THE PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS PROGRAM

I THINK IT MIGHT BE FOR ME?
HOW CAN I GET STARTED?

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WHAT IS THE PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS PROGRAM?

• Senior undergraduate capstone experience, taken in 4th or final year of study, September to April.

• You complete an original research project under the supervision of faculty member, spanning from development of research question to write-up of a thesis in accepted APA format & a poster presentation session.
WHAT ELSE HAPPENS DURING THE HONOURS YEAR (SEPTEMBER TO APRIL)?

• While you complete your research, you also attend the Honours PSYC 499 seminar.

**Purpose of Seminar:**

- to support completion of each step of your Honours thesis
- to develop key academic-professional skills & portfolio
- to expose you to state-of-art issues in psychology research & practice
WHAT WILL A PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS DEGREE DO FOR ME?

- A “gold star” beside your degree, showing you met selective criteria & completed advanced training.

- A major plus if you plan to apply for graduate school in clinical, social, developmental, cognitive sciences or other subfields of psychology or higher education in related fields (e.g., medicine).

- Enhances professional skills & impression you make on prospective employers.

- Individualized real-life experience with faculty mentor & research team.
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE HONOURS PROGRAM: FEEDBACK FROM PAST STUDENTS

• It is hard work, and for most students it includes work you have not done before:
  • Self-directed work
  • Long-term deadlines over a full academic year
  • Uncertainty and changes to research plans

• You will learn interesting & important things:
  • Career options in psychology
  • Planning for graduate school
  • Written and oral presentation skills and practice
  • The inner workings of research labs & research work
HOW IS HONOURS DIFFERENT FROM A PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR?

• Honours students must complete all the same requirements as Psychology Majors.
• The Honours Program only requires 60.0 units now (instead of 63.0 units), so you need to plan your electives properly.

PLUS:

- PSYC 400A: Advanced Statistical Methods*
- Three additional PSYC 400-level course (i.e., 3 rather than 1 required of Psyc Majors)
  - Cannot be PSYC 490 or 492.
- PSYC 499: Honours Seminar & Project

*A joint BioPsychology Honours is also available; PSYC 400A is recommend for BioPsyc students opting to take PSYC 499 (as opposed to BIOL 499A/B).
**TYPICAL TRAJECTORY FROM UG YEAR 1 TO SENIOR HONOURS YEAR**

**YEAR 1:**
- You realize you love PSYC 100A/B & want more psychology courses
- Consider potential faculty advisors & gain experience

**YEAR 2:**
- Declare Major in Psychology
- Take PSYC courses (enjoy! Work hard, and eye on GPA!)
- Spring: Apply Honours online – Honours Website goes live February 1\(^{st}\)

**YEAR 3:**
- PSYC 300A & PSYC 300B (≥A-)
- CUM PSYC GPA 7.0+
- NON PSYC GPA 5.0+
- Consider potential faculty supervisors
  - classes,
  - directed studies (PSYC 390)
- volunteer lab
- Spring:
  - Apply for graduate school? Workplace? Gap year?
  - Create thesis, poster & portfolio

**YEAR 4:**
- PSYC 499 (Seminar & Research Thesis)
- PSYC 400A
- Apply for graduate school? Workplace? Gap year?
EVALUATION OF YOUR GPA: SELF-APPRaisal AND DEPARTMENTAL DOUBLE CHECK

• A *minimum* GPA of 7.0 (A-) in all Psychology courses taken at post-secondary institutions within the last 5 years.

• A *minimum* GPA of 5.0 (B) in all non-Psychology courses taken at post-secondary institutions within the last 5 years.

• 9-point system, A+ = 9, A = 8, etc. Add up and divide by number of courses (assuming each course is worth 1.5 units; count double for any 3-unit course). Calculate the average across all PSYC courses, and separately, the average across all other courses.

• A *minimum* grade of A- (80%) in both PSYC 300A and PSYC 300B

• The Psychology Department will double-check all grades.
FINDING YOUR SUPERVISOR

• This is going to be a long-term relationship!
  • It is up to you to find a supervisor

• START looking in the fall of your third year (or earlier!).

• HOW?
  • Check out what type of research faculty conduct: https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/psychology/people/faculty-directory/index.php
  • volunteer in a professors research lab
  • take a 390 independent study with a professor
  • make yourself known in classes!
  • Reflect on courses taken or taking now? What grabbed you as interesting??
  • Ask current Honours students

• There are frequently more students who meet the criteria for honours than supervisors
MORE DETAILS ON APPLICATION

1. Inform yourself about potential supervisors & labs
2. Register online at [http://honours.uvic.ca](http://honours.uvic.ca) - opens Feb 1 at noon
3. Submit a transcript, brief statement of interests, and qualifications (resume)
4. Select 2-3 potential supervisors from the list provided if some turn you down, you can reapply to others!
5. The Honours program is competitive. Registration closes on March 15, as that is when applications will be reviewed by the admissions committee.
6. Applicants should know by the first or second week of April of their status (provisional until final marks are in).
YOUR MEETING WITH PROSPECTIVE FACULTY HONOURS SUPERVISOR

• Come prepared:
  • Visit faculty member’s research website to learn about their work.
  • Be informed and enthusiastic. Prepare a few questions.
  • Bring transcript (unofficial is fine)
  • Bring sample of your written work.
  • If you have research ideas, you could offer them. Just don’t insist on them. Usually the supervisor sets the thesis topic with some input from student.
  • Leave with clarity. Politely. What’s next and when.

The follow up email.
Thank you. Reflections. Encourage to contact if you if further information is needed.
SELECTING A SUPERVISOR

- Your faculty supervisor will guide you and evaluate your work one-on-one for a full year.
- Before you commit to the relationship, meet in person or by Skype/FaceTime/Zoom if at all possible (even if you get offered a position without meeting).
- Ask yourself:
  - Do you seem compatible?
  - Do you like this person?
  - Can you get excited about the research you will be doing?

You MIGHT receive more than one offer. Whichever you decline, do so gracefully.
UNFORTUNATELY THERE ARE SOME LIMITS …

• Not all qualified students always get into the Honours program.

• There are a limited number of potential supervisors.

• A few supervisors have extra requirements, such as having worked in their lab already or wanted you to get started, at least on readings, in the summer.

• You may want to consider doing a PSYC 390 with a potential supervisor either in the fall or spring of your third year (which can be followed up with PSYC 490).
DECISION TIME

- On the website, it will say “No status” or “pending” as the prospective supervisor is deciding.
- Status changes to “accepted” if the prospective supervisor has agreed to supervise you, “Not available” if prospective supervisor declines.
- When accepted, you may then accept the offer:
  - once you accept it is a binding commitment
  - you can wait to see if another prospect agrees, but until you commit a prospective supervisor can withdraw an offer.
- Of course, you will be talking to the supervisor as well, but the website is the official version, so other students can be aware.
- You must officially accept on the website, even if you heard from the supervisor by email and accepted by email.
YAY! YOU HAVE A SUPERVISOR! NOW WHAT?

• Ask your supervisor how to prepare – usually at least some reading, even an independent study course with your supervisor?
• Attend Honours Poster Session on during Making Waves conference in early April
• Consider taking a course or 2 during the summer (to free up time next year)
• The Honours Advisor will write you a confirmation letter. If you have not heard anything by mid-June, please contact me.
FINAL NOTE

• The Psychology Honours Program is an exciting capstone opportunity for senior UG students.

• If you are interested in Honours for September 2021, start thinking about your application now.

• The Psychology Honours Program is certainly not the only route to gaining research experience in psychology or to facilitating entry to graduate school. It is one route to consider.

• Thank You!
QUESTIONS??

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http://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/psychology/undergraduate/honours/index.php