



PSY400Y5 Y – Psychology Undergraduate Thesis

Monday 2:00pm to 5:00pm Room DH 4001

Contact Information

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Office Hours: after class or 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 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 or early May.

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 seminars, 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 ROSI. Unfortunately external email companies (e.g., yahoo, hotmail, etc.) on occasion will block utoronto.ca emails. Therefore, do not forward your utoronto email.

According to official university policy, all correspondence between faculty and students must take place via a utoronto email address. Therefore, if you want to receive email from Professor Smith about this course, and if you want to correspond with Professor Smith about your marks or assignments in this course, 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 ROSI address, please login to ROSI 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://portal.utoronto.ca>

Note: You don't need to create a new login for Blackboard; 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 Blackboard. If you have any general questions regarding Blackboard, please visit the following help site: <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/students.htm>

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 of assignment.

Original supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificates, accident reports, etc.) must be submitted to the Psychology Academic Counselor or dropped off in the drop box located outside the Psychology office (Deerfield Hall 4th Floor). Students are expected to submit requests to the Department before the last day of the term, unless demonstrably serious reasons prevent them from doing so. In the event of an illness, medical certificates or doctor's notes must confirm that student was ill on the due date of the assignment (for a one-day extension). For a longer extension, documentation must specify the full duration during which academic work could not be carried out.

For extensions of time beyond the examination period you must submit a petition through the Office of the Registrar. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/current-students/petitions>.

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 Coordinator 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

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Resource Centre as soon as possible.

AccessAbility staff (located in Room 2047, Davis Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please call 905-569-4699 or email access.utm@utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessability/>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Honesty and fairness are considered fundamental to the university's mission, and, as a result, all those who violate those principles are dealt with as if they were damaging the integrity of the university itself. When students are suspected of cheating or a similar academic offence, they are typically surprised at how formally and seriously the matter is dealt with -- and how severe the consequences can be if it is determined that cheating did occur. The University of Toronto treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Please take the time to review the Academic Integrity website:

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/academic-integrity/students>.

Common trends in academic offences:

- Plagiarizing/concocted references
- Collaboration/unauthorized assistance
- Purchasing work
- Recycling work - "double-dipping"
- Resubmitting of altered work for re-grading
- Electronic devices (cell phones) or any unauthorized aids
- Altering medical certificates and UoT documents

From the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: "It shall be an offence for a student to knowingly: represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or

in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism. Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on "knowing", the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known." All students must refer to this website to obtain information on what constitutes plagiarism. <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

If questions arise after reading the material on the website, consult your instructor.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated.

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.

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 25% or more 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.

Major Requirements and Deadlines

1. In-class presentations (Four in total): TBA
2. Ethics protocol: Monday November 2, 2015
3. First draft of Method Section: Friday January 29, 2016
4. First draft of Introduction: Friday February 26, 2016
4. Thesis submission: TBA (1 copy to Coordinator (submit by email); 1 copy to Supervisor)
5. Practice for UTM Department of Psychology Thesis Day: TBA (attendance is mandatory)
6. UTM Psychology Department Thesis Day: TBA (Around end of April/early May, 2016)

Schedule of dates

- Sept 14 No class. If you have not already done so, this week you should arrange to meet with your supervisor to discuss your research project, the plan to get started, and the timeline for the year.
- Sept 21 Introduction to course; Discussion of graduate school application process
- Sept 28 Ethics; Presentation Tips

The rest of the fall term, and continuing into January 2016, will be filled with in-class presentations. We will also meet later in the second term (in March) when students will provide a “progress report” and preliminary findings.

Presentations

All students will make four presentations. In two of these presentations (both in the fall term) you will describe an article that is relevant and important to your thesis. 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 in which you will present your thesis as it has been planned (the proposal). The articles you use for these two presentations will provide some familiarity with some key research in your chosen thesis research area. These presentations have 5 sections: Background, Research Questions/Hypotheses, Methods, Results, Discussion.

The timing for the presentations is as follows (in minutes):

	Time for presentation	Time for questions / comments
First (article)	15	5-10
Second (article)	10	5
Proposal	20	10-15

Your third presentation will be your research proposal. More time will be allotted for the talk and the feedback in this third presentation. You need to provide the background to the research (add to the 2 articles you have already presented) and provide the details of your methodology. Your classmates will also be commenting/questioning/providing feedback on the substantive scientific aspects of your project as well as any ethical issues that are relevant. Your fourth presentation will be a progress report/presentation of preliminary results, and will take place in the 2nd term.

Note that your course mark is not just based on the quality of your presentations, but also the quality (not just quantity) of feedback you provide your peers.

The scheduling of the presentations (who goes when) will be as follows. For the two presentations on research articles and for the progress reports, students will be scheduled in alphabetical order of their last names. For the

research proposal, the more 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 everyone as best as possible.

In the second term, we will complete the presentations on the research proposals in January and later (in March) will meet to discuss progress and preliminary results from your thesis projects. Then we will not meet again until about one to two weeks before Thesis Day. At that time, over the course of one to several meetings, all students will do at least one brief (~10-15 minute) practice thesis day presentation on their theses. If your first practice presentation does not meet my expectations, you will need to give additional practice presentations until I am convinced you are ready for Thesis Day. You will be sent an email several weeks in advance to remind you of the dates of these presentations. It is your responsibility to ensure your availability on the practice days and on Thesis Day. These dates will be decided on once the final exam schedule is available (to avoid conflicts with the scheduling of exams).

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 Smith in advance.

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. Is the research question clear?
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 conclusions clearly linked to the data?
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?

Your participation grade will be based on attendance, the quality of your in class presentations, your contribution to class discussions, and the feedback you provide to your classmates on their presentations. Attendance at Thesis Day and the practice sessions for it is MANDATORY; failure to participate in these events will result in a total participation grade of 0.

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