



PSY400Y5Y – Psychology Undergraduate Thesis

Monday 12:00pm to 3:00pm

Online Synchronous

Course Delivery

ONLINE VIA QUERCUS

Class will be held online using zoom. Instructions on how to access zoom and the links to class meetings will be shared on the course Quercus page.

- Learn Anywhere Guide for Students
<https://library.utm.utoronto.ca/students/quercus/learn-anywhere>
- University of Toronto tech [requirements for online learning](#)

Contact Information

Dr. Doug VanderLaan

doug.vanderlaan@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Virtual via Zoom

By appointment

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide you with experience in conducting psychological research. Students will work closely with a supervisor on the different phases of a research project, including development of a hypothesis, research design, ethics approval, testing participants, data analysis, interpretation, and writing. In addition, students will meet together to discuss their projects as well as general topics important to the conduct of research, and, most importantly, to gain experience in giving oral presentations on research. In addition to writing a thesis, you will be required to give a presentation based on the thesis at the annual Thesis Day, typically held in late April/early May.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify key concepts and theories related to their thesis topic
- Gain familiarity with issues of general importance in psychology, including research ethics and contemporary perspectives on optimizing the scientific method in academic psychology
- Critically evaluate scientific arguments and research
- Develop oral communication skills through seminar-style presentations and discussions
- Explore interests in psychology through independent inquiry and research

- Use hypothesis-driven methods of scientific inquiry to answer psychological questions
- Analyze and interpret data using quantitative and/or qualitative techniques
- Develop written communication skills through the production of a thesis
- Foster a strategy for taking the next steps in one's educational or career path

Course Evaluation

Your final mark consists of three components:

1. A grade from your supervisor based both on your work in the planning, execution, and analysis of your study and on the various drafts of the written thesis itself: **65%**
2. A grade based on the written thesis from an independent reader, another faculty member: **15%**
3. A grade from the Thesis Coordinator based on your participation in the class meetings, your presentations in class and on Thesis Day, and the work you are required to hand in during the year: **20%**

NOTE: There are no written tests in this course, but attendance is mandatory. Missed classes (or arriving late) will negatively impact your final mark. Attendance at Thesis Day and at the Practice Day is absolutely mandatory. Failure to attend Thesis Day (and/or Practice Day) will result in a failing mark for the course.

Email

According to official university policy, all students MUST have their utoronto.ca email address listed in ACORN, and all correspondence between faculty and students must take place via a utoronto email address. Therefore, if you want to receive email from the instructor about this course, and if you want to correspond with him about your marks or assignments, etc., you MUST use your utoronto.ca email. Any email correspondence should contain PSY 400 in the subject line.

If you would like to update your ACORN address, please login to ACORN at <http://www.rosi.utoronto.ca/> Under the "Current Email Address" section, ensure that your utoronto.ca email is listed. If your utoronto.ca email is not listed, you can click on the red "Edit" button to update your email address. Then click on save, then logout, and close the web browser.

Course Webpage

The website associated with this course is accessible via <http://q.utoronto.ca>

Note: You don't need to create a new login for Canvas; it already knows who you are. You just need your UTORid and password. This is the same login that gets you onto the wireless network with your laptop, and the same one that you use to check your email. If you're confused about your UTORid or don't remember your password, go to: <https://www.utorid.utoronto.ca/>

In order to access course material, monitor course information, and view your grades you must log into Canvas. If you have any general questions regarding Canvas, please visit the following help site:

<https://library.utm.utoronto.ca/faculty/canvas>

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES **PLEASE READ**

Extension of Time Special Consideration Request Process

Students who seek to be granted more time to complete their term work beyond the due date without penalty, owing to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., illness, or an accident), must do so by submitting a request **directly to the Instructor** for the period up to and including the last day of the term. The decision as to whether

or not to apply a penalty for the specified period rests with the Instructor.

Students who seek to be granted more time to complete term work beyond the last day of the term must submit their request directly to the Department. This request covers the period following the last day of classes and ends the last day of the exam period. This is done by submitting a request via the online Special Consideration Request form at <https://utmapp.utm.utoronto.ca/SpecialRequest>. You are advised to seek advising by the departmental Undergraduate Counsellor prior to the deadline.

Supporting Documentation

The University is temporarily suspending the need for a doctor's note or medical certificate for any absence from academic participation. However, you are required to use the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN found in the Profile and Settings menu to formally declare an absence from academic participation. The tool is to be used if you require consideration for missed academic work based on the procedures specific to our campus/department.

Penalties for Lateness

A penalty of 10% per calendar day (i.e., including week-ends and holidays, during which students are not able to submit term work) up to and including the last day of classes, will be applied by the Instructor. After the last day of classes, the penalty of 10% per calendar day will be applied by the Undergraduate Counsellor on behalf of the Department. No penalty will be assigned if request for special consideration, described above, was successful.

Academic Guidelines

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the UTM Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you WILL BE REMOVED from the course up until the last day to add a course. Further information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the University of Toronto Mississauga Calendar at: <http://www.erin.utoronto.ca/regcal/>. You are encouraged to read this material. If you run into trouble and need advice about studying, preparing for exams, note taking or time management, free workshops and advice are available from the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre at 905-828-5406.

AccessAbility Services

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs. Students requiring academic accommodations for learning, physical, sensory, or mental health disabilities or medical conditions should contact the AccessAbility Office (2037B Davis Building), 905-828-3847. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/>

Privacy and Copyright Disclaimer

Notice of video recording and sharing (Download permissible; re-use prohibited)

This course, including your participation, will be recorded on video and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other source depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright. In this course, you are permitted to download session videos and materials for your own academic use, but you should not copy, share, or use them for any other purpose without the explicit permission of the instructor. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact your instructor. Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Copyright Act, RSC 1985, c C-42. Course materials such as PowerPoint slides

and lecture recordings are made available to you for your own study purposes. These materials cannot be shared outside of the class or “published” in any way. Posting recordings or slides to other websites without the express permission of the instructor will constitute copyright infringement.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto Mississauga is a strong signal of each student’s individual academic achievement. As a result, UTM treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously.

The University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the process for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
3. Making up sources or facts.
4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
2. Looking at someone else’s answers during an exam or test.
3. Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required, including (but not limited to) doctor’s notes.

With regard to remote learning and online courses, UTM wishes to remind students that they are expected to adhere to **the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters** regardless of the course delivery method. By offering students the opportunity to learn remotely, UTM expects that students will maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting. Potential academic offences in a digital context include, but are not limited to:

Remote assessments:

1. Accessing unauthorized resources (search engines, chat rooms, Reddit, etc.) for assessments.
2. Using technological aids (e.g. software) beyond what is listed as permitted in an assessment.
3. Posting test, essay, or exam questions to message boards or social media.
4. Creating, accessing, and sharing assessment questions and answers in virtual “course groups.”
5. Working collaboratively, in-person or online, with others on assessments that are expected to be completed individually.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources.

Academic Rights

You, as a student at UTM, have the right to:

- Receive a syllabus by the first day of class.
- Rely upon a syllabus once a course is started. An instructor may only change marks' assignments by following the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy provision 1.3.
- Refuse to use turnitin.com (you must be offered an alternative form of submission).
- Have access to your instructor for consultation during a course or follow up with the department chair if the instructor is unavailable.
- Ask the person who marked your term work for a re-evaluation if you feel it was not fairly graded. You have up to one month from the date of return of the item to inquire about the mark. If you are not satisfied with a re-evaluation, you may appeal to the instructor in charge of the course if the instructor did not mark the work. If your work is remarked, you must accept the resulting mark. You may only appeal a mark beyond the instructor if the term work was worth at least 20% of the course mark.
- Receive at least one significant mark (15% for H courses, 25% for Y courses) before the last day you can drop a course for H courses, and the last day of classes in the first week of January for Y courses taught in the Fall/Winter terms.
- Submit handwritten essays so long as they are neatly written.
- Have no assignment worth 100% of your final grade.
- Not have a term test worth more than 25% in the last two weeks of class.
- Retain intellectual property rights to your research.
- Receive all your assignments once graded.
- View your final exams. To see a final exam, you must submit an online Exam Reproduction Request within 6 months of the exam. There is a small non-refundable fee.
- Privacy of your final grades.
- Arrange for representation from Downtown Legal Services (DLS), a representative from the UTM Students' Union (UTMSU), and/or other forms of support if you are charged with an academic offence.

Equity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the UTM Equity and Diversity officer at edo.utm@utoronto.ca or the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union Vice President Equity at vpequity@utmsu.ca.

Please note that this outline is subject to change depending on the needs of the class (we may need additional time to cover a topic). Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class one week before. However, the assignment and test dates are fixed.

Course Outline

Although PSY 400 is a full-year course, in terms of teaching it counts as a 1-semester course because it's primarily about conducting research in your supervisor's lab. Accordingly, the class will meet 9 times in the fall term and 3 times in the winter term.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 2020 | <i>Tentative Schedule for Fall Term</i> |
| Sept. 14 | Introduction to the Course; Research Ethics; Designing Research Timelines; Literature Searches; Discussion on Preparing for Graduate and Professional School |
| Sept. 21 | Presenting tips; VanderLaan Presentation; Discussion of Reading (to be read in advance; listed below) |
| Sept. 28 | Presentation 1 (7 students) |
| Oct. 5 | Presentation 1 (7 students) |
| Oct. 12 | Presentation 2 (7 students) |
| Oct. 19 | READING WEEK |
| Oct. 26 | Presentation 2 (7 students) |
| Nov. 2 | Presentation 3 (Research Proposal, 5 students) |
| Nov. 9 | Presentation 3 (Research Proposal, 5 students) |
| Nov. 16 | Presentation 3 (Research Proposal, 4 students) |
| | |
| 2021 | <i>Tentative Schedule for Winter Term</i> |
| Jan. 18 | Discussion of readings (to be read in advance; listed below); Discussion on APA-style |
| Jan. 22 | Progress Reports and Method section draft due |
| | |
| April | Practice Talks |
| | Practice Talks (only if required) |
| TBD | Practice Day and Thesis Day |

List of Readings (can be accessed via the university library or by following the open access link provided)

- Sept 21 Jaremka et al. (2020). Common academic experiences no one talks about: Repeated rejection, impostor syndrome, and burnout. *Perspectives in Psychological Science*, 15, 519-543.
- Jan 18 Amrhein et al. (2019). Retire statistical significance. *Nature*, 567, 305-307.
- Devezer et al. (2020). The case for formal methodology in scientific reform. Preprint on biorxiv. <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.26.048306v1>
- Szollosi & Donkin (2019). Arrested theory development: The misguided distinction between exploratory and confirmatory research. Preprint available at <https://psyarxiv.com/suzej/>

Presentations

All students will make three presentations in the first term of the course. For the first two presentations, you will present an article that is relevant and important to your thesis, *as if it were your own research*. You should think about what articles you want to discuss in your presentations, keeping in mind that you should be building up to your third presentation, when you will present your thesis as it has been planned (the proposal). The articles you use for the first two presentations will provide some familiarity—to you, me, and the other students—with key research in your chosen topic.

Presentations typically have 5 sections: Background, Research Questions/Hypotheses, Methods, Results, Discussion.

For the first and second presentations, each student will be allotted 20 minutes. You will talk for a maximum of 12 minutes and there will be about 8 minutes for feedback.

For the third presentation, each student will be allotted 30 minutes; of that, about 15 minutes will be reserved for your presentation, and the remainder of the time for questions and feedback. More time is allotted for feedback in this third presentation because it is about the research for your actual thesis.

Your course mark from the instructor is based (in part) on the quality of your presentations and the quality (not just quantity) of feedback you provide to your peers.

The scheduling of the three presentations (who goes when) will be as follows. For the first presentation, students will be scheduled in alphabetical order of their family names. For the second presentation, the order will be reversed. For the third and most important presentation, you will have some choice. Submit your first, second, and third choices in our second class, and a schedule will be created to accommodate people as best as possible.

Major Requirements and Deadlines

1. In-class presentations: Fall dates provided in schedule
2. First draft of Methods and feedback on progress form: January 18, 2021
3. First drafts of Introduction, Results, and Discussion: To be discussed with individual supervisor
4. Thesis submission: TBD (electronic copies to Coordinator [word and pdf] and to Supervisor)
5. Practices for Thesis Day: April (exact dates TBD)
6. Practice Day for UTM Department of Psychology Thesis Day: TBD (attendance is mandatory)
7. UTM Psychology Department Thesis Day: TBD. (Around last week of April 2021; first week of May, 2021)

In the second term, we will have one class (Jan 18, 2021; see activity listed above). Also, at the end of January/beginning of February after you have handed in your Method draft and progress report (Due Jan 22, 2021), I will schedule informal meetings with each student to discuss progress (and possible delays) in your thesis projects. Then, we will not meet again until the end of the term (unless it is to have a one-on-one meeting to follow-up on progress or for you to seek guidance).

In April, all students will give practice presentations (10 minutes) of their talk for Thesis Day. Students should first practice their presentations with their respective supervisors. Then, we will meet as a group to deliver practice talks at least once before an official “Practice Day” (attendance mandatory) about a week before Thesis Day. “Practice Day” will be a dress rehearsal, and will be in the same venue as Thesis Day. If your presentation does not meet expectations at this point, you will need to give another practice presentation. You will be sent an email several weeks in advance to remind you of the dates of these presentations.

In the case of all presentations, if for some reason the time you have been assigned doesn't work for you (e.g., you have a lot of other assignments due at that time), you are free to change times with someone else in the class. Please inform Professor VanderLaan in advance.

Penalties: All late assignments are penalized by 10% per day.

Details of Evaluation

Your supervisor will evaluate your performance according to the following criteria:

1. Did the project involve a substantial intellectual contribution from the student? To what extent were important design issues resolved by the work and reasoning of the student?
2. To what extent did the student conduct the research in a timely fashion and complete the data collection and other phases of the project to the satisfaction of the supervisor?
3. To what extent did the student analyze the data effectively, with a clear appreciation of the most useful questions to be put to the data? To what extent did the student understand the findings and their implications?
4. To what extent did the student successfully communicate the thesis work in early drafts of the thesis and in conversations with the supervisor?
5. To what extent was progress seen over the course of the year, with the development of a greater understanding of the research process?

Your independent evaluator will evaluate your performance according to the following criteria:

1. Are the hypotheses/predictions/research questions clear? Are they appropriately supported by the background literature reviewed?
2. Was the research design appropriate for the question? Was the sample size adequate (allowing some leniency given the time constraints of the thesis project)?
3. Could someone adequately replicate the study based on the methods section?
4. Are the results and data analyses clearly and completely described? Are the interpretations/conclusions clearly linked to the data? Are limitations, implications, and future directions addressed?
5. Is there evidence of original thinking and creative contribution in this thesis?
6. Does the thesis conform to the APA guidelines for manuscripts?
7. Is the thesis well written? Is the writing clear, logical, and complete?