

Psychology 497: Honors Seminar
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York
Fall Semester

Instructor: Dr. Wendy Quinton (*she/her*)
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Course Section & Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 9:00-11:50am

Required Textbook:

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Other Readings:

A variety of other readings will be required throughout the course. These readings will be posted on [UB Learns](#) the week prior to our discussing them in class.

Program and Course Description:

The Psychology Honors Program is the capstone experience for psychology undergraduates at UB. The program is designed to enable students to complete an individual research project (i.e., Honors Thesis) under the supervision of a faculty advisor. The Honors Program consists of two parts. The first part is the Honors Seminar, which meets only during the Fall semester. The topics covered during the Honors Seminar are intended to help students design, execute, write, and defend their Honors Thesis. In addition, we will discuss professional skills and issues relevant to choosing a career path in psychology or other areas. The second part of the Honors Program is completion of the Honors Thesis, which students work on throughout both the Fall and Spring semesters, and defend at the end of Spring semester.

Student Learning Goals: The student learning goals for this course address the goals detailed for the Department of Psychology's Undergraduate Program ([BA](#) and [BS](#)).

After completing the Honors Seminar and Honors Program, you should be able to:	This will be assessed by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a research idea and design an empirical study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in discussion of assigned readings; writing assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, critically evaluate, and synthesize scientific literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in discussion of assigned readings; writing assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate hypotheses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in discussion of assigned readings; writing assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how to manipulate and how to measure variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in discussion of assigned readings; writing assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop research materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in discussion of assigned readings; writing assignments

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interact with research volunteers and/or subjects in a manner consistent with APA Ethical Guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in discussion of assigned readings; completion of human/animal research participant/subject training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect data* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your work with your advisor*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use statistical software to analyze data and understand what the results mean* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your work with your advisor*; Honors Thesis*; Honors Defense*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write an APA-style research proposal; write an APA-style research report (Honors Thesis)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present, explain, and defend your work to an informed audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class presentation; Honors Defense*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand of some of the options available to you if you decide to pursue a career in psychology or related fields; appropriately prepare for and navigate the graduate school application process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in discussion of assigned readings; preparation of questions for guest speakers; writing a personal statement

Note: Elements designated with an asterisk (*) are learning objectives or assessments that are part of the Honors Program, but not directly part of this semester's Honors Seminar.

As you can see, this year will be packed with activity. The Honors Program is a great deal of work but hopefully will also be a highly rewarding learning experience that is a lot of fun (*yes, fun!*).

FALL SEMESTER HONORS SEMINAR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- 1) **Class Participation**. This course is a *seminar*, which means that we will not follow a standard lecture format. As a member of the seminar, you are expected to be an active participant throughout **each** of our class meetings. Arriving on time to all class meetings and attending all classes is expected; arriving late or any unexcused absence will negatively affect your grade. Coming prepared to class (i.e., having completed all required readings and other homework relevant to particular class meetings) and thoughtfully contributing to all class discussions is also expected; lack of preparation, poor participation, or inattention during the seminar will also adversely affect your grade. Specific homework assignments (e.g., preparing questions for guest speakers, written statement of your design and hypotheses, completing human and/or animal subject IRB research certification, writing a personal statement for graduate programs or other career opportunities) will be due throughout the semester. Your class participation grade will be based on your performance on all of these elements.
- 2) **Research Proposal**^o. Your full research proposal consists of: Title Page, Abstract, Introduction, Proposed Method, Data Analysis Plan, and References. It is due on the last day of class, **12/4**.
 - **Written Statement of Design and Hypotheses**. A written statement of the design of your proposed study and your hypotheses is due **9/18**.
 - For the design, a sentence or two will suffice. For example, please indicate whether you will have a correlational research design (if so, identify your predictor and criterion variables) or an experimental research design (if so, identify each independent variable including levels and your dependent variables).
 - For your hypotheses, write out the prediction(s) you will include in your proposal. Be sure that your hypotheses are clear and follow from your design. Ask your advisor for assistance as needed.
 - **Outline of Introduction**^o. A 3-5 page outline of the Introduction section of your proposal is due **10/16**. This outline needs to: clearly set up the structure of your Introduction, cite all relevant work that you will include in your Introduction, and end with your hypotheses.
 - **Full Draft of Introduction**^o. A complete written draft of your Introduction section is due **11/6**.
- 3) **Class Presentation**^o. You will present your proposal to the class during one of the last two class meetings.

^oSee grading rubrics for each of these assignments for detailed criteria.

Course Grading Breakdown: The Honors Seminar course grades will be determined as follows:

<u>Course Assignment</u>	<u>% Worth</u>	<u>% Earned at End of Class</u>	<u>Grade in Class</u>
Class Participation:	25%	93.00% to 100.00%	A
Research Proposal:	40%	90.00% to 92.99%	A-
Outline of Introduction:	5%	87.00% to 89.99%	B+
Full Draft of Introduction:	15%	83.00% to 86.99%	B
Class Presentation:	15%	80.00% to 82.99%	B-
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100%</u>	77.00% to 79.99%	C+
		73.00% to 76.99%	C
		70.00% to 72.99%	C-
		67.00% to 69.99%	D+
		60.00% to 66.99%	D
		< 60.00%	F/FX

*Consistent with UB policy (see the Undergraduate Catalog), no Incompletes will be given to students with otherwise failing grades.

Device-free Classroom: Please turn off/silence/stow all electronic devices, including phones and laptops. This is designed to help you learn and prevent distractions to both you and those around you. The policy is grounded in research showing that hand writing notes results in better learning than typing or photos and that access to the internet is detrimental to classroom learning ([Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014](#); [Ravizza et al., 2017](#); [Wong & Lim, 2023](#)). If you require a special accommodation, please contact me.

Equity and Inclusion: The Department of Psychology is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for people from all backgrounds and a community where people respect and trust each other enough to have difficult conversations. It is expected that you will strive toward this same goal in the classroom by being courteous to your classmates, by being willing to listen to differing viewpoints and opinions, and by recognizing the inherent value in all human beings. You can find more information on the department's stance on equity and inclusion, as well as links to UB resources on our [Equity and Inclusion](#) webpage.

Course Announcements, Supplemental Readings, and Assignments: Announcements, readings, and assignments will be periodically posted on UB Learns and/or sent to your UB email account. You are expected to check both on a regular basis. Not checking these sources of information will not be accepted as an excuse for being unaware of course-related information.

Submitting Assignments: For all submitted assignments, please follow these guidelines:

- Create and save your assignment in MS Word, and submit that Word document, *not a PDF*.
- Put your **last name** then **first name** at the beginning of the document's title. Then include a brief description of the assignment. For example: Quinton-Wendy-Personal-Statement.docx
- Make sure all assignments you submit for this class are clean submissions with no previous tracked changes or comments included.
- Email it to me (wquinton@buffalo.edu) by the start of our class (i.e., 9:00am) on the due date.

Late Assignments: Assignments are expected to be submitted to me via email *by the beginning of class (i.e., no later than 9:00am)* on the specified due date. Late assignments will be accepted *without penalty* only in extreme cases of illness, emergency, or circumstances beyond your control wherein you notify me in advance of the expected missed deadline and provide a clear and well-documented explanation for the absence. To be fair to those who turn in assignments on time, assignments that are late for other reasons will be penalized one letter grade for each day that they are late.

Missed Class: Each unexcused missed class or missed portion of class (i.e., absence, partial absence, or late arrival) reduces a student's class participation grade. Absences can be excused and made up in cases of illness, emergency, or circumstances beyond your control wherein you notify me in advance to request an excused absence and provide a clear and well-documented explanation for the absence. Specific make-up work for

excused absences will be determined based on the class missed. Assigned oral presentation dates are set at the beginning of the semester; except in cases of personal tragedy or illness (where an excused absence is requested and granted), failure to complete the oral presentation on the scheduled date will result in a zero on the assignment.

Writing Advice and Assistance: Writing is a skill that improves with practice and feedback. PSY 497 and the Psychology Honors Program involve a great deal of high-level writing. Completing all writing assignments far enough in advance so that you can proofread your work (and potentially get your advisor's or other critical feedback) and make improvements as necessary is strongly recommended. UB's [Center for Excellence in Writing](#) is a helpful resource for basic writing mechanics; if you are struggling with writing in any way, use their services. *Not seeking help when it is needed and/or trying to complete writing assignments a day or two before they are due often leads to panic, poor grades, and unsuccessful completion of the Psychology Honors Program.*

Extra Credit: UB, the Department of Psychology, and I place a high value on student feedback. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to complete an online evaluation of this course. This evaluation is completely anonymous and instructors do not see the report of students' ratings and comments until after grades have posted. At the end of the semester, instructors can monitor the percentage of the class that has completed an evaluation. If 80% or more of students in this seminar complete the course evaluation, I will add 0.5% extra credit to all students' course grades. The best way to ensure that you get this extra credit is to make sure that you complete a course evaluation.

Incomplete Grades: If you are experiencing a serious, documentable problem (i.e., a death in your immediate family, serious illness) that is preventing you from optimally performing in the course, see me as soon as the issue arises to discuss an Incomplete. Incompletes cannot be given retroactively; that is, if you come see me toward the end of the semester after performing poorly and tell me you have been experiencing personal issues, I cannot give you an Incomplete. If an issue arises, you need to see me immediately to let me know that you will not be able to complete upcoming work; in that situation, an Incomplete may be an option. Consistent with UB policy (see the [UB Catalog](#)), no Incompletes will be given to students with otherwise failing grades.

Sharing of Course Performance Information: To facilitate your progress in the Psychology Honors Program, at the end of the semester, your grade in PSY 497 and feedback about your individual course performance will be shared with your advisor.

Academic Integrity: UB has a responsibility to promote academic integrity and develop procedures to effectively deal with academic dishonesty. You are responsible for the honest completion and representation of your work, for accurate citation of sources, and for appropriate conduct regarding others' academic endeavors. By placing your name on your academic work, you are certifying the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Any use of generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) is prohibited in this class and will be considered a violation of UB's academic integrity policy. If you are unsure if a resource or tool is allowable, be sure to ask. *Any* form of academic dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the [UB Catalog](#), which states that academic dishonesty may involve any of the following: being given no credit for a particular assignment, an "F" in the class, suspension, and/or expulsion from the university.

Intellectual Property: All materials prepared and/or assigned by me for this course are for the students' educational benefit. Other than for permitted collaborative work, students may not photograph, record, reproduce, transmit, distribute, upload, sell or exchange course materials, without my prior written permission. "Course materials" include, but are not limited to, all instructor-prepared and assigned materials, such as lectures; lecture notes; discussion prompts; study aids; tests and assignments; and presentation materials such as PowerPoint slides; and course packets or handouts. Public distribution of such materials may also constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law. Violation of this policy may additionally subject a student to a finding of "academic dishonesty" under the Academic Integrity Policy and/or disciplinary charges under the Student Code of Conduct.

Office of Accessibility Resources: If you have a disability (physical or psychological) and require reasonable accommodations to enable you to participate in this course, such as note takers, readers, or extended time on assignments, please contact me and the [Office of Accessibility Resources](#) (AR), 60 Capen Hall, 716-645-2608, during the first two weeks of class. OAR will provide you with information and review appropriate arrangements for reasonable accommodations.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PSYCHOLOGY HONORS PROGRAM

Spring Semester: There is no seminar during the Spring semester, but you will still enroll in “Honors” credits by registering for the 497-level Honors course associated with your faculty advisor, who will be responsible for the grade given. During the Spring, you should spend your time completing all tasks necessary (e.g., data collection, data analysis, writing) to finish your Honors Thesis. I will remain available to help during the Spring semester (feel free to e-mail, stop by my office hours, or make an appointment to see me).

Honors Thesis: The final (i.e., complete, advisor-approved) version of your individual research project write-up (i.e., Honors Thesis), containing Title Page, Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, References, and Table(s)/Figure(s) (if included) is due **Monday, May 5**. Be sure to give your faculty advisor adequate time to read many drafts of your Honors Thesis so that you will meet this deadline. Your advisor must approve your Honors Thesis prior to you turning it in on 5/5. You need to submit your advisor-approved thesis in electronic format on the due date; specific information regarding where, how, and to whom you will submit it will be provided during the Spring semester.

Oral Defense: During the Spring semester, you will schedule the oral defense of your work. Your oral defense will involve a committee of two faculty members (not your Honors Thesis advisor) who will meet to hear you give a brief presentation of your project and then pose questions to you about your work. Once I assign committee members, you are responsible for contacting them to schedule the date and time of your oral defense. Information regarding scheduling a meeting time and site and reserving necessary equipment (e.g., laptop, etc.) will be provided during the Spring semester.

Graduation with Honors and the Feldman-Cohen Award: If you successfully complete an Honors Thesis and oral defense, you will receive one of three levels of Honors at graduation: Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors; students who submit an Honors Thesis that is evaluated below threshold and/or whose performance during the oral defense is evaluated below threshold will not receive any level of Honors. The awarding of Honors, including level of Honors, is primarily determined by input from the two faculty members who form your oral defense committee; your faculty advisor’s input may also factor into the decision. If one Honors Thesis in a given academic year is evaluated as superlative (both in write-up and oral defense), the student who authored the project may receive a special honor, the Feldman-Cohen Award. This honor, which includes a monetary award, is typically given to a student who receives Highest Honors and is judged to have the superior project in a given year. If none of the projects is evaluated to be of exceptional quality, the Feldman-Cohen award may not be conferred. In the event of a tie, I will cast the deciding vote.

Fall Course Outline:

Week	Seminar Topics & Assignment Due Dates
<u>Week 1:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Honors Seminar
<u>Week 2:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Research Ideas
<u>Week 3:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with Your Advisor; Becoming a Professional
<u>Week 4:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DESIGN AND HYPOTHESES DUE** • Graduate School: The Application Process and Beyond
<u>Week 5:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **PERSONAL STATEMENT DRAFT DUE** • Writing a Research Proposal: Part 1 (APA Style, Introduction, etc.)
<u>Week 6:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a Research Proposal: Part 2 (Method, Results, Statistics, Discussion, etc.)
<u>Week 7:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **CITI CERTIFICATION DUE** (email me a copy of your certificate) • Ethics in Research
<u>Week 8:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **OUTLINE OF INTRODUCTION DUE** • Career Paths in Psychology

<u>Week 9:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing Yourself Well: Online Presence, CVs, Job Applications, and Interview Skills
<u>Week 10:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Writing Day—No Class</i>
<u>Week 11:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **FULL DRAFT OF INTRODUCTION DUE** • Organizing a Talk about Your Research
<u>Week 12:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive Criticism: How to Give It, How to Take It
<u>Week 13:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **CLASS PRESENTATIONS**
<u>Week 14:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thanksgiving Break—No Class</i>
<u>Week 15:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **COMPLETE RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE** • **CLASS PRESENTATIONS**