

PSY 4842E-530

Honours Thesis in Psychology

School of Behavioural and Social Sciences

General Information

Course #: Psy 4842E
Section #: 530
Term: Fall-Winter
Year: 2020-2021
Delivery: Online, asynchronous

Instructor Information – Fall 2020

Name: Dr. Jennifer Sutton
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Office hours for students via Zoom: TBA, updates on Owl with Zoom link

Instructor Information – Winter 2021

Name: Dr. John Mitchell
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Course Description

Independent research under the direction of a faculty member.

Antirequisite(s): [Psychology 4850E](#), [Psychology 4880E](#), [Psychology 4891E](#).

Prerequisite(s): Registration in 4th year of Honours Specialization in Psychology module at Brescia University College.

Required Course Materials

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th edition)*. Washington, DC: Author.

Hardcopy available in the UWO bookstore, Indigo, amazon.ca, etc. Also available as an E-book for rent or purchase: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/publication-manual-of-the-american-psychological-v9781433832185>

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Synthesize the background literature for a topic in psychology and create a logical narrative demonstrating a clear gap in current knowledge
- Design and implement a research study in psychology
- Plan and conduct data analyses appropriate to a study's design and hypotheses
- Present research background and findings in written and oral form appropriate to the field of psychology, including via oral presentations of various lengths, in a research poster, and in a formal written thesis document.

Brescia Competencies

The honours thesis also contributes to the Brescia Competencies of:

- *Communication*: You will be developing a compelling argument and synthesizing background research. You will articulate your ideas and findings with skillful use of scientific language.
- *Critical Thinking*: You will identify key concepts and findings and evaluate the logical strength of existing interpretations. You will consider how your data relate to existing findings.
- *Inquiry and Analysis*: You will develop an original research study that incorporates appropriate concepts and methods. You will gather data and develop a logical conclusion and consider wider implications of your findings.
- *Problem Solving*: You will create an original argument that your study is an important component in addressing a specific gap in knowledge within the psychological research literature.

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

Our course is totally online this year and asynchronous. The bulk of your in-person (via Zoom, most likely) meetings will be with your thesis supervisor(s), and I will have drop-in office hours for help with thesis assessments and occasional one-on-one meetings for status reports. This course is meant to scaffold your thesis work and keep you on track. Your specific project topic, readings, hypotheses, and initial drafts of written work will be worked on with your thesis supervisor.

Since this course is completely online, you will be interacting with the Owl site for all course information. The terms are divided into Units, each with a deadline, usually at the end of the unit. Each unit spans multiple weeks, and you will need to pay close attention to make sure you are staying on track. Thesis work is not something that can be done at the last minute.

Video lectures will be posted at the beginning of each new unit, along with materials relevant for that stage of your thesis work. You are responsible for checking Owl and your UWO email on a regular basis for changes to dates and assessment requirements. Since this is our first time online, I anticipate some things will need to be tweaked as we go along.

Students **must** follow relevant sections in *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2020; 7th Ed.) when preparing all course work, including the preliminary introduction, the Ethics Protocol and the final written thesis.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

PowerPoint lecture slides and notes, course activities, assignment guidelines, and other components of the course materials are typically the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction through audio-recording, video-recording, photographing, sharing on social media, or posting on course-sharing websites is an infringement of copyright and is prohibited. Such action may be considered a Code of Conduct violation and lead to sanctions.

Evaluation

Evaluation Breakdown:

Component	Weight	Date/ Deadline	Learning Outcome	Brescia Competencies
Annotated bibliography	4%	9am WED SEPT 23	Synthesize background literature	
Ethics Protocol	10%	9am WED OCT 14 to Dr. Sutton	Design, plan, and communicate an original research study in psychology	Communication, Inquiry & Analysis, Critical Thinking, Problem Solving
Thesis Introduction	12%	9am WED NOV 25	Synthesize background literature and communicate rationale for study	Problem solving, Critical Thinking, Communication
Research Proposal Poster and Data Blitz Talk (talk will be recorded)	12%	Dec Exams TBA	Communicate study information in various formats and levels of detail	Communication
Results Section	optional	9am WED MARCH 3	Conduct statistical analyses and communicate results	Communication, Inquiry & Analysis
Thesis	50% (includes 10%)	9am WED APRIL 6	Communicate entire project in a manner	Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Communication,

	effort mark)		appropriate for Psychology	Inquiry & Analysis
Thesis Conference Presentation (recorded)	12%	April exam period, TBA	Communicate project in an oral format appropriate for Psychology	Communication

COMPONENTS OF THE 4842E COURSE MARK

1. Annotated Bibliography

Once you know your topic, it's time to read, read, read. Some articles will be critical to your research question and design, and some will be helpful for a specific component – a particular scale they used, or a way the data were analyzed, or a finding for a specific effect. Still others will be not useful at all. The annotated bibliography is a place for you to collect the important articles that will need to be cited and/or explained in your literature review. You may find more that these (you undoubtedly will), but this is a place to start. More details about what the annotated bibliography should look like can be found in Unit 1 on Owl. This assignment is worth 4% of your final mark in the course.

2. Ethics Protocol

The Ethics Protocol will be graded by the course instructor, then you will edit it based on feedback from the instructor, and then you will submit your protocol as an application to the Brescia Research Ethics Board (BREB). The BREB will almost certainly ask for revisions to your initial submission, so please be prepared for this. You will need to perform their suggested revisions quickly and resubmit the protocol application as soon as possible in order to start testing participants in a timely manner.

Please note that protocols can be handed in to Dr. Sutton to start the process before the due date, in order to expedite thesis progress.

The Ethics Protocol consists of a paragraph about background literature and your research question, hypothesis(-es), and a description of the procedural aspects of your proposed thesis study, followed by a copy of all materials to be used in the study. The ethics proposal is not a full literature review - that comes later in the Introduction section assignment. The format and type of material required in this protocol will be discussed in the materials for Unit 2.

The Ethics Protocol **must** be approved by the BREB prior to any data collection. It is a serious offense to involve participants in research that has not received ethics approval. The completed ethics protocol is worth 10% of your final grade in the course.

In addition,

All students must complete the online tutorial on ethics of the Tri-Council (found at <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>). Students must submit to the instructor the tutorial certificate that they can print out at the end of their online session.

Note: the tutorial need only be taken once. If you have already completed the tutorial, you may submit your certificate via the Assignments tool in Owl to fulfill this requirement. A copy of your tutorial certificate must be submitted before ethics for your study can be approved.

Some studies may require a more complicated process for ethical approval, especially if they involve any form of deception or the use of special populations (e.g., children). If a more complicated ethical review is required, expect it to take longer to receive ethics approval.

With respect to **deception**, the guidelines used by the UWO Research Ethics Board for Non-medical research involving human subjects (NMREB: 2002, page 3) state that,

Under most circumstances, the NMREB will follow the principle that no deception should be involved in research. Therefore, if the research involves the practice of deception where participants are purposely misled as part of the research project, it must be justified as important and as the only alternative. Further there should be no foreseeable risk of harm or potential for the perception of harm or embarrassment by the subject and there must be a full explanation and “debriefing” soon after completion of the experiment.

Thus, you should carefully note that any proposed study involving deception may result in a more complicated and time-consuming ethical approval procedure. Avoiding deception is the best choice, if at all possible.

3. Preliminary Written Thesis Introduction

The preliminary APA-style Introduction will be graded by the thesis course coordinator (Dr. Sutton). This paper is worth 12% of your final grade in the course. We will review the type of material that should be included in the Introduction, and its organization, in the materials for Unit 3 on Owl.

4. Research Proposal Poster & Blitz Talk

Students will create a research proposal in poster form that will be due during the December exam period (TBA). The Research Proposal Poster will include sections on the Introduction, Methods, Statistical Analyses to be used and Expected Results. Details regarding poster preparation will be given in Unit 5 on Owl. Posters will be graded by your thesis advisor and a second reader (another professor assigned by Dr. Sutton), with their averaged marks contributing 12% to the final grade in the course.

You will also create a 1-minute, high-level, “blitz” talk explaining the background to your study, your research question, and what your participants will do. It’s only 1 minute, but it takes careful planning. The reason we do this is to give you practice talking about your thesis at a high level without all the details. Plus, it’s fun and a different kind of challenge.

Results Section [optional]

In early March, you will have the option to turn in a preliminary Results section in order to obtain feedback to help you improve this section for your final thesis. This is completely optional and does not count toward your grade in the course. Even if you opt not to turn it in, you’ll find all the info about the Results section in Unit 7.

5. Written Thesis

The final version of the thesis is to be uploaded on April 6. Information on the format and type of material to be included in the final thesis document is in Unit 8 on Owl. Include in your

Appendices only necessary materials that you created specifically for the thesis. Figures and tables should be inserted in the body of the thesis, paginated in sequence, following the page where they are first mentioned. Consult *the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for details of references and headings, as well as for writing style

Your final thesis will be evaluated and marked by your advisor and second reader. Your advisor and second reader will each assign a mark out of 20 for your thesis, and your advisor will assign an additional mark out of 10 that will reflect your initiative, effort and conscientiousness in working on and completing your thesis over the course of the year. These marks will be summed to give the mark out of 50 that the thesis contributes to your grade in the course.

Late penalties will be applied, see the section outlining penalties below.

6. Thesis Talk

You will present and record a short talk (10 - 12 minutes) with PowerPoint slides summarizing your thesis project. The Thesis Talk provides an opportunity for you to gain experience in communicating your research in the manner used at scientific conferences. Your Thesis Conference presentation is marked by your advisor and second reader and is worth 15% of your course grade. The marks assigned by your advisor and second reader will be averaged.

Completion of All Assignments

The assignments in this course are sequential and build upon each other. Accordingly, it is expected that students will complete each on time and in the proper sequence.

Essay Course Requirements

Because this is an essay course, as per Senate Regulations, you must pass the essay component to pass the course. That is, the average mark for your written assignments must be at least 50%.

Late Penalties

All work will be submitted through Owl. All assignments must be completed and submitted by their due date and time.

There are no extensions of any due dates for any components of this course without formal accommodation.

Late penalties will be assessed for any course component not submitted on time. If you miss a deadline, ten percent (10%) of the worth of that assignment will be deducted for each 24-hour period that the assignment is late. So, for instance,

For work due by 9am on a Wednesday that is submitted:

 between 9:01am Wednesday and 9:00am Thursday = -10%

 between 9:01am Thursday and 9:00am Friday = -20%

 between 9:01am Friday and 9:00am Saturday = -30%

 Etc.

Academic Accommodation

For course components worth any amount of the total course grade, please see the Academic Policies and Regulations section at the end of this course outline or consult the Academic Calendar.

Course Content

Units and due dates:

Unit	Topics covered	Task for this unit	Due date for task
1	Welcome! Course overview and getting started	Annotated Bibliography	Wed Sept 23, 9am
2	Ethics for your study	Ethics Application (initial submission to Dr. Sutton)	Wed Oct 14, 9am
3	Writing your Introduction	Introduction section	Wed Nov 25, 9am
4	Testing participants	Get your study up and running	Ongoing once BREB approval obtained
5	How to make your research proposal poster and blitz talk	Research poster and blitz talk	Dec exams period: Due date scheduled by registrar, see Owl
6	Writing your Method section	Write method section	No due date, complete by mid-Feb to stay on track
7	Writing your Results section	Results section	*DEADLINE FOR OPTIONAL FEEDBACK* Wed March 3, 9am
8	Writing the Discussion section and preparation of the final thesis document	Discussion, Abstract, Final Doc	Wed April 6, 9am
9	How to present a conference talk	Conference talk	April exams period: Due date scheduled by registrar, see Owl

Basic needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Brescia Student Life Centre (bucstudent.life@uwo.ca) for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to point you toward resources at Brescia that you may not be aware of (e.g., the Brescia Care Program).

Mental health resources

The Brescia Student Life Centre maintains a number of mental health resources you can access to get help for yourself or someone else. Wondering whether you should seek help for yourself? Read more here:

https://brescia.uwo.ca/student_life/health_and_wellness/get_help.php. I can also help you tap into the Brescia Care Program if you are comfortable speaking to me.

Are you in crisis right now? Follow this link for a comprehensive list of contacts that can help: https://brescia.uwo.ca/student_life/health_and_wellness/resources/crisis_contacts.php

2020-21 BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

The complete policy regarding [Accommodation for Illness - Undergraduate Students](#) can be found at

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12.

Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions which may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities should seek Academic Accommodation through Student Accessibility Services

(http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10).

Personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

Students who experience an illness or extenuating circumstance sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

1. Submitting a **Self-Reported Absence** form provided that the conditions for submission are met;
2. For medical absences, submitting a **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)** signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner;
3. For non-medical absences, submitting **appropriate documentation** (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to their Academic Advisor. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Advisor to clarify what documentation is acceptable.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Portal

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance of 48 hours or less that is sufficiently severe to render them unable to meet academic requirements should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours. Note that the excused absence includes all courses and academic requirements within the up to 48 hours, it is not intended to provide an excused absence from a single course while students fulfill their academic responsibilities in other courses during that time.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

1. Students will be allowed **a maximum of two self-reported absences** between September and April and one self-reported absence between May and August;
2. The duration of the absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 am;
3. The excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period if the student undertakes significant academic responsibilities (writes a test, submits a paper) during that time;
4. Self-reported absences will **not** be allowed for scheduled final examinations; midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations scheduled during the final week of term;
5. Self-report absences may **not** be used for assessments worth more than 30% of any course;
6. Any absences in excess of 48 hours will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC), or appropriate documentation;
7. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24** hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation.

Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated.

The following conditions apply for students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds:

1. Students must submit their Student Medical Certificate (SMC) along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. An SMC can be downloaded from http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf ;
2. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Advisor for advice during their recovery period;

3. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, scheduled tests or examinations, and other academic requirements;
4. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the SMC to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence;
5. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office/Academic Advisor in consultation with the course instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements, arranging Special Exams (make-ups), re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawal without academic penalty.

The [full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness](#) can be viewed at:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal challenge that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds are not normally considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines; please refer to the [Registrar's website](#), <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> or the list of official sessional dates in the Academic Calendar (<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=>).

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Please note that for asynchronous online courses, attendance or participation requirements maybe different than for synchronous or in-person courses.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations if appropriate and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory (http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_68).

For the purposes of online courses, the phrase “is absent too frequently from” in the policy on *Attendance Regulations for Examinations* will be interpreted as “has not engaged sufficiently in.”

4. SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Academic Dean’s Office, or the Registrar. A claim that “you didn’t know it was wrong” is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal is to be sent to the School Chair. If the response of the Chair is considered unsatisfactory to the student, they may then submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, they may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA), if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal and if the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the SRBA. For information on academic

appeals consult your Academic Advisor or see the Student Academic Appeals – Undergraduate in the Academic Calendar

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14.

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices.

6. PREREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisite(s).

7. SUPPORT

Support Services

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/>. Students can access supports through Brescia's Student Life Centre (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/student-life/>) and Learning Skills Services at Western (<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>)

Mental Health and Wellness

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can obtain information about how to obtain help for yourself or others through **Mental Health & Wellness at Brescia** (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/mental-health-wellness/>) and **Health and Wellness at Western**, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html.

Sexual Violence

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/sexual-violence/>.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary

of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.
