UNIVERSITY of GUELPH

PSYC*4870 - Honours Thesis I
Fall 2025 Course Outline
Section: 01
Credits: 0.50

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

Under individual faculty supervision, students plan, develop, and write a research proposal and prepare an extensive review paper on their area of research. Group sessions are held on research ethics, subject protocols and computer data handling techniques. This course will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Note that enrolment in this course is limited and academic records are used for student selection. Course registration requires the signature of the Course Instructor. This signature is contingent upon the student demonstrating they have obtained a Thesis Supervisor's signature on the department's Thesis Registration Form and have an academic standing appropriate for application to graduate programs (see Graduate Advisory under Major).
Prerequisite(s): 14.00 credits including (1 of NEUR*3500, PSYC*3000, 7.50 credits in Psychology)
Co-requisite(s): 1 of NEUR*4000, PSYC*4780, PSYC*4790
Restriction(s): PSYC*4540. Restricted to students in BAH.PSYC, BAH.PSYC:C, BSCH.NEUR or BSCH.NEUR:C with a minimum 75% cumulative average in Psychology courses. Instructor consent required.
Department(s): Department of Psychology

Elements of this calendar description are inaccurate. Please see Course Description below instead.

Course Description

Students develop their Honours Thesis project across two (normally successive) semesters by working closely with a faculty supervisor. Students take PSYC*4870 (0.5 credits) in the Fall semester and PSYC*4880 (1.0 credits) in the Winter semester. The 1.5 credit weighing for the two courses reflects the workload and the standards set for the Honours Thesis project.

The primary goal of PSYC*4870 is to assist students in preparing a thesis proposal. Much of students' time will be spent doing independent reading, under the supervision of their faculty supervisors, to explore the relevant literature related to their thesis project.

Students will also work with their supervisors to plan their research study(s), which they will present during the fall semester in the form of an oral presentation to the class (these will be graded by the instructor and teaching assistant) and at the end of the semester in the form of a written proposal (graded by supervisor). Students will work at different speeds: some will not start data collection or analysis until January while some will be largely finished with data collection before December. Regardless, students should aim to submit ethics no later than early November as ethics must be submitted before the end of term (pass/fail). All students should be ready to begin data collection or analysis before the Winter semester begins.

Class time will also be devoted to other important topics such as: applying to graduate school, using Mass Testing and the SONA Participant Pool, conducting research ethically, completing an ethics protocol, and learning about helpful writing and presentation tools.

Lecture Schedule

Fri 11:30am-2:20pm in MCKN*229 (9/4 to 12/12)

November 21 is our last class.

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Instructor Information

Leanne Son Hing (she/her)
Email: sonhing@uoguelph.ca
Office: MacKinnon Extension room 3010
Office Hours:
Tuesdays 11-12
Office Phone: x54475

Additional Support

Teaching Assistant:

Carson Rumble-Tricker (she/her). Virtual office hours by appointment. crumblet@uoguelph.ca

Email Protocol:

Please include PSYC*4870 in subject of all emails.

I will attempt to respond to emails within 48 hours, Monday through Friday. I may respond through an announcement in class or on CourseLink if the answer pertains to the whole class.

Son Hing Office hours

To attend office hours, just drop by my office in person during the stated time - there is no need to email in advance. If you need an alternate time, please schedule an appointment for a virtual Teams meeting.

Learning Resources

Required Resources

Lectures, readings, and assignments will be posted on the course website: Course link (Website) (https://courselink.uoguelph.ca/)

I will send out announcements via Courselink, so please set up the notifications tool so that you will be immediately notified. See for instructions https://support.opened.uoguelph.ca/instructors/courselink/tools/content/notifications (https://support.opened.uoguelph.ca/instructors/courselink/tools/content/notifications/)

PEAR (http://www.uoguelph.ca/peartool/) for peer evaluations.

Campus Resources

If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with a Program Counsellor (https://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/programcounsellors/) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the Learning Commons (https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/using-library/spaces/learning-commons/) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Cost of Textbooks and Learning Resources

Textbook / Learning Resource	Required / Recommended	Cost
PSYC*4870	none	none

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Depth and Breadth of Understanding: Demonstrates knowledge of key concepts in psychology, and integrates that knowledge across disciplinary and sub- disciplinary boundaries. A successful student will be able to: • Integrate and use knowledge gained in prior courses on study design, analysis, and content by designing and implementing their own independent research project. • Conduct a literature review on the topic of the proposed research project by reading and reporting on critical empirical and theoretical work. • Identify and delineate major theories and empirical evidence related to the proposed research topic.

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2. Inquiry and Analysis: A systematic process of exploring issues, objects and works in psychology through the collection and analysis of evidence that result in informed conclusions or judgments. A successful student will be able to: • Integrate and synthesize the existing research literature in order to provide a clear justification/rationale of their own study objectives, methods, and analyses.

3. Creativity: The ability to adapt to situations of change, to initiate change and to take on intellectual risks. A successful student will be able to: • Generate and evaluate creative approaches to the study of their own and their colleagues' proposed research topic. • Adapt to different situations and emergent challenges in the process of research by generating and evaluating creative solutions to problems and creative ways of investigating topics.

4. Information Literacy: The ability to know when there is a need for information, where to locate it and the ability to identify the value and differences of potential resources in a variety of formats. A successful student will be able to: • Locate relevant information and use it to identify gaps in the existing knowledge base and design research questions and hypotheses to address these gaps in a written research proposal and thesis

5. Methodological Literacy: The ability to understand, evaluate, and design appropriate methodologies for rigorous psychological science. A successful student will be able to: • Design a methodology to answer their proposed research questions and test their hypotheses, taking into account the available research populations and contextual circumstances.

6. Quantitative Literacy: Includes numeracy, and competence in working with numerical data. A successful student will be able to: • Conduct data collection and analyze data using appropriate quantitative or qualitative methods. • Interpret their study's findings; write the results and discussion sections with logical and evidence-based arguments.

7. Oral Communication: Includes interpersonal skills, oral (speaking), and active listening as they apply to psychology. A successful student will be able to: • Deliver an oral presentation that integrates and summarizes their research proposal. • Communicate effectively with other academics in a professional context using a poster presentation of their honours thesis. • Present information in ways that are readily understandable to people from a variety of psychology backgrounds. • Actively listen, reflect upon, and respond to questions while acknowledging limitations to one's own knowledge.

8. Written Communication: The ability to express one's ideas and summarize theory and research through a variety of writing styles (e.g., American Psychological Association [APA] style, papers, posters). A successful student will be able to: • Communicate constructive feedback to peers on the content and delivery of their oral presentations. • Write a research proposal that includes proposed methodology using APA style (or another, if required by the field of study). • Write a thesis document using APA style (or another, if required by the field of study). • Write in a sophisticated scientific manner, clearly conveying the key messages to a target audience. • Include a breadth of vocabulary appropriate to the discipline of psychology. • Avoid grammar, spelling, and functional errors

9. Ethical Issues in Research: Includes the understanding and application of how human and animal rights and cultural relativism applies to ethical decision making in the context of research. A successful student will be able to: • Design and prepare research ethics forms and obtain ethics approval for their project. • Understand potential ethical issues with their own research.

10. Professional Behaviour: An ability to interact with others in a respectful manner, manage several tasks at once, and prioritize. A successful student will be able to: • Negotiate and plan with supervisor for draft submissions and final deadlines. • Communicate with supervisor and instructor about expectations, research activities, performance, and feedback. Reflect meaningfully on feedback and enact positive change. • Clearly delineate roles and expectations with other lab members. • Submit early drafts of the work to supervisor in order manage the work progression. • Deliver final versions of all assignments according to deadlines and expected quality to supervisor, instructor, and teaching assistant. • Be respectful of others' points of view and their time in class, meetings, and other professional settings.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date:	Topic	Activities	Due
Fri	9/5	Introductions		
Fri	9/12	Self-guided learning: Career Exploration Assignment		Sept 26
Fri	9/19	Career Advisor, Applying for Grad School, and Scholarships		
Fri	9/26	Research Ethics Board, SONA Participant Pool		
Fri	10/3	Oral Proposal Presentations and Feedback		
Fri	10/10	Writing the Proposal		
Fri	10/17	Oral Proposal Presentations		
Fri	10/24	Oral Proposal Presentations		
Fri	10/31	Oral Proposal Presentations		
Fri	11/7	Oral Proposal Presentations		

Fri	11/14	Oral Proposal Presentations
Fri	11/21	Oral Proposal Presentations

Assessment Details

Class Attendance

Class Attendance   5%

Students are encouraged to attend class as there we will hold discussions and probe the course material. As such, attendance this term is worth 5% of your grade. Because personal factors arise that can cause legitimate conflicts (e.g., illness), only 75% (8/11 classes) attendance is required to pass this component of the course (pass/fail). Please **do not email me or the TA about missing the occasional class**. Only if an issue is ongoing and is causing you to miss 3 classes or more, then please email me or your TA.

Career Exploration Assignment

Career Exploration Assignment   5%

The goal of this assignment is to help you explore potential careers in psychology and related fields, connect them to your education, strengths, and interests, and reflect on possible pathways to these careers.

Due Sept 26 5:00pm. Complete within 3-5 double spaced pages. See courselink for more details.

10-min Oral Proposal Presentation

10-min Oral Proposal Presentation   15%

Starting in October, each student will be required to give an oral proposal presentation to the class, summarizing their planned research project. The purpose of the oral presentations is (a) to help students learn how to present research to an audience of non-specialists and handle a Q&A session, (b) to provide a forum for inquiry and constructive feedback; which is intended to facilitate and enhance the development of their own research project, and (c) for students to develop an appreciation of the diversity of topics being investigated and to foster interests in the broad spectrum of psychological inquiry.

The presentation should include background context for the study, a description of the problem to be investigated, and an account of the research methodology to be employed. A five-minute question period will follow each presentation. All students will be expected to engage in constructive critical discussion around the presentations.

We will hold a class session to prepare students for their presentations. Be sure to upload your PowerPoint presentation to **PEAR** by 1:00pm the day before your presentation (20% of your oral proposal grade is based on evaluation of these slides so ensure timely submission or you will be docked half this grade).

STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR FACILITATING THE ATTENDANCE OF THEIR FACULTY SUPERVISOR

Constructive Review of Other Presentations

Constructive Review of Other Presentations   5%

Students will act as co-reviewers of the in-class oral presenters and will provide a constructive feedback review for the students who presented during each oral presentation class. This assignment is designed to give you experience with a critical aspect of the scientific process: peer review and constructive feedback.

Students will learn how to provide constructive feedback and how to fill out and submit the constructive feedback reviews.

Constructive feedback reviews of each presenter will be submitted through **PEAR** (http://www.uoguelph.ca/peartool/) within 24 hours following the presentation session. The reviews will be confidential, allowing the reviewers to be blind to the presenters. Once all the blind reviews are submitted, presenters will be able to access the reviews. Students will submit timely, constructive, and complete feedback reviews for each presenter from at least 4 of the 6 sessions.

Please note that recordings of oral presentations will NOT be posted online, so students must attend class to observe the presentations and provide meaningful feedback for each presenter. Students are not required to submit reviews for the session in which they present (although they are welcome to do so).

After your own presentation, you will be provided with feedback from your peers.

Written Research Proposal

Written Research Proposal **15%**

Students will submit their written research proposals (to their supervisor) by 4:00pm Friday November 28. Supervisors should submit their grades to the course instructor and TA by 4:00pm Friday December 12.

The proposal should clearly define the research problem and present an appropriate research design and plan for analyses to investigate it. The proposal should clearly show how the proposed research relates to the questions drawn from the critical review of the literature.

Proposals are typically 10-12 pages long (not counting references and appendices); however, the length of your proposal will depend on your specific topic and type of research. Your advisor, the one supervising and grading your thesis and proposal, is the best person to ask about expectations in terms of length.

Before submitting the proposal, you should have delivered a minimum of one draft (typically more) to your supervisor (deadlines to be negotiated with your supervisor) for feedback to improve the final proposal.

Proposals should contain the following sections:

• Introduction

• Proposed research design and methods

• Plan for data analyses

• References

• All study materials in Appendices

Evidence of Ethics Submission

Evidence of Ethics Submission **pass/fail**

By the last day of Fall semester (before November 28), students must submit evidence of the submission of the ethics protocol to the university research ethics board or animal care committee (even if you were not involved in the production of the original protocol) to **dropbox**. A failure to submit ethics by the end of classes will result in a Fail for PSYC*4870 (and an inability to register for PSYC*4880). If for any reason, you believe that you will not meet this deadline, contact the course instructor by mid November at the latest.

Grading Schemes

PSYC*4870 is Pass/Fail.

PSYC*4880 is for grade. The components of this final grade involve both work done in the first term (PSYC*4870) and work done in the second term (PSYC*4880).

Grades reflect the demonstrated quality of your work, not the grade you need, and not just the effort you put in. It's possible to put in significant effort and still receive a mark that is lower than you had hoped for. This is a normal part of the learning process. Please know that your grades are not random or subjective decisions. Your work will be assessed carefully and consistently by me, your TA, and your supervisor, following the criteria outlined in the course. If you have concerns about how an assignment has been graded, I encourage you to reach out so we can discuss it.

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Fall 2025 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: November 28

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Late Assignments

Marks will be docked for late submissions of the proposal presentation slides, the PEAR evaluations, and the career planning assignment. 10% per day.

Course Standard Statements

Course AI Policies

1. We will spend time during the first class learning about AI and its appropriate and inappropriate use in coursework.
2. Students' work must reflect their unique intellectual capacity and demonstrate the application of critical thinking and problem solving. Unauthorized use of AI to complete assessments violates the fundamental intellectual purposes of the University and does not demonstrate student achievement of course learning outcomes. Students are responsible for appropriately referencing how and to what extent they have used AI in assessments in keeping with University and course requirements.
3. Submission of materials completed by AI, without permission of the instructor, constitutes an offence under the University's academic misconduct policies, either as a form of plagiarism or the use of unauthorized aids.
4. Career exploration assignment: You may use AI to help you edit but not write or generate your responses.
5. Oral proposal presentations: If your supervisor approves, you may use AI to help you structure, plan, and edit your oral proposal, and to help you create slides. Do not trust AI to help you generate content.
6. Peer evaluations: Use of AI is prohibited.
7. Research process, materials, written proposal: Acceptable use of AI in research should be determined by the research supervisor and may vary across disciplines, programs and types of assessments.

CSAHS Academic Misconduct Policy

The *Academic Misconduct Policy* is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar. The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and **it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct** and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Instructors **shall not** determine if academic misconduct has occurred. This is up to the Associate Dean Academic's office. Instructors shall not assign a grade of zero even if they believe that the student has committed some form of academic misconduct (e.g., copied material from a website like CourseHero) on an assignment or exam.

Instructors **can** determine if a student has poorly paraphrased and/or improperly cited material and can provide a grade accordingly as long as this is clearly identified as part of the assessment criteria via a rubric or other assessment tools.

For more information about Academic Integrity resources and how to prevent Academic Misconduct.

Standard Statements for Undergraduate Courses

Academic Integrity

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Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy (https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-misconduct/) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website. (https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas/)

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations (https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/).

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses (https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/dropping-courses/).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness (https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a Student Wellness Navigator (https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/navigators/) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our mental wellbeing resources (https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year/). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars (http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/?index) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-consideration-appeals-petitions/)