

## Senior Thesis Guidelines for Psychology Students

The senior thesis is an independent research project undertaken in collaboration with a faculty advisor. The project takes place over two semesters in the senior year. The central theme and hypotheses for the thesis are typically identified in the junior year. A thesis advisor and research lab are ideally identified by the end of the sophomore year and prior to enrolling in Psych 380: Junior Honors Seminar. Psych 380 is required for Honors in the Major. It is recommended for all students who are completing a thesis.

Draft proposal. A draft proposal should be written in the format used for the Hilldale and Senior Honors Thesis Fellowship proposals. The proposal is limited to 5 pages and includes description of the research topic, rationale and brief literature review, research question(s), hypotheses, methods, anticipated results, and a timeline for completion of the project. The proposal (or research plan) must be approved by the faculty advisor prior to submission for funding and prior to enrolling for thesis credit during the senior year. Students are also encouraged to apply for thesis awards (see award and scholarship information below).

Senior year. During the senior year, students will complete the research project and a final paper that includes the results of the study (see paper guidelines below). Students should meet with their faculty advisor on a regular basis during both semesters and provide updates on progress and drafts of the paper. The faculty advisor will provide guidance on the research and feedback on the paper. This feedback should be assimilated in revisions of the paper.

Final paper and presentation. The final project will include a paper written in the format of a scientific journal within the topic area of the project. The paper includes: title page, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, figures, tables, references, and appendices (optional). The paper is due at the end of the student's final semester. Students are expected to make a presentation of the research in one or more venues that could include the UW-Madison Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS), or a scientific conference. There may also be a thesis showcase event within the Psychology Department during which the project will also be presented. Students are encouraged to apply for travel awards to support attendance at a scientific conference (see award and scholarship information below).

Thesis mentors. Students completing thesis work must have a faculty advisor with whom they register for thesis credits and who supervises the laboratory in which the student conducts their thesis research. Faculty advisors may be Psychology Department faculty or affiliate faculty. Students may be co-mentored by postdoctoral fellows or graduate students. The thesis agreement form (below) should include the faculty advisor and any other members of the research team that provide primary mentoring for the student thesis project.

**Timeline:**

## Sophomore year:

- Fall-Spring: Identify a faculty research mentor. Prior to enrollment in Psych 380 in their Junior year, students should be in a research lab and have a faculty advisor who has agreed to serve as the thesis mentor.
- Enroll in Research Methods (Psych 225). Research Methods is a prerequisite for Psych 380.
- For students who are planning to study abroad in their junior year, or planning for early graduation, the timeline for the thesis is likely to include earlier identification of a mentor and earlier completion of Psych 380.

## Junior year:

- Fall: Identify research topic and work with faculty advisor to design research plan. Enrollment in Psych 380 will facilitate this process. To enroll in Psych 380 students must complete an initial thesis agreement form with their faculty advisor.
- Early February: Submit Hilldale or Senior Honors Thesis proposal (optional).
- Literature searches and reading to inform the background (Introduction) of the thesis.
- Training in the techniques to be used in the research (i.e., methods for data collection and analysis). May include beginning data collection for the thesis.
- Present research proposal in lab meeting (optional).
- Note - during the junior year students are typically enrolled for research credit in the laboratory in which they will conduct their senior thesis.

## Senior year:

- Register for thesis (Psych 681/682: Senior Honors Thesis OR 691/692: Undergraduate Thesis). You will enroll for 2 semesters.
- Fall: Advisor approval of final thesis proposal (if new or revised from junior year).
- Continued literature review to inform paper.
- Data collection.
- Continue to revise and refine paper.
- Spring: Data analysis, write results, and discussion.
- April/May: Research presentation at URS. Thesis showcase event presentation in Psychology Department. Note – the thesis showcase presentation is required for all Psychology Department thesis and travel grant awardees.
- May: Final thesis paper due. The paper will take the form of a journal article (see above).
- May: Provide your faculty advisor with an electronic copy of your thesis.

## REQUEST FOR PSYCHOLOGY JUNIOR HONORS SEMINAR -OR- THESIS ENROLLMENT FORM

DIRECTIONS	
Students who wish to enroll in Psych 380: Junior Honors Seminar, Psych 681: Senior Honors Thesis or Psych 691: Undergraduate Thesis must complete this form for course authorization. <b>Return this completed form</b> electronically to the Psychology Undergraduate Program Manager at timetable@psych.wisc.edu. Alternatively, students may submit a paper copy to the mailbox of Melanie Jones, Undergraduate Program Coordinator.	

STUDENT INFORMATION			
Name	Last:	First:	Middle:
Student ID#	- -	E-mail:	@wisc.edu
Honors Program Status (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Honors in Liberal Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Honors in the Major for Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> Distinction in the Major for Psychology <input type="checkbox"/> No intent to complete an Honors program; pursuing a thesis in the Dept. of Psychology		
Student's Signature*		Today's Date	
<b>*By signing this form, I verify that I have read the "Senior Thesis Guidelines for Psychology Students" and understand the expectations of a thesis.</b>			

PSYCHOLOGY 380: JUNIOR SEMINAR IN PSYCHOLOGY	
Psychology 380 (Fall only) is a 1 credit small enrollment seminar intended to provide guidance and feedback to students interested in completing a thesis project in their senior year. In order to enroll in Psych 380 students should have completed Psych 225 and be admitted in a Psychology research lab.	
Research Lab and Faculty Advisor	
Other mentors (if applicable; e.g., graduate students, postdoctoral fellows)	
General research area planned for thesis:	
Semester in which Psych 380 will be taken (Fall only)	
Faculty Advisor Signature	

PSYCHOLOGY 681/682: SENIOR HONORS THESIS –OR- 691/692: UNDERGRADUATE THESIS			
The senior thesis is a two-semester independent research project undertaken in collaboration with a faculty advisor. See "Senior Thesis Guidelines for Psychology Students" for more information.			
Thesis Mentor/Faculty Advisor			
Other mentors (if applicable; e.g., graduate students, postdoctoral fellows)			
Thesis Topic			
I will be enrolling in:	<input type="checkbox"/> Psych 681/682: Senior Honors Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Psych 691/692: Undergraduate thesis	Semesters in which thesis will be completed? (ex. Fall 2019/Spring 2020)	
Faculty Advisor Signature			

**Funding Opportunities for Students Completing a Thesis**

Please note this is not a comprehensive list and students are encouraged to explore their funding options beyond these opportunities.

**UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC AWARDS OFFICE**

awards.advising.wisc.edu

**Hilldale undergraduate/faculty research fellowships and holstrom environmental scholarships**

provide support for collaborative research between undergraduate students and faculty or research/instructional academic staff members. The student researcher receives \$3,000, and the faculty/staff receives \$1,000 to help offset research costs. Students must have at least junior standing at the time of application. The Holstrom Scholarships require an environmental focus. The McPherson Eye Research Institute will continue to sponsor one additional Hilldale Fellowship for vision-based research (including bioengineering, imaging, data visualization, ophthalmology and general biology of the eye). The application deadline is typically in February.

**University book store academic excellence awards** provide \$1,000 to undergraduate students who have distinguished themselves by completing outstanding projects, such as a senior thesis, at UW-Madison. Students must be enrolled in a degree program during the current academic year. Applications are typically due in March.

**L&S HONORS PROGRAM**

honors.ls.wisc.edu

**Honors Summer Senior Thesis Research Grant**

These grants enable students to undertake more demanding and extensive senior thesis research projects than might otherwise be possible. Besides recognition of an excellent thesis proposal, grant recipients are awarded a cash stipend of up to \$3000 to cover research-related expenses. Such resources may enable students to travel to archives or research sites, arrange participant interviews or initiate other research activities that requires special funding. All students who receive an Honors Senior Thesis Summer Research Grant will be asked to submit a copy of their completed thesis to the L&S Honors Program, where it will be bound and placed in the Washburn Observatory library. Applications are usually due in March.

**Trewartha Undergraduate Honors Research Grant**

This grant enables honors students to undertake more demanding and extensive honors senior thesis research projects than might otherwise be possible. Besides recognition of an excellent thesis proposal, grant recipients receive funds (up to \$1500) to cover the expendable supplies, travel expenses and related costs needed to complete the research. These resources may enable students to travel to archives or research sites, or to initiate other research activities that require special funding. The application deadline is in late October.

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

psych.wisc.edu

Scholarship applications and information found at: [scholarships.wisc.edu](http://scholarships.wisc.edu)

**Arlene R. Davenport Psychology Career Development Award**

The purpose of the Arlene R. Davenport Fund is to annually support a Psychology student with financial need who has demonstrated a career interest in psychological research. Candidates for the award will be evaluated by a committee within the Department of Psychology. The fund was initiated on the occasion of Arlene Davenport's retirement after 37 years of service to the Department of Psychology. She made many important contributions to the department through her advising but also by initiating many important programs, including the development and nurturing of Psi Chi, the national Honorary Society of Psychologist; an annual State Wide Undergraduate Research Symposium that continued for 25 years; and the successful development and shepherding of the Psychology Research Experience Program, a highly successful NSF funded program for minority and low income first generation students to develop research skills. It is felt that Arlene's service can best be honored into the future through an annual scholarship for research-oriented UW psychology students with financial need. The application deadline is typically in October.

**Undergraduate Thesis and Travel Awards**

This award was created by Dr. Joyce Rosevear, who received her Ph.D in animal behavior working with Dr. Harry Harlow. Undergraduates may receive an award to support research projects supervised by a psychology faculty mentor up to \$1000 OR Students may receive an award to cover travel expenses to present their research up to \$1,000. The research work or conference attended must be carried out during the current academic year. The application deadline is typically in October.

**PSI CHI (INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY IN PSYCHOLOGY)**

[www.psichi.org](http://www.psichi.org)

The National Psi Chi office offers undergraduate awards and grants to Psi Chi members. These include undergraduate research grants covering all semesters as well as travel grants. Students presenting posters at conferences can also apply for regional research awards.

**GENERAL L&S SCHOLARSHIPS**

[scholarships.wisc.edu](http://scholarships.wisc.edu)

Students can search for scholarship/grant opportunities on the UW-Madison campus at [Scholarships@UW-Madison](mailto:Scholarships@UW-Madison). Students can view a list of scholarship opportunities as well as "match" scholarships and apply online.