

## Departmental Honors Track in Psychology

### About

The Departmental Honors Track in Psychology offers students in the Honors College a rigorous, research-oriented curriculum with which to pursue their Bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Utah. This is the only program through which psychology majors can have the Honors designation appear on their degree. The centerpiece of the Psychology Honors Track is a research project culminating in the submission of a written thesis and its presentation in a public forum. This guide provides all you will need to know to get started and ultimately complete your Psychology Honors Thesis.

### Important People to Know

**Faculty Research Advisor.** Each student is independently supervised by a Faculty Research Advisor. This is most often a faculty member within the Department of Psychology who has agreed to supervise the student on their Honors Thesis project. Research advisors are typically secured the semester before your Phase 2 application. Although you may work closely with a graduate student or a postdoctoral scholar, each student is required to have a Faculty Research Advisor. More information about Faculty Research Advisors can be found on pg. 5.

**Honors Faculty Advisor for Psychology.** The Honors Faculty Advisor, or **HFA**, is a faculty member within the Psychology Department who directs the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology. The HFA also teaches the Honors Thesis course series (PSY 4998/PSY 4999). The HFA will work in concert with the Faculty Research Advisor to guide students through the completion of their Honors Thesis.

**Honors Teaching Assistant for Psychology.** The Honors Teaching Assistant, or **Honors TA**, is typically an advanced graduate student in Psychology. The Honors TA will assist with the Honors Thesis course series (PSY 4998/PSY 4999). The Honors TA also serves as a resource for students who are interested in learning more about conducting Honors Research and, along with the HFA, can help students identify research opportunities.

**Honors Advisory Committee.** The Honors Advisory Committee, or **HAC**, is typically made of up three members (the HFA, Director of Undergraduate Studies in Psychology, and a representative faculty member or Dean of the Honors college). The HAC will be in charge of reviewing the Psychology Honors Track procedures, as well as student applications, petitions, and performance.

### Whom Do I Contact For Questions?

- For questions about getting research experience, your Honors Thesis, or the Phase 2 application process, students should reach out to the HFA or Honors TA.
- For questions about the Honors College requirements or degree-related inquiries, students should reach out to the Lead Academic Advisor for Psychology or an Honors College Academic Advisor. We recommend that all Honors College students who are majoring in psychology meet with both the Psychology lead advisor and the Honors College advisor.
- Contact information for the current HFA, Honors TA, and academic advisors can be found on the University of Utah Psychology Honors [Webpage](#). This information may be updated each academic year.

### Additional Resources:

- Honors College [Webpage](#) and Honors advising [Webpage](#)
- Department of Psychology advising [Webpage](#)

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## Requirements of the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology

The Departmental Honors Track in Psychology is intended to be flexible and accessible to all interested and eligible students, including transfer students (please see special notes below for transfer students). Honors Track requirements typically take a minimum of three semesters to complete. To receive an Honors Bachelor's degree in Psychology, students must meet all of the following requirements:

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- Be admitted to the University Honors College. (Visit [honors.utah.edu](https://honors.utah.edu) for more information on requirements and how to apply).
- Meet all requirements for a Bachelor's degree in Psychology.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 overall, a minimum grade of B in all Psychology courses, and a cumulative GPA of 3.5 in all Psychology courses.
- Complete 6 units (typically 2 semesters)<sup>1</sup> of Research Experience (PSY 4800-4806)<sup>2</sup> in approved laboratories.
  - Research experience (PSY 4800-4806) conducted with a faculty member in Psychology is automatically approved as meeting this requirement.
  - Research may be completed with a faculty member outside the Psychology Department only with approval from the Psychology Honors Faculty Advisor. See the Lead Academic Advisor in the Psychology advising office for more information.
  - **Transfer students:** Transfer students who enter with more than 59 credits may fulfill the research experience requirement with 3 units of PSY 4800-4806.
- Complete at least 9 additional units of Psychology Honors electives (see Appendix 1 for a list of approved Honors electives).<sup>3</sup>
  - **Transfer students:** Transfer students who enter with more than 59 credits may fulfill the Honors elective requirement with 6 units.
- Submit a successful Phase 2 application (deadlines are typically in October and March)
- Complete 6 units of honors thesis coursework as part of the two-semester thesis course series (3 units of PSY 4998 and 3 units of PSY 4999).
- Submit a written Honors Thesis (see pg. 3). The format of the Honors Thesis should be consistent with standard scholarly practice (i.e., Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, and References, following APA style). As per University Honors policy, the thesis must be completed "with distinction." Students will receive guidance and feedback on multiple drafts

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<sup>1</sup> The minimum requirement is 2 semesters of research totaling 6 credit hours, but students are encouraged to pursue their research in greater depth. Start early if you can!

<sup>2</sup> The specific course number for Research Experience enrollment will depend on your field of study and the faculty lab you are enrolling in. Each Professor has a different section number. Please be sure to check with Psychology Major Advisors regarding the specific course number you should enroll in.

<sup>3</sup> Praxis is 9 credits total and has been approved to fulfill the elective requirement. Learn more at [honors.utah.edu/praxis-labs](https://honors.utah.edu/praxis-labs).

on their written thesis as part of PSY 4998 and PSY 4999.<sup>4</sup> The final thesis is due in the same semester in which PSY 4999 is completed. Exceptions must be approved by petition.

- Present the results of their research in an appropriate public forum (i.e., CSBS Research Day, Undergraduate Research Symposium,) approved by the Psychology Honors Advisory Committee. For examples of posters presented at the 2020 Undergraduate Research Symposium, see [here](#).

### **Requirements for Transfer Students**

*Welcome to the U!* We recognize that students who transfer to the U have less time to meet Honors Track requirements. As noted above and summarized below, the program was designed to permit transfer students (those entering with more than 59 credits) to complete the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology by altering two key requirements:

1. Transfer students may satisfy the research experience requirement with 3 units of Psychology 4800-4806 (rather than the 6 units listed above).
2. Transfer students may satisfy the Psychology Honors Elective requirements with 6 credits of Psychology Honors Electives (rather than the 9 units listed above).

### **Sample Timelines for Completing the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology**

Sample research timelines for completing the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology are presented in Appendix 2. Note that there is a separate sample timeline for students who started their careers at the U and for those who joined us as transfer students. There is also a sample timeline for students who plan to graduate at the end of the Fall Semester (rather than the more typical timing of a Spring Semester graduation). All timelines are provided as an example, but there are multiple ways to arrange your schedule to complete Honors Track requirements, including research experience and the Honors Thesis itself. The Honors Faculty Advisor and Psychology Advisors can work with students to create an individualized plan. This advanced planning will be especially helpful to those of you completing more than one major and those of you involved in certificate programs, premed classes, and other activities that involve meeting multiple requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> These two classes are typically taken during your final year (PSY 4998 in Fall and 4999 in Spring). However, some students elect to start the sequence with PSY 4998 in Spring and PSY 4999 in Fall if they have completed the required research experience credits in their first and second years (see Appendix 2).

## Overview of Honors Thesis Research

The Honors Thesis in Psychology is a research project culminating in the submission of a written thesis and its presentation in a public forum, typically a poster session. The Honors Thesis in Psychology can take many forms, described below. This is typically completed in students' final year at the U.

**Format.** The Honors Thesis is prepared in a form similar to a psychology journal article, with a title, abstract (approximately 200-250 words), introduction (literature review, statement of research question and hypotheses), a complete method section (participants, design, procedure, measures), a complete results section (all analyses and results, with tables and figures to illustrate), a discussion section (outlining implications and conclusions), references, and where appropriate, acknowledgments of funding sources or conflicts of interest. In the PSY 4998 class, we cover how to write the sections and work with you to refine them through peer feedback and feedback from the Honors Faculty Advisor, the Honors TA, and your Faculty Research Advisor. These activities continue through the PSY 4999 class.

**Length.** The written product (Honors Thesis) is typically 15-35 pages long, including any tables, figures, and references. The appropriate length depends on the complexity of the research question (theories, methods, findings, discussion of implications for theory, alternative explanations, strengths and limitations of the study, clinical or practical applications, future research directions). The length may also depend on standards for journals in the particular subfield of psychology (cognition and neural sciences, clinical neuropsychology, clinical psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, health psychology, human factors, etc.).

### What Can I Do for My Thesis Research?

There are several different kinds of research projects that may be appropriate for the Honors Thesis in Psychology. Importantly, the kind of project to be undertaken may be highly individualized – it is something that you and your Faculty Research Advisor will design together. Thus, the descriptions below are general and should be customized to your interests, those of your Faculty Research Advisor, and current research opportunities. These following options should be discussed in consultation with your Faculty Research Advisor.

#### Collecting Your Own Data (New Data)

One type of project involves designing and conducting an independent experiment, survey/questionnaire, interview, or focus group study in collaboration with your Faculty Research Advisor. These options have the value of providing hands-on experience with data collection. However, these typically take more time, not only because the researchers must enroll participants and collect data but also because a human subjects ethical review (IRB application) must typically be successfully completed before data collection can begin. (For some faculty labs, an IRB approval may already be in place, in which case no extra time need be allotted.) Our recommendation is that students interested in collecting new data for their thesis should be working on their thesis idea in the spring of their junior year (and no later than the summer before their senior year) to allow time for the human subjects review and data collection. When deciding whether to collect your own data, it is important to consider whether your research question involves a hard-to-reach-population (e.g., students who are from underrepresented groups or participants who are involved in a specific type of therapy). Underrepresented and patient populations often take longer to recruit, and thus you need to have a clear and feasible timeline in place that allows for participant recruitment and data collection.

### **New Analyses with Data That Have Already Been Collected (Existing Data)**

Not all successful thesis projects involve collecting new or independent data. In many cases, consistent with trends for interdisciplinary research and team science, students have the opportunity to work with data that have already been collected in larger research projects (but not analyzed). This is fine, as long as the thesis carves out an independent literature review, presentation of hypotheses, new analyses, and other elements of the thesis. Many successful honors theses have been completed using data from projects that would otherwise be beyond the scope of an honors thesis because they involve data that are too expensive or time-consuming for students to collect on their own or that involve special populations (e.g., cancer patients, justice-involved youth) or equipment (e.g., fMRI) to which students would not ordinarily have access for research purposes. An example of this approach would be an Honors Thesis in which a student analyzed qualitative data (like interviews with adolescents and their mothers or with cancer patients) collected as part of a larger study.

In cases in which a Faculty Research Advisor does not have existing data suitable for an Honors Thesis, students may use a number of datasets available online (e.g., the [General Social Survey](#), [Project Implicit](#), or [Pew Research Center](#)). If you will be using datasets outside of your immediate lab, the student and Faculty Research Advisor are responsible for ensuring these datasets have been made available for public use or outside analyses (all examples listed above allow researchers affiliated with academic institutions to download and use these datasets). Other options capitalizing on existing data can include archival research (e.g., analyzing publicly available records, such as historical speeches or diversity statements) or conducting a meta-analysis (an analytic technique that calculates effect sizes for particular findings in order to examine all available studies on a question and then quantify in a common metric the overall strength of research evidence for a particular relationship).

### **Advice on Choosing a Topic**

Many students believe that an independent research project means they need to come up with the ideas, design, measures, funding, etc., on their own. This is almost never the case. Instead, you will work with a Faculty Research Advisor to jointly develop an idea that advances knowledge in some area of psychology. Almost always, the project is in the area of expertise and research interests of the Faculty Research Advisor (that way, the Faculty Research Advisor can offer meaningful guidance). The Psychology Honors Faculty Advisor and Honors TA can help you think through your interests and identify potential Faculty Research Advisors. In some cases (which require approval from the HFA), Psychology Honors students may have a Faculty Research Advisor who has an appointment in a different department, as long as the project primarily involves some aspects of Psychology (see “Admission to the Psychology Honors Track Program” for additional details). It would be highly unusual for a Faculty Research Advisor to agree to supervise a project outside of his or her area of expertise.

**The best advice** we have for thinking about potential topics and research opportunities for your Honors Thesis **is to get involved in a faculty research lab**. This will give you exposure to the research literature and methods used in a particular area of psychology. We realize that this is challenging as many labs cannot take on a large number of undergraduate researchers, so please consult with the Honors Faculty Advisor and/or Honors TA if you would like help identifying research opportunities. You may also wish to ask professors and instructors of your current courses if those courses spark an interest in what you are learning.

## Admission to the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology

The application process consists of two phases.

**Phase 1** is an initial application to the University Honors College. Students are encouraged to make their initial application to the Honors College as early as possible in their academic careers in order to receive Honors-related advising concerning coursework and research opportunities. This initial application consists of materials required by the Honors College for their application. See this [website](#) for the current application requirements. If students are already enrolled in the Honors College, then Phase I has been completed.

**Phase 2** is the Honors Thesis Research application. The [Phase 2 application](#) is submitted to the Psychology Department and describes the proposed thesis project and its timeline. Prior to submitting a Phase 2 application, students must secure a Faculty Research Advisor who will agree to supervise the Honors Thesis. The application requires three elements: (1) 1-2 page description of project (including rationale, hypotheses, proposed methods, proposed analyses, and importance to theory and application), (2) ½ page timeline outlining the steps needed to initiate, conduct, and complete the project, (3) a letter of support from a faculty member who has agreed to supervise the thesis. Phase 2 applications are reviewed twice per year, typically in October and March. Students should plan to submit this application in the Spring semester of their Junior year or credit equivalent for transfer students. Alternative timeline options are provided in Appendix 2.

**It is important to emphasize that initial acceptance into the Honors College does not guarantee successful completion of the Departmental Honors Track.** Students must complete their research experience units with distinction and find a Faculty Research Advisor willing to supervise their thesis.

**Finding a Faculty Research Advisor.** Typically, the Faculty Research Advisor will be a faculty member in the Department of Psychology with an active research program. The Psychology HFA and Honors TA can assist in identifying potential advisors, but cannot guarantee the availability of particular faculty or the willingness of faculty to supervise theses. Advisement by faculty who are not in the Psychology department is allowed upon approval by the HFA, provided the research topic is related to psychological science. In cases where students have well-defined research interests that are not represented by departmental faculty, a student may petition to have a primary advisor from another department (e.g., Psychiatry, Educational Psychology, or Neurobiology & Anatomy) provided that the petition outlines plans for coordination with the psychology HFA and that the resulting thesis conforms to the standards of the Department of Psychology. A meeting between the faculty outside the department and the HFA is necessary before approval can be granted.

**Notes for Students Already Involved in a Faculty Research Lab.** Most departmental faculty require at least one or two semesters of research experience in their own labs before considering supervising students for the Honors Thesis. However, being already involved in a lab does not guarantee that you will be able to conduct your Honors Thesis in that lab. Faculty willingness to supervise students varies depending on a variety of factors, including advisors' other commitments, preferences for certain types of projects, and a student's past performance in their lab. Thus, if you are already involved in a lab and would like to continue working with your Faculty Research Advisor on your Honors Thesis project, you should approach that individual **prior** to making your Phase 2 application to the Honors program. If your advisor is unable to support your Honors Thesis, you can still apply, but will need to make alternate arrangements for mentorship (that is, find another Faculty Research Advisor). These alternative arrangements need to be in place by the time of the Phase 2 Honors Thesis application.

## Petition Process and Student Evaluation

We encourage students to be both active and *proactive* in seeking help from the HFA, the Honors TA, their Faculty Research Advisor, and the Psychology lead advisor and Honors College Advisors in making sure that they stay on track to complete the Honors Thesis. If a student is not on track to complete their Psychology Honors Thesis, it is recommended that they reach out to these sources of support to formulate a plan to get back on track following any issues or delays.

**Student evaluation and continuation in the Honors Track.** Although the Honors Advisory Committee (HAC) will officially admit students to the departmental honors track, individual faculty members retain full discretion in agreeing to supervise students for the Honors Thesis. For example, a Faculty Research Advisor may elect to admit an honors student to his or her lab on a provisional basis prior to formally agreeing to supervise an Honors Thesis. If the student demonstrates insufficient performance or does not meet deadlines, the Faculty Research Advisor must first notify the student in writing that they are not meeting the expectations and standards of the Departmental Honors Track (with copies to the HFA and HAC). This notification must set clear guidelines for steps that a student must take to remain in good standing in the lab and complete an Honors Thesis. Following major issues or repeated performance issues, a Faculty Research Advisor may decide to discontinue advising a student in their lab and/or may decline to supervise the student's Honors Thesis. The HAC will provide guidance to faculty and students on ways that faculty should communicate their individual expectations concerning the quality, amount, and timeliness of research productivity they expect from Honors students. The HAC can further provide feedback to students on how to meet these expectations.

In addition to the discretion of the Faculty Research Advisor, the HAC also has discretion concerning whether to allow students to remain enrolled in the Departmental Honors Track. For any of the following reasons, the HAC may review a student's progress in order to evaluate continuation in the program:

1. If a student changes their proposed thesis project, they will need to petition the HAC and submit a new written proposal, which the committee will review before determining whether a student may continue in the program. Note that this petition and new proposal are only required for major changes. If questions arise about what constitutes a major change, we recommend early consultation with the HFA.
2. If a Faculty Research Advisor is no longer willing to advise a student (due to performance issues or changes in a faculty member's availability to supervise the thesis), the Faculty Research Advisor shall advise the HAC. Unless a new advisor can be secured within 2 months, the student will be terminated from the Departmental Honors Track. If a new Faculty Research Advisor is secured, then a new proposal must be submitted and a consultation with the HAC must occur before continuation in the program is granted.
3. If a student cannot complete all Honors Thesis requirements on time while enrolled in PSY 4998/4999, they must petition the Honors Advisory Committee with reasons for the delay and a timeline for completing the requirements (see "Petition Process" section below for more information on submission and evaluation of student petitions). Petitions for Honors Thesis extensions must be signed by the student's Faculty Research Advisor to indicate they have agreed to a revised timeline and are willing to continue to supervise the thesis. If the HAC approves, then the student will have no more than one year from the completion of PSY 4999 to finish the Honors Thesis. If the student does not complete the Honors Thesis and meet the requirement for presentation in a public forum within the established timeline, they

will be terminated from the Departmental Honors Track and will not receive a passing grade in either PSY 4998/4999.

4. If a student is not making sufficient progress in PSY 4998 per the HFA or the Honors TA, then a formal meeting of the HFA with the student and the student's Faculty Research Advisor must occur before the student may enroll in PSY 4999.

**Petition process.** The HAC will evaluate all student petitions regarding Honors electives and other program requirements. These evaluations will be completed on a rolling basis (at least monthly), with all decisions communicated in writing (typically email) to students, their Faculty Research Advisors, and the Psychology Advising Center. This Handbook notes when petitions are needed for various exceptions or delays, including but not limited to the following:

- Course substitutions for the Honors Track Requirements should be submitted here before the Phase 2 application: <https://csbs.utah.edu/forms/petition-course-substitution.php>
- Petitions for extension or delays of the Honors Thesis should be submitted via email to the HFA (see point 3 above).
- Petitions for substitution of required research experience should be submitted to the HFA prior to the Phase 2 application.
- If a student changes their proposed thesis project, they should email the HFA as soon as possible, who will provide guidelines on creating the petition and forward the information to the HAC for review if needed.
- If you encounter issues or delays for which you are unsure how to proceed during your Honors Thesis, please contact the HFA for advisement and additional information on any required petitions or memos.

**Remediation and reinstatement.** The HAC will work with individual students and Faculty Research Advisors in cases where a student is making insufficient progress in either the research experience requirements or the Honors Thesis Research (including PSY 4998/4999) or needs to repeat a course to maintain his or her GPA at the 3.5 level required for successful completion of the program. In all such cases, a written plan of remediation and conditions for reinstatement to full departmental honors status will be formulated, and student progress will be monitored through the Psychology Advising Center as needed.

## Student Events, Presentation Opportunities, and Recognition at Graduation

**Presentation Opportunities.** All Honors students are *required* to present their work in poster form at **one** of the following venues: the [CSBS Research Day](#), the University of Utah [Undergraduate Research Symposium](#), or any other special undergraduate research presentation events on campus (or virtually). Students may also present their work at other state-wide and national research conferences, as well as University of Utah student research days at the state legislature (e.g., [Research on Capitol Hill](#)) and other professional and community venues as appropriate.

**Outstanding Psychology Honors Thesis Award.** The department will award a prize for the most Outstanding Psychology Honors Thesis in the amount of \$500 each year. Approximately one month prior to Spring graduation, the Honors Faculty Advisor will solicit drafts or final projects to be included for consideration for the department thesis award. Self-nominations for the award are allowed. Interested students should notify the HFA. The review of submissions and selection for the award is conducted by the Department of Psychology Undergraduate Committee. Although submissions are due in Spring, students completing their thesis in either the Fall or Spring semesters are eligible for the award. The winner of the award will be announced at the Honors College graduation as well as at the departmental graduation ceremony in the Spring.

**Departmental Graduation Ceremony.** The Department of Psychology has a long tradition of inviting Honors students and their families and other guests to participate in our special departmental graduation ceremony and reception that recognizes Honors Track students, Master's degree recipients, PhD recipients, and student, faculty, and staff awards. Honors students will receive recognition of their accomplishments in the department program and will be individually introduced and celebrated during a formal ceremony attended by their advisor, other faculty members, and fellow Honors students. This event is typically scheduled after the CSBS Graduation Ceremony. If this event is virtual, students will be invited to attend and will receive a formal e-program to send to family and guests (e.g., [2020 Commencement Program](#)). The Honors Faculty Advisor and Honors TA will provide information to students about this event during Psy 4998/4999.

### Additional Opportunities & Resources

**Publication in the University of Utah Undergraduate Research Journal (URJ).** Students have the option to submit their Honors Thesis Research to the [University of Utah Undergraduate Research Journal](#). Submitting one's research to the URJ should be discussed in consultation with your Faculty Research Advisor. This is not a requirement of the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology.

**Undergraduate Research Scholar Designation.** [This designation](#) appears in the awards section of student transcripts to recognize a student's commitment to their development as an undergraduate researcher. To be eligible for this optional designation, you must both present at the Undergraduate Research Symposium and publish your work in the Undergraduate Research Journal (see above). This is not a requirement of the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology.

**Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) and Funding.** Students can optionally apply for the UROP program (<https://our.utah.edu/urop/>) or small research grants (<https://our.utah.edu/for-students/travel-small-grants/>) through the Office of Undergraduate Research. This is not a requirement of the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology and can be completed concurrently with the Research Experience course (PSY 4800-series) and the Honors Thesis work (PSY 4998/4999). That is, research experience and student research projects supported by UROP may be the same projects that students conduct to meet requirements of the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology. In this way, funding from UROP may help students meet these requirements.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: I am just about to start my senior year. Am I too late to do the Honors Thesis?**

**A1: If you already have research experience in a psychology lab** (typically, through enrollment in the 4800-series research experience classes required for the Honors degree), you may still be able to complete the two-semester honors thesis sequence, but you would need to submit the Phase 2 application before the deadline, which is typically in mid-March. Exceptions are sometimes made for applications submitted in Summer provided the student has a plan in place for successful implementation of the thesis and has petitioned for a Phase 2 application deadline extension with the HFA.

**A2: If you do not have any research experience**, it may be too late by the start of your senior year to make arrangements to complete the honors thesis. We recommend a *minimum* of three semesters to complete the required research experience, plan the thesis, submit your Phase 2 application, and then complete the thesis (taking PSY 4998 and PSY 4999 in consecutive semesters). You should still contact the Honors Faculty Advisor to discuss your unique situation and examine your options.

### **Q: What is the PSY 4800-series research experience class, and how do I sign up for it?**

**A:** The PSY 4800-series consists of several research lab courses that students may take for credit to satisfy the Research Experience requirements for the Honors degree. This course is for those who have made arrangements to work in a faculty lab (e.g., as a Research Assistant), and **students can only enroll with instructor permission**. These classes are typically taken for three units, although some faculty may be willing to supervise students for a lower number of units per semester (these arrangements are made individually with faculty labs). Importantly, there is no formal class to attend. Instead, you will likely be invited to attend lab meetings. Performance in this course series is evaluated by fulfilling all required lab duties. This is why you will almost never see days and times listed for classes in the PSY 4800-series. Individual faculty and supervisors will communicate the projects and tasks you will be expected to complete within your lab.

The reason we say 4800-series is that each of the major substantive areas of psychology has its own course number – for example, Social Psychology has PSY 4806. There is then a unique section number that corresponds to each member of the faculty—students should ask advising for the section number that corresponds to their faculty lab. This number can change each semester, and faculty are unlikely to know their own section numbers for this reason. To illustrate, let's say you have made arrangements to work with Dr. Jacqueline Chen in her social psychology lab. You would sign up for Psychology 4806-004 if Dr. Chen's section number were 004. It is essential to get this information right, or your grading information will go to another faculty member who has no way to know whose lab you are in!

### **Q: What is the PSY 4988/4999 series, and how do I sign up for it?**

**A:** PSY 4998/4999 is the Honors Thesis course series, which guides students through completion of their Honors Thesis project, presentation, and final written product. Students must enroll, and exhibit satisfactory performance, in **both** courses for completion of the Honors Track in Psychology (see pgs. 1-2 for more information). Students can only enroll in these courses after approval of their Phase 2 application. All students whose Thesis Proposal has been approved are guaranteed a spot within PSY 4998/4999 (this course will never “fill up!”). Permission codes are given out by the HFA.

**Q: If a faculty member has agreed to have me work in their lab as a Research Assistant (RA), does that mean that the faculty member has agreed to supervise my Honors Thesis?**

**A:** *No, this is a separate determination, and decisions about Honors Thesis advisement are often based on your performance as a Research Assistant in a faculty member's lab (see next question below and pg. 5 for more details).* If you are having a good learning experience in your current lab, and you have a strong interest in the research areas covered by the lab, you should ask the faculty member supervising the lab to meet with you to discuss whether he or she is willing to supervise your Honors Thesis (we recommend having this discussion well in advance of the Phase 2 deadline). These decisions are made on an individual basis, and may depend on things like a faculty member's other advising commitments, sabbatical leave (if they are not "in residence," they will be hard for you to find and probably not a good choice to supervise your thesis), and other responsibilities. If a faculty member declines to supervise you for the Honors Thesis, it does not necessarily mean that he or she doubts your capabilities as a student. Instead, the professor may simply be overcommitted. In that case, ask if the faculty member might recommend you to another faculty member as you work with the HFA and Honors TA to find another Faculty Research Advisor.

**Q: How do I show good performance as a Research Assistant in a faculty lab?**

**A:** In addition to completing all assigned tasks to the best of your ability and by any deadlines you are given, ask questions. Ask about the rationale for the study – why is it important, what theories are involved? Ask if there are additional readings that would help you understand the theoretical approach to the research, the methods used, controversies in the particular area of study, and so on. These individual research experience courses (PSY 4800-series) will be what you make them, and taking these active steps to learn as much as you can from the faculty member and graduate students working with him or her will greatly increase your learning experience. Keep in mind that in asking a Faculty Research Advisor to supervise your Honors Thesis, you are asking that person to work with you for one year or more. For that reason, faculty often wish to see how students fulfill their responsibilities as RAs before agreeing to supervise you for this intensive individual research experience (see more on pg. 5).

**See here for additional FAQ's:** <https://psych.utah.edu/undergraduate/honors/honors-faq.php>

## **Appendix 1**

### **Honors Electives in Psychology**

There are two different kinds of official Honors Electives in Psychology that may be used toward the nine required credits of Honors Electives in Psychology. **Honors-designated sections and classes** of any Psychology courses may be used toward the nine required credits of Honors electives in Psychology. If you are signing up for a course that has an official Honors section and a regular section, be sure that you are enrolling in the Honors section. Otherwise, you cannot use the course to meet the Honors elective requirement. **Psychology classes at the 5000-level** also count as Honors electives.

**Important Note:** Honors electives may not be used to fulfill both major and Honors Track requirements. Any course that carries the HON designation may NOT be used to fulfill a requirement elsewhere in the major (i.e., PSY 4455 would not fulfill both an Honors Elective AND elective for the general psychology major; similarly, PSY 3461 Honors Health Psychology can fulfill an Honors elective, but NOT a core area). It is possible through a special exception to take an Honors course to meet a core requirement, but it would count only as the core requirement and not as an Honors elective – please see the Psychology lead advisor for details (this will not happen automatically and requires a petition for a special exception).

Below is a list of elective options that may be offered in Fall and Spring semesters, but offerings will vary by semester. Remember always to check the class schedule for the official list of courses offered in a particular semester, and be sure you are enrolling in the Honors section of the course if it has more than one section. Courses meeting the Honors Elective requirement are rarely if ever offered in the summer, so it's important to plan carefully based on Fall and Spring offerings. Example syllabi will be made available on the Psychology Honors Track webpage. You may also wish to see if these syllabi are posted on the webpages of individual faculty instructors.

#### **Honors Courses and Honors Sections**

- 3461 Honors Health Psychology (3)
- 4080 History and Theories of Psychology (3)
- 4130 Cognition in the Wild (3)
- 4455 Honors Intergroup Relations (3)
- 4460 Social Psychology of Health and Illness (3)
- 4960 Honors Topics in Clinical Psychology (3)
- 4961 Honors Topics in Developmental Psychology(3)
- 4962 Honors Topics in Cognitive Psychology (3)
- 4963 Honors Topics in Personality & Social Psychology (3)

#### **5000-Level Classes**

Instructor consent is required to enroll in any of the courses below.

- 5120 Advanced Human Cognition (3)
- 5150 Advanced Cognitive Electrophysiology (3)
- 5220 Cognitive Development across the Lifespan (3)
- 5250 Applied Statistics (3)
- 5260 Social Development across the Lifespan (3)
- 5360 Biological Bases of Affective and Cognitive Processes (3)
- 5410 Advanced Social Psychology (3)

5420 Methods in Social Psychology (3)  
5499 Introduction to Quantitative Methods (single-semester advanced stats class) (3)  
5700 Neuropsychology (3)  
5775 History and Psychology of the Gay Family in America: Origins, Context, & Implications (3)  
5950 Gender & Sexual Orientation (3)

**Approved Honors Electives Taught Outside of the Psychology Department**

Below are preapproved courses outside of the Psychology Department that may count for one elective. Except for the Praxis lab, only one course from this list may be taken as a Psychology Honors elective.

ED PS 5060 Forgiveness & Anger Reduction (3)  
ED PS 5061 Change Using Positive Psychology  
ED PS 5062 Coping with Difficult People (2)  
ED PS 5063 Enhancing Happiness and Life Satisfaction (3)  
ED PS 5064 Resilience after Divorce: Life Reconstruction  
ED PS 5065 Quality Intimate Relationships (3)  
ED PS 5066 Growing from Traumatic Life Experiences (3)  
ED PS 5067 Overcoming Self-Defeating Behavior (3)  
ED PS 5068 Meditation & Stress Reduction (3)  
ED PS 5069 Change Addictive Thinking (3)  
ED PS 5070 Changing Children's Behavior Using Positive Methods (3)  
ED PS 5072 Positive Psychology of Work & Career (3)  
ED PS 5073 Positive Psychology of Disability (3)  
ED PS 5074 Developing a Healthy Body Image (3)  
ED PS 5960 Special Topics in Educational Psychology  
LING 5240 Child Language Acquisition (3)  
HONOR 3200 Research University (3) (may only count if a different course is used to fulfill the Honors writing requirement)  
HONOR 3214 Foundations in Social Sciences (3)  
HONOR 3300 Deductive Logic (3)  
HONOR 3700 Praxis Lab (4.5 Fall, 4.5 Spring)  
PBHLT 5530 Global Health

**Appendix 2**

**Sample Research Timelines for Completing the Departmental Honors Track in Psychology**

**A. Students Who Start Their College Career at the U.**

Year 2 Fall/Spring/Summer	Year 3 Fall                      Spring/Summer		Year 4 Fall                      Spring	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply to Honors College (Phase 1)</li> <li>• Begin applying for research labs (PSY 4800-4806) – it's fine to start your research experience early!</li> <li>• Reach out to HFA or Honors TA for introductory meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete <a href="#">Honors Track Checklist</a></li> <li>• Make advising appointments with Psychology Lead Advisor and Honors College Advisor</li> <li>• Secure a Faculty Research Advisor</li> <li>• Research Experience: PSY 4800-4806 (3 units)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Phase 2 application (deadline typically in mid-March, extended to late June in pandemic era)</li> <li>• Begin planning Honors Thesis research</li> <li>• Research Experience: PSY 4800-4806 (3 units)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in PSY 4998</li> <li>• Plan and conduct Honors Thesis research</li> <li>• Begin writing abstract, introduction, and method sections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in PSY 4999</li> <li>• Analyze your data, write results and discussion sections</li> <li>• Present your Honors Thesis research</li> <li>• Write and submit Honors Thesis</li> <li>• Apply for graduation (yay!)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You need to complete a total of 9 units of Honors electives (see Appendix 1).</li> <li>• It doesn't matter when you complete electives, but you should keep a close eye on the schedule of classes as specific courses may be offered only every other year or every 3 years. Ask the HFA or Psychology Advisor for a list of Honors electives or consult the Psychology Honors Track webpage.</li> </ul>				

**B. Students Who Transfer to the U with More Than 59 Credits.**

Year 3		Year 4	
Fall	Spring/Summer	Fall	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply to Honors College (Phase 1)</li> <li>• Begin applying for research labs (PSY 4800-4806)</li> <li>• Make advising appointment with Psychology Lead Advisor and Honors College Advisor</li> <li>• Reach out to HFA or Honors TA for introductory meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete <a href="#">Honors Track Checklist</a></li> <li>• Research Experience: PSY 4800-4806 (3 units)</li> <li>• Secure a Faculty Research Advisor</li> <li>• Begin planning Honors Thesis research</li> <li>• Submit Phase 2 application (deadline typically in mid-March, extended to late June in pandemic era)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in PSY 4998</li> <li>• Plan and conduct Honors Thesis Research</li> <li>• Begin writing abstract, introduction, and method sections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in PSY 4999</li> <li>• Analyze your data, write results and discussion sections</li> <li>• Present your Honors Thesis Research</li> <li>• Write and submit your Honors Thesis</li> <li>• Apply for graduation (yay!)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You need to complete a total of 6 units of Honors electives (see Appendix 1).</li> <li>• It doesn't matter when you complete electives, but you should keep a close eye on the schedule of classes as specific courses may be offered only every other year or every 3 years. Ask the HFA or Psychology Advisor for a list of Honors electives or consult the Psychology Honors Track webpage.</li> </ul>			

**C. Students who start their college career at the U and plan to apply for a Fall Graduation**

Year 2 Spring/Summer	Year 3		Year 4		Graduation
	Fall	Spring/Summer	Fall	Spring	Fall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply to Honors College (Phase 1)</li> <li>• Begin applying for research labs – it's fine to start your research experience early!</li> <li>• Reach out to HFA or Honors TA for introductory meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete <a href="#">Honors Track Checklist</a></li> <li>• Make advising appointment with Psychology Lead Advisor and Honors College Advisor</li> <li>• Research experience: PSY 4800-4806</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure a faculty mentor</li> <li>• Research Experience: PSY 4800-4806</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit Phase 2 application (typically October)</li> <li>• Research Experience: PSY 4800-4806</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in PSY 4998</li> <li>• Plan and conduct Honors Thesis Research</li> <li>• Begin writing abstract, introduction, and method sections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in PSY 4999</li> <li>• Present your Honors Thesis Research</li> <li>• Write and submit your Honors Thesis</li> <li>• Apply for graduation (yay!)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You need to complete a total of 9 units of Honors electives (see Appendix 1).</li> <li>• It doesn't matter when you complete electives, but you should keep a close eye on the schedule of classes as specific courses may be offered only every other year or every 3 years. Ask the HFA or Psychology Advisor for a list of Honors electives or consult the Psychology Honors Track webpage.</li> </ul>					