

Psychology 396/398: Psychology Honors Research Seminar

Mondays 11:10am-12:25pm

Dr. Sarit A. Golub

Office: HN 1209 Email: sgolub@hunter.cuny.edu

Office hours by appointment

This course is for students who are completing a Psychology Department Honors Thesis project. The goals of the course are to:

1. Provide students with advice and support in the components of thesis writing (e.g., literature review, methods, figures and tables, results, citation and plagiarism, APA style)
2. Provide students with guidelines for timely completion of the thesis (e.g., thesis schedule worksheet, guidelines for working with your mentor)
3. Assist students in creation of key professional development “products” (resume, cover letter, personal statement, conference abstract)
4. Provide a capstone experience in the presentation of their thesis (either a poster or PowerPoint presentation)

Each semester includes specific thesis support and professional development content that is linked to the stage of the process (and career) for the majority of students. Class time will involve lectures by the instructor, group discussions, and targeted exercises.

The required text for this course is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition. The APA manual is critical to the completion of a honors thesis that conforms to APA style.

1. Course Content

The main content of the course is divided into two categories – thesis support topics and professional development topics. See the course schedule on page 5 of this syllabus for a list of topics and dates.

A. Thesis Support Topics

Thesis support topics were chosen to provide students with support on each component of the thesis. Certain topics (e.g. Finding good sources, reading journal articles) are geared toward students in 396 and others (e.g., writing a results section) are geared toward students in 398. However, all sessions are open and available to students in either section.

1. Thesis Scheduling/Working with your Mentor. This topic is designed to help students plan ahead for the timely completion of their thesis and to assist them (where necessary) in developing and maintaining a productive relationship with their mentor. This topic is covered in two course sessions: one designed for students in 396 (focusing on the first semester of thesis work) and one designed for students in 398 (focusing on the second semester and finishing the thesis). All students will complete a Thesis Schedule Worksheet (see course requirements, below) outlining target dates of completion of thesis components in collaboration with their mentor, which will be revisited periodically to assess progress.

2. Finding Good Sources and Using the Library. Two sessions (students pick one that fits their schedule) will be delivered by library staff to teach students about the resources available through the library and to provide them with training on how to use databases to find relevant articles and sources.
3. Reading (and Citing) Journal Articles; Avoiding Plagiarism. This topic is designed to teach students a method for reading and digesting articles used in their thesis literature review. It also focuses on correct citation procedures and good practice strategies to avoid plagiarism.
4. Organizing and Outlining your Introduction. This topic focuses on techniques for creating a coherent, well-organized, and compelling introduction to the thesis.
5. Writing a Methods Section. This topic focuses on the components of APA style for methods sections and assists students in determining the correct level of detail to include in sections on participants, materials, procedures, and analysis.
6. Writing a Results Section. This topic focuses on the components of APA style for the results section, including presentation of Tables and Figures, including appropriate statistics, and providing the correct level of detail in describing findings.
7. What's in a Discussion? This topic focuses on crafting compelling and appropriate discussion section including interpretation of results, contextualization within the larger literature, description of limitations and alternate interpretations, implications for future research and/or practice.

B. Professional Development Topics

Professional development topics were chosen to provide students with information and resources in the production of a professional development portfolio that they can use for post-graduate applications to both employment and graduate school. Three portfolio items are required of students in 396 and two are required of students in 398; however, professional development sessions are open to students in either section.

1. Careers in Psychology. This topic will cover the range of potential job paths open to students with a degree in psychology, including strategies for job searches and applications. This session will also cover specific tips for writing a compelling cover letter for a job application.
2. Introduction to Graduate School. This topic will explore the different types of graduate programs in psychology (and closely related fields) and will describe the different requirements for admission and graduation. This session will also cover specific tips for writing a compelling personal statement for graduate school.
3. Writing a Resume. This topic will cover how to write a resume tailored for graduate school or a specific job application. In this session, students will be encouraged to bring copies of their resume and workshop them in class.
4. Writing Conference Abstracts This topic will cover strategies for writing clear, concise, and compelling abstracts for conference submissions. The session will be focused on writing abstracts for the specific conferences to which 398 students will apply to present their theses. Students will be encouraged to bring drafts of their conference abstracts and workshop them in class.

5. Creating Effective Posters and Oral Presentations. These two sessions will focus on elements of effective and engaging poster and oral presentations. These sessions are designed to help students in 398 prepare their posters and presentations for their conference requirement and to teach students in 396 how to critique posters and presentations (see course requirements, below).

2. Course Requirements

The primary course requirement is the submission of five professional development portfolio products (three in 396 and two in 398). Detailed instructions for the creation of each portfolio items will be discussed in class and supplemental materials will be posted on Blackboard. **Portfolio items must be submitted through Blackboard; click on the tab that says "Submit Portfolio Items HERE."** All portfolio items must be completed by the due dates indicated below.

Required Portfolio Items for Students in Psych 396

1. *Application Item (pick one)*
 - a. Cover letter for a job. Students identify a job posting and write a letter of application.
 - b. Personal Statement for Graduate School. Students identify the graduate program to which they might apply and write a personal statement appropriate to the program.

The application item (either the cover letter or personal statement) is due 10/30 by 5pm.
2. *Resume/Curriculum Vitae.* Each student will prepare a version of their resume that could be used for graduate school or job applications. Students will also develop a set of specific goals for improving their resume over the course of the coming year. **The resume is due 11/20 by 5pm.**
3. *Two Critiques of poster or oral presentations.* The class will attend the Psychology Honors Conference (Fall), the Undergraduate Research Conference (Spring) or the Psychology Convention (Spring) to see the thesis presentations from Psych 398 students. In addition, students are encouraged to attend talks at the Hunter Psychology Department Colloquium (schedule attached). Each student will provide two written critiques, based on guidelines and a critique form presented in class. At least one of the critiques must be of an oral presentation; the second critique may be of an oral presentation or a poster. **Both critiques are due by 12/15 by 5pm.**

Required Portfolio Items for Students in Psych 398

1. *Conference Abstract.* Each student will prepare a 250 word abstract of their thesis project, conforming to APA guidelines. The conference abstract will be used for submission to the Psychology Honors Conference (Fall), the Undergraduate Research Conference (Spring), or the Psychology Convention (Spring). **Conference Abstracts are due 11/13 by 5pm.**
2. *Capstone Presentation.* Each student will prepare either an oral presentation or a poster for presentation at the Psychology Honors Conference (Fall semester students), the Undergraduate Research Conference (Spring semester students only), or the Psychology Convention (Spring semester students only). **A copy of the completed poster or PowerPoint must also be turned in on Blackboard and is due 12/15 by 5pm.**

Additional Requirement for All Students

In addition to the required portfolio items, all students (396 and 398) must submit a Thesis Schedule Worksheet by **5pm on Friday, September 25th**. The Thesis Schedule Worksheet will be discussed in detail on the first day of class, and is also submitted through the Assignments tab on Blackboard.

The Psychology Honors Conference for the Fall semester will be on Friday, December 4th, from 3pm -7:30pm. All 398 students are required to present their oral presentation or poster on that date. For students with unresolvable scheduling conflicts, please contact Dr. Golub to make alternate arrangements.

3. Grading

Students receive their 396/398 grade from their thesis mentor, based on their performance on their thesis project. However, in order to be eligible to receive their thesis grade, they must complete all the course requirements for this seminar. ***In other words, if a student does not complete one of the portfolio items, he/she will receive an incomplete for the thesis project in lieu of their grade.*** Students with an unresolved incomplete at the time of graduation will not be listed as receiving honors in the Commencement Bulletin.

4. Students with Time/Scheduling Conflicts

Students who must take another required course to graduate at the same time that this course is offered may apply for a waiver from the psychology department to exempt them from course attendance. **All students with a waiver must attend a course orientation session during Dean's hours on Wednesday, September 2nd (1:15pm -2:30pm).** Students with an attendance waiver are still required to complete all the course requirements and hand in materials by the due dates listed in the syllabus. Materials to aid these students in the production of course requirements will be provided on Blackboard. **Students with attendance waivers are still required to present their thesis** at the Psychology Honor Conference (Fall), the Undergraduate Research Conference (Spring) or the Psychology Convention (Spring).

5. Other Information and Groundrules

- Science tolerates all points of view when they are advanced with **sensitivity** for those who may not share them. Please keep in mind that your fellow students may not share your religious affiliations, political beliefs, cultural backgrounds, or sexual orientations. Please speak carefully and with respect during all class discussions.
- No form of **academic dishonesty** will be tolerated. Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.
- In compliance with the **American Disability Act** of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (emotional, medical, physical, and/or learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call (212-772-4857) / TTY (212-650-3230)

6. Course Schedule (dates in red are designed for 396; dates in blue are designed for 398; dates in purple are designed for both)

Date	Topic	Portfolio Item Discussed
8/31	Introduction to Psych 396	Thesis Schedule Worksheet for 396 Due: 9/25
9/10 *THU	Introduction to Psych 398	Thesis Schedule Worksheet for 398 Due: 9/25
9/21	Introduction to Graduate School	Personal Statement Due: 10/23
9/28	Writing a Methods Section	
10/5	Careers in Psychology	Cover Letter Due: 10/30
10/19	Reading (and Citing) Journal Articles; Avoiding Plagiarism	
10/26	Writing Conference Abstracts	Conference Abstracts Due: 11/13
11/2	Writing a Resume or CV	Resume/CV Due: 11/20
11/9	Writing a Results Section	
11/16	Outlining and Organizing your Introduction	
11/23	Creating Effective Oral Presentations	Oral Presentations Critiquing Oral Presentations Due: 12/15
11/30	Creating Effective Posters	Posters Critiquing Posters Due: 12/15
12/7	What's in a Discussion	
12/14	Thesis Workshop	

In addition to these class sessions, there will be two sessions delivered by Library Faculty on "*Finding Good Sources and Using the Library.*"

9/10 (*Thursday; Classes on Monday Schedule) 11:10-12:25pm. Thomas Hunter Room 405.

9/29 (Tuesday) 2:30-3:45pm. Hunter Library, Room 114.