

Psychology Honors I
PSYC 490, Section 001
Spring, 2012

Facilitator/Instructor: Dr. Linda Chrosniak **Office:** David King Hall 2045
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Readings:

- Readings from faculty: articles and/or chapters (distribution process will be discussed in class)
- Additional reading materials will be distributed throughout the semester during class.

Recommended Texts:

- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition).
 - Dunn, D. S (2011). A short guide to writing about psychology (3rd Edition, Longman. Boston.
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Course Objectives:

This course will examine current experimental and theoretical issues in the field of psychology. A variety of research domains within the field of psychology will be explored, with special emphasis placed on research areas of interest to George Mason University faculty members. In addition, speakers from other institutions may make presentations to the class.

Expectations:

- The Honor Code of George Mason University will be strictly enforced in this course. It is a student's responsibility to be familiar with the Honor Code and to abide by it at all times.
 - Class participation and discussions are essential for a complete educational experience. Class attendance is expected. It is extremely important to arrive to class on time, as a display of professional courtesy and respect.
 - Students should be able to comprehend, critique, and discuss scientific readings. All readings should be completed before they are covered in class. These readings are a part of students' training for understanding scientific articles and writing their own research papers.
 - Students should be prepared to discuss topical issues related to class material and readings. Oral defense of ideas is as important a skill as written presentation.
 - Students should demonstrate a high level of sensitivity and respect towards other classmates, particularly when personal experiences or differing opinions are being shared.
 - Students should develop professional communication skills through interaction with researchers in the field of psychology.
 - Students should make some preliminary choices regarding their own honors projects and possible project committee members, following exposure to research being conducted in the department, usually by the end of the semester.
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Grading: Final grades will be based on a 100 point scale.

99 - 100 = A+	87 - 89 = B+	77 - 79 = C+
93 - 98 = A	83 - 86 = B	73 - 76 = C
90 - 92 = A-	80 - 82 = B-	70 - 72 = C-

Specific Breakdown of Points

10 points: Preparation, Attendance, and Participation

Class participation will constitute 10% of the final grade in the course. Participation points will be assessed based on frequency of class attendance and the quality (not quantity) of contributions to class discussion. Students will lose one point for each class absence, starting after a second absence. For example, if you miss three classes you

will have the opportunity to earn only 8 out of the possible 10 participation points. Honors students are expected to attend every class. The two penalty-free absences are expected to be used for emergency situations only. Frequent late arrival to class will also affect the participation grade and may result in lost points.

20 points: Research Participation

By the end of the first semester in the Honors Program, each honors student should have a tentative idea of what he/she would like to do for the research project in the Honors Program. In order to make informed choices about research interests and possible faculty committee members, students are required to engage in some participation in a research laboratory or laboratories within the department. Each hour of laboratory participation will be worth 1 point. Therefore, you will need to have 20 hours of quality participation in order to earn full credit. You are encouraged to explore different laboratories, ask questions, gather information, interact with faculty, and read research articles. This involvement creates the foundation from which the independent honors projects will be constructed (i.e., it's worth the time and effort). There are a variety of quality activities that would count for this participation which are listed below. Please note that this does not mean signing up to be a participant in a study. These requirements will be further discussed in class and on an individual basis.

Students will need to keep a log of laboratory participation usually for a given day. Document the amount of time worked and the tasks accomplished. Make sure to include the name of the faculty member or supervisor of the laboratory. These supervisors may be contacted at the end of the semester to help assess the quality of your participation and thus, determine your final participation grade. All laboratory work must be completed by Monday, April 30th. Final laboratory summaries/logs are due at the beginning of class on **Wednesday, May 2nd 2012.** (Note: there is no particular format for the submitted log. It should just be in a table format and provide all requested information.)

Research participation may be defined in the following ways. Some other ways may come as we move through the semester.

- Shadowing an established researcher in the lab (graduate student or advanced honors student)
- Interviewing established lab team members to learn more about the lab's theoretical framework, research methodology and/or current projects
- Attending laboratory meetings (with the permission of the faculty member)
- Actively assisting in research (data entry, testing subjects, analyzing data, etc)
- Other activities may qualify as participation, as long as the student and faculty agree in advance.
- Completion of the CitiProg course (required by GMU for research with human subjects)

Please be sensitive to the fact that many faculty members require a specific time commitment from students who work in their laboratories. Ask permission to participate, be clear about the extent of your participation, and be aware of faculty expectations. Use these interactions to polish your professional interpersonal skills.

30 points: Two "Thought" Papers

You will be required to write two 15 point "thought" papers. These papers will require a careful consideration of the current state of the field of psychology. *You are encouraged to discuss the paper topics with faculty members, community professionals, graduate students and/or other students.* Although ***only you*** should write the paper, ideas can be gathered from many sources. These should include personal contact with faculty, graduate students or community professionals. Online sources such as APA should be a minimal part of your resources. Please do not send out mass e-mails to faculty members asking them questions. You should make appointments or use other opportunities to discuss the topics in person.

Papers should be 3-4 pages, double-spaced and typed. Papers will be graded based on the following: ideas: thoughtfulness, organization, supporting ideas, logic and spelling/grammar. Late papers will be penalized two points for each day beyond the deadline. A paper submitted after the start of class on the assigned date will be considered one day late. Late papers should be placed under my door or in my mailbox (Chrosniak) in David King Hall or submitted during class time.

You should **bring 21copies of your paper to class on the scheduled due date** to distribute copies to the instructor and to your classmates. During scheduled 'discussion days,' we will discuss the different perspectives

addressed in these papers. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss any and all of your classmates' papers. (As an alternative, papers may be distributed electronically to classmates.)

PAPER #1: Due Wednesday, February 22nd

What is (are) the goal(s) of psychology? Is one more important than the other? How are they accomplished? Is the field of psychology doing a good job of meeting these goals? Where are we headed in the future?

PAPER #2: Due Wednesday, March 7th

Psychology is sometimes considered a social or "soft" science. There is often a line drawn between research within the field of psychology and research in the "hard" science fields, such as biology, chemistry, or physics. Why is this distinction drawn? Is it an appropriate division? Why or why not?

20 points: Introduction to Honors Thesis (Draft 1): Due Wednesday, April 4th

The thesis draft (3-5 pages in length) should be a preliminary introduction section for your honors project. In order to write this paper, you will have to choose a specific topic of interest. You do not need to know the precise methodology you plan to use; however, you do need to have a narrow, achievable (albeit, tentative and early) project goal. The introduction section will summarize some of the research that has been done in your general area of interest and should be written in APA style.

Start with an opening paragraph that defines the general topic of interest to you. Then, begin with broad ideas and move to more specific ideas and research examples. Each of the studies that are particularly relevant to the study you may plan to do will probably will require a paragraph or two of explanation. Aim for around 4-7 references citations at this point. Some will be only mentioned to support a point. Others will be described in a paragraph or two as part of the rationale for your study.

You may want to refer to published journal articles to give you an idea of how an introduction should be written. However, keep in mind that these are generally longer and more detailed than published papers. Whereas a published paper may mention a relevant study, in a thesis, that study might require a paragraph of explanation. Your job in your thesis is to demonstrate to your committee that you 1) are knowledgeable about the research that has been done in your area of interest, 2) can communicate that information to an educated audience in a scientific manner, and 3) are able to justify the need/purpose of your own study. Sample theses can be found in the Honors Library held in my office in David King Hall 2045.

We will have writing workshops throughout the semester and it is important to utilize published resources that are recommended.

20 points: Introduction to Honors Thesis (Draft 2): Due Wednesday, April 25th

After you receive feedback on the first draft of the introduction, you will have the opportunity to improve and expand on that draft. If you plan to continue with your original topic, your paper should be expanded to approximately 8-10 pages in length, and should include about 10-15 references. You also have the option of changing topics at this point. If you do so, follow the guidelines for draft 1 on your new topic.

By the end of the semester, you should have a tentative idea of which faculty members you might want to have on your committee. (Hopefully, you have been talking with the faculty member and have developed some sort of relationship but your decision does not have to be firm at this point.) List the faculty members whose research interests you on a separate sheet of paper and submit it with Draft 2.

Class Schedule:

Below is a tentative class schedule. The schedule will be updated throughout the semester, and revised versions will be distributed during class time and by e-mail. Students are responsible for knowing the updated information, including reading assignment and class location (if changed).

Graduating with Honors:

Students must finish the Honors Program with at least a 3.5 grade point average (GPA) across their three honors courses (i.e., Honors I, Honors II, and Honors III) in order to graduate with honors. In addition, students must maintain an overall GPA of at least 3.25 and a psychology GPA of at least 3.4.

Last Day to Add (Full Semester Course)	January 31, 2012
Last Day to Drop (Full Semester Course)	February 24, 2012
Elective Withdrawal Period (Full Semester Course)	February 27- March 30, 2012

Additional Information:

If you are a student with a documented disability and require some academic accommodation, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703)993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE
(Updated versions will be distributed throughout the semester)

DATE:	SPEAKER or ACTIVITY:	REQUIRED READING(S) & SPECIAL
LOCATIONS:		

1/23	Welcome and Orientation	
1/25	Dr. Christy Esposito-Smythers (Clinical Psychology)	
1/30	Dr. Adam Winsler (Applied Developmental)	Reading posted on Blackboard
2/1	Dr. Robert Smith Department Chair (Biopsychology/Cognitive Neuroscience)	
2/6	Dr. June Tangney (Clinical Psychology)	Tangney, June et. al. (2007). Working at the social-clinical-community-criminology interface: The George Mason University Inmate Study, <i>Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology</i> , 26, 1-21 (available online)
2/8	General Discussion	
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2/13	Dr. Reeshad Dalal (Industrial and Organizational Psychology)	
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2/15	Dr. Keith Renshaw (Clinical Psychology)	
2/20	Student Panel: Discussion of Graduate School and Honors Process	
2/22	Thought Paper 1 due (Distribute copies to classmates and Instructor)	
2/27	Dr. Carryl Baldwin (Human Factors and Applied Cognition)	
2/29	Paper 1 Discussion Thought Paper 2 assigned	
3/5	TBA	

3/7	Thought Paper #2 Due (Distribute copies to classmates and Instructor)
3/12-16	Spring Break (No Class)
3/19	Discussion (Paper 2) & Thesis Writing Workshop
3/21	TBA
3/26	TBA
3/28	Dr Ellen Rowe (School Psychology)
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4/2	Dr. Susanne Denham (Program Director: Applied Developmental Psychology)
4/4	Dr. Johannes Rojahn (School Psychology Program) Thesis draft #1 Due
4/9	TBA Discussion, Thesis Draft 1
4/11	TBA
4/16	TBA
4/18	TBA
4/23	TBA
4/25	Thesis Draft #2 Due (bring 1 copy to class)
4/30	Research Participation Logs due
5/2	Last Day of Class Thesis Draft # 2 returned