



Psychology

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

SCARBOROUGH

PSYD98: Thesis in Psychology
Fall 2023 – Winter 2024 Syllabus

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Instructor Information

Debra Bercovici (she/her)

Email: d.bercovici@utoronto.ca

- Please put course code (PSYD98) in the subject line for prioritized responding
- Replies within ~24 business day hours.

Office Hours:

- One-on-one
- By appointment
- Book via my [Calendly page](#)
- Access my [Zoom office](#)

I'm available to discuss course content, address concerns about the course or your UTSC experience, talk about grad school and non-academic career paths, and find ways to connect you with resources to better support you as a student.

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students in the programs in Psychology or Mental Health Studies with an intensive research apprenticeship in their field. In the process of collaborating with a faculty advisor, students will develop the skills necessary to conduct and present original research. These skills include library research, designing experiments, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting results, writing, and public speaking.

Prerequisites

Admission to PSYD98 requires the supervision of a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at UTSC, or the supervision of a researcher outside UTSC with the co-supervision of an internal faculty member. More information regarding admission to the course can be found on the UTSC Department of Psychology website.

Additionally, students must ordinarily have the following prerequisites to enroll in the course:

- Specialist or Major in PSY or MHS
- cGPA of 3.3 or higher over the last 5.0 credits completed.
- Completion of the following courses or their equivalents: PSYC02, PSYC70, and [PSYC08 or PSYC09]

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this course, you should...

...have experience carrying out an original research project from start to finish, including:

- Proficiency in formulating a research question and hypotheses.
- Proficiency in conducting a literature review.

- Proficiency in operationalizing a research question using appropriate methodological techniques.
- Experience in collecting data using such methods.
- Experience in analyzing and reporting data using appropriate statistical methods.
- Proficiency in drawing conclusions from such data

...be well versed in ethical issues in psychological science, including experience in submitting and amending ethics protocols for research with human and non-human animal subjects.

...be proficient in presenting research in the following formats: an oral research proposal, a conference poster, and a formal paper.

...be proficient in writing an abstract according to the standards of the field.

...know how to craft and update a curriculum vitae (CV) according to the standards of the field.

...be proficient in communicating and collaborating with colleagues at various levels of experience (e.g., other undergraduate student peers, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and research supervisors).

Course Logistics

Class Meetings

Meetings for this course will take place in person in **AA 204 from 1pm to 3pm**. Class will **not** meet each week, so be sure to see the course calendar below for the schedule.

Based on the university policy for thesis courses, attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken at each session. **Failure to attend at least 50% of the scheduled meetings in either term may result in failure of the course.** Students whose attendance record is low will be asked to meet with the course instructor and with their supervisor at the end of the fall term.

[Quercus Modules](#)

You can find each weekly module on Quercus. At the top there is a Student Resource tab with links to various campus supports available. Subsequent weekly modules contain the learning objectives and checklists for each week. I recommend taking a look at the checklist at the beginning of the week so that you are aware of any upcoming deadlines, administrative updates, or helpful links. The module page is also where you will find any weekly lecture content.

Course Schedule

Schedule subject to change (Last updated Sept 5, 2023)

Dates	Topic	Evaluations
Sept 8	Introductory Meeting	Library Research Survey Due: Fri Sept 15 th @ 11:59pm Presentation Sign Up Due: Fri Sept 29 th @ 11:59pm
Sept 22	Library Research Workshop Guest: Sarah Guay, UTSC Library	Ethics components (3) Due: Fri Oct 6 th @ 1pm
Oct 6	Applying to Graduate School Guest: Prof. Jon Cant	
Oct 27	Ethics in Human and Animal Research + Writing a Research Proposal	Research Proposal Due: Fri Nov 3 rd @ 11:59pm
Nov 10	Writing and Maintaining an Academic CV + Giving Effective Oral Presentations	
Nov 17	Class Presentations I	
Nov 24	Class Presentations II	
Dec 1	Class Presentations III	
Jan 12	Thesis Formatting	Introduction Draft Due: Fri Jan 26 th @ 1pm
Jan 26	Writing Workshop with Faculty and Staff from the UTSC Writing Centre and Library	Methods draft Due: Fri Feb 9 th @ 1pm
Feb 9	Data Analysis Workshop Guest: Prof. Olivia Podolak Lewandoska	Peer Review Due: Fri Feb 16 th @ 11:59pm
Mar 1	Poster Formatting	
Mar 15	Optional class: Writing/Poster Workshop	Electronic Poster Due: Tues Apr 2 nd @ 11:59pm
Apr 5	Optional class: Writing Workshop	Thesis Due: Fri Apr 5 th @ 11:59pm
Apr 9 (Tues)	Thesis Day, 10:00am-4:00pm (arrive at 9:00am)	

Evaluation Scheme

For a detailed description of each graded component, please click on an individual item to go to the associated page on Quercus.

[Thesis Supervisor Mark](#)—60%

[Secondary Reader Mark](#)—15%

In-Class Components—25%

- [Ethics](#) (10%)
- [Research Proposal](#) (10%)
- [Proposal Presentation](#) (30%)
- [Introduction](#) and [Methods](#) Drafts + [Peer Review](#) (15%)

- [Final Poster Presentation](#) (35%)

Grades will be posted directly to your [gradebook](#) on Quercus. Once grades are released, you will be able to access any associated rubrics, individual feedback, and grading keys directly from each individual item's Quercus page. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

Please also note that final grades posted on Quercus are not considered official until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course.

Submitting Written Work

All submissions (excluding presentations) are to be completed on Quercus. You can access the assignment pages directly from the [assignments tab](#), or from the [Course Schedule](#). **Online submissions automatically close at the due date and this will prevent you from submitting a late assignment.** If we do not have an arrangement, late work will not be accepted and will receive a score of 0%. Please see the [Accessibility](#) section of this syllabus for more information.

Deadlines have been input into Quercus and should automatically appear in your Quercus calendars. In addition, you can keep track of due dates by referencing the [Course Schedule](#). Please be mindful that **deadlines are inconsistent**. Some deadlines are at midnight, some are due by the time class starts, and some are due on weeks where we do not meet.

Our Classroom Community

Inclusivity and Safe Classrooms

(Inspired by the Safe Classroom statement from Dr Lily May's 2021 syllabi at UBC)

Our classroom is a community where students should feel included and are treated equitably. This refers to identities including, but not limited to, gender identity, gender expression, sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, political and religious affiliation, disability, health, and age. When we encounter controversial and/or sensitive issues, discussion is encouraged. However, students should feel safe to explore ideas without fear of being judged. If a statement or behaviour is likely to offend/alienate/discriminate against others, it should not be shared with the class. Instead, please share it with me after class or during office hours. Any behaviour that compromises the safety of our environment will not be tolerated and you will be asked to leave the space (Zoom or in-person). If at any point during the semester you feel offended, threatened, or alienated by anything that happens during our class (including by me), please feel welcome to let me know.

One thing to keep in mind is that we are bound to make mistakes in this space, as does anyone when approaching complex topics. Strive to see your mistakes and others' as valuable elements of the learning process. I am also constantly learning from my mistakes.

A note on masking: I view masking as an example of accessibility, inclusivity, and classroom safety. While it is not a requirement, I encourage wearing a mask in class.

Accessibility

If you have accessibility needs, you are welcome in our classroom community. Here are some ways I am committed to increasing classroom accessibility:

- Encouraging mask-wearing.
- Upholding classroom safety.
- Creating unambiguous instructions/expectations and grading rubrics.
- Providing weekly checklists.
- Sharing classroom content ahead of class.
- Posting all course content online.
- Honouring accommodations for all students, regardless of diagnosis, disability status, or affiliation with AccessAbility Services.
- Virtual one-on-one office hours available on most days of the week with flexible online booking system.

If there is a specific accommodation you need and it is not listed, please reach out to me so that we can make the course work for you. **You can reach out to me at the start of the semester and as needs arise/change, expected or unexpected.** I will advocate for you if there is a need that isn't being met.

Seeking accommodations for your needs shouldn't be burdensome. However, this course necessitates stricter deadlines and attendance than other courses due to the collaborations between you and your classmates, supervisors, and departmental administration/policy.

Therefore, email me or book an office hour with me as soon as you require an accommodation to work out a suitable arrangement. *Please be aware that not all accommodations are possible (e.g., there is only one Thesis Day!) and not all reasons are considered sufficient (e.g., travel for leisure, work commitments, etc. do not qualify for missed work).*

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is what all members of the UTSC community, from first-year undergraduates to publishing professors, aspire to when they do research. Having academic integrity means taking responsibility for and having pride in your work, especially when it connects through practices such as crediting the work of others.

Having strong academic integrity is a qualifying behaviour that welcomes you as a scholar to the academic community.

Academic Integrity is about being loyal and respectful to those who have created content and about encouraging you to create work independently that you can feel proud of. Working with academic integrity means:

- **Doing your own work:** everything you submit should be completed by you.
- **Avoiding collusion:** this involves working too closely with your peers without authorization.
- **Not sharing materials** provided to you in this course. Please respect the copyright surrounding the work I've put in to offer you this course. If you'd like to share the content I've created, please speak with me first.
- **Engaging** with the ideas of others, both past and present, in a variety of scholarly platforms such as research journals, books by academics, lectures, etc. But also...
- **Explicitly acknowledging** the sources of your knowledge, especially through accurate citation practices

As members of our learning community, I want to invite you to spend some time thinking about what academic integrity means to you. What behaviours can you and your classmates engage in to make sure you are achieving your learning objectives and that your work is something you can be proud to represent.

If you are at risk of breaching academic integrity due to external and extenuating circumstances or a lack of accessibility, please come talk to me about how we can make the classroom a place where these coping mechanisms aren't necessary.

University Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters

If there is a breach in academic integrity, you may face consequences as per the university policy. The [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines what constitute academic dishonesty and the processes U of T takes for addressing academic offences.

My Teaching Values

Transparency

Being transparent is important to me and my goal is never to conceal my motives. If something is unclear, that's my bad. Please point it out and I'll clarify!

Non-hierarchical learning

I don't like to pretend that I am the expert. I may know more about certain topics than you, but I am confident that in other domains, you hold more knowledge and experience than I do. I invite you to share when I've said something wrong or when you have a better idea than me.

Student/Community-driven learning

If something I'm doing isn't conducive to your learning, I'm open to altering course. You are the ones paying for this education, and you deserve to learn in a way that is best for you.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

The University of Toronto is located on land belonging to the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. The Scarborough campus is also located on land belonging to the Anichnabeg, the Chippewa, and the Haudenosaunee peoples. In addition to settling on stolen traditional and ancestral land, we are occupying it for the purpose of participating in an educational system that was built on and continues to uphold colonial frameworks.

Many non-Indigenous folks, me included, have settled on this land for comfort, safety, and opportunity. It is important to me that I reflect on how being here offers more opportunities for myself, like being a member of a world-renowned university, but comes at the expense of the Indigenous communities we perpetually displace and exclude. I invite you to reflect on your own positionality and what it means for you to be on this land.

To learn more about the land which we are occupying, as well as about land acknowledgements, visit [Native Land.ca](https://www.native-land.ca)

If you have ideas on how we can incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into our classroom, I would be eager to learn.