	

Course Calendar **This calendar is subject to change** Big goals due at end of week.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment(1:29p)
1	Aug 24	Intros and ideas		
	Aug 26	What have I got myself into?	Text Chs 1 and 2	
2	Aug 31	What is a study, really?	Text Chs 3 and 4	Progress Report #1
	Sept 2	Guests – Psyc honors alumni		
3	Sept 7	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY		
	Sept 9	Journal articles	Text Ch6 & article	
4	Sept 14	Guest – Librarian Matt Paris	Library 1058	Progress Report #2
	Sept 16	Writing group		Article on Teams
5	Sept 21	Literature reviews & outlines	Text Ch7	Article Summary
	Sept 23	Writing group		BigGoal#1: Chair
6	Sept 28	Careers & grad school	Teams readings	Progress Report #3
	Sept 30	Writing group		Intro Outline (2:45p)
7	Oct 5	Method and hypothesis	Text Chs 8 and 9	Progress Report #4
	Oct 7	Writing group		
8	Oct 12	APA and presenting findings	Text Chs 12 & 13	Progress Report #5
	Oct 14	Writing group		Career Project (flex)
9	Oct 19	Brief presentations		BriefPres slides
	Oct 21	Brief presentations		BriefPres slides
10	Oct 26	Guests – Grad student panel		Progress Report #6
	Oct 28	Writing group		BigGoal#2: Draft
11	Nov 2	Results and Discussions	Text Ch10 & 11	Progress Report #7
	Nov 4	Writing group		
12	Nov 9	IRB, Qualtrics, & Sona	Text Ch5	Progress Report #8
	Nov 11	Writing group		
13	Nov 16	Practice props		
	Nov 18	Practice props		BigGoal#3:Schedule
OFF	Nov 23	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS		
	Nov 25	Thanksgiving – NO CLASS		
14	Nov 30	Practice props		Progress Report #9
	Dec 2	Practice props		
15	Dec 7	Practice props		Progress Report #10
	Dec 9	Assessment & reflections		Capstone Assess
--	Dec14-18	FINALS WEEK – NO CLASS		Thesis Proposal
Sp13	Apr 16	Schedule defense with committee	W15 ends Apr 30	Attach thesis paper
Grad	May 7	Final thesis paper to Carlee		Congrats!

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

- **Late policy.** If your assignment will be late, it is your responsibility to set a new reasonable due date and notify me of when that is. Frequent late assignments will be penalized 20%.
 - **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.
- **Getting help from me.** Please make an appointment with me during office hours or talk before, during, or after class. You can also join my 1:00pm walk on Mon, Tues, or Wed.
- **MY SIUE email.** I am much better in person and not a fast email responder. For quick help from classmates or your TA, post questions to Teams. Otherwise, let's talk in person.
- **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.
- **Teams.** We will submit assignments on our class Teams page. If you are not comfortable submitting your assignments on Teams, you can email them directly to your TA (copy me). I will also use Teams for announcements, course materials, and online writing groups.
- **Notebooks.** You should secure a small notebook (8x10 or smaller) for note-taking in this class. You will complete your progress reports in this notebook and turn it in to me for review on Mondays (see course calendar). I will provide feedback and return on Wednesday.
- **Submitting your work using Turn It In.** Your proposal draft and final proposal paper will be submitted electronically through Turn It In, a plagiarism detection service on Blackboard.
- **Grades.** You will receive frequent feedback from me, your TAs, and your classmates in class and in writing. You should also receive feedback from your chair throughout the thesis process. Therefore, I will not post grades; see your TA or me with questions about grades.
- **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.** Zero tolerance approach to generative AI. In this course, the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools is not permitted for coursework. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all submitted work reflects your own thinking, skill development, and academic voice. You are expected to engage directly with course materials and complete all assignments independently, without assistance from AI tools for generating, revising, or editing content. Using GenAI to produce, modify, or meaningfully contribute to submitted work—whether for writing, problem solving, or analysis—violates the SIUE academic integrity expectations of this course. If you are uncertain whether a tool or practice counts as GenAI use, you should assume it is not allowed and seek clarification before submitting your work.
 - **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.siu.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.siu.edu/its/software/index.shtml>
- SPSS on your home computer or you can use computers on campus

Student Services (where you can go if you need some help)

- [Lovejoy Library Resources](#)
- [Tutoring Resource Center](#)
- [The Writing Center](#)
- [Dean of Students](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Counseling Services](#)
- [Cougar Cupboard \(food pantry\)](#)
- [ITS \(tech and Blackboard help\)](#)
- [SIUE Housing](#)

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.siu.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.siu.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.siu.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.siu.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.siu.edu/policies/3c1.shtml>.