Syllabus for PSY 5190: Thesis Writing

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Dr. Savoy will serve as your thesis advisor, the primary person working with you during your thesis. Grades for the course are assigned by Dr. Savoy, after consultation with your thesis committee.

Purpose of the course: This course will allow students the opportunity to engage in original empirical research in collaboration with a thesis advisor and committee.

Course objectives: Students completing this course will be able to know/understand…
1. How to implement the data analysis phase of a research project
2. How to code, enter, and analyze research data
3. How to write an APA style results and discussion section and complete the final paper
4. How to present the results of research in oral format

PSY 5190 (Thesis Writing) Guidelines

General guidelines:
Students will not be granted permission to enroll in PSY 5190 until their thesis proposal is completed and their proposal defense is scheduled.

Your thesis should be a major priority that should involve regular meetings with your advisor and at least 10 hours per week of work. Like PSY 5189 (Thesis Research), PSY 5190 (Thesis Writing) can be completed in one semester, if you follow the schedule below. However, this is often not feasible if your data collection or analysis takes longer than expected. If you fail to finish in one semester, a WH grade will be submitted by the thesis advisor at the end of the semester and you will be given an extension on PSY 5190. Students may be charged a continuation fee (see the catalog). Students not completing PSY 5190 within one year will be given F as their grade and will need to re-register for the course in the future. If you foresee not being able to complete your thesis in a timely manner, you should withdraw from the course and re-take it when you are able to devote adequate time to your research.

Collecting and analyzing your data are major parts of PSY 5190, but so is working through drafts of the final document until it is polished and complete. You should allocate plenty of time for the writing phase of the project—it cannot be crammed into a couple of weeks.

PSY 5190 is a graded course. In order to do well in the course, you must complete the following tasks:
• Obtain IRB approval to move forward with your project
• Conduct your study and analyze your data in an ethical manner
• Write the results/discussion sections of your study and update the introduction/method as needed
• Work through drafts of your final product with your advisor until it is ready to defend
• Submit a draft of your thesis to the graduate school by the required deadline
• Schedule a final defense and provide a copy of your thesis to your committee with at least one week’s notice
• Pass your final defense
• Submit the required forms to the required offices by the required deadlines

Defense-related expectations:
• The average defense takes about two hours
• You should treat this as a serious event, dress professionally, and arrive early
• Bring all forms that will need to be signed. This will allow your committee to sign them at the defense rather than tracking them down later.
• You should prepare a short presentation to your committee about your project. Work with your advisor to determine the appropriate breadth, depth, and length of your presentation.
• You should prepare to answer questions about your topic, your choice of methods, your results and conclusions, and various other aspects of the project. Your committee is trying to determine if you are able to communicate about your project in an informed and professional manner.
• You should be prepared to discuss your plan for publishing or presenting your research. Publication/presentation is not required for PSY 5190 credit, but is an important next step in your professional development.
• At the end, you will be given feedback about whether you passed and information about what you will need to improve in order to complete your project.

Intellectual Property Policy: The University has a policy (Policy 9.4) regarding intellectual property. This policy exists to encourage research and innovation, clarify ownership of intellectual property rights, create opportunities for public use of the university innovations and provide for the equitable distribution of monetary and other benefits derived from intellectual property. The policy can be found at this link: http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/intellectual-property-9.4.pdf

Elements of the final thesis document:
Do NOT schedule a defense until your final thesis is polished and complete and your advisor has given you explicit permission to schedule said defense. The following are minimal expectations of the Psychology Department for a thesis document. Your advisor or committee may require additional items.
• Cover Page
• Abstract that provides a brief summary of the entire paper; this should be updated to include past tense verbs and sentences about results/conclusions
• Introductory section should include the same information that was in your proposal but be updated in the following ways:
  o Change your verb tenses from future to past tense
  o Incorporate changes that your thesis committee requested of you at the proposal defense
  o Incorporate new references or studies that you located in the period after your thesis defense (if there are any)
• Method section. This should include all information from your “proposal” version (assuming it is still accurate) and be updated in the following ways:
  o Change your verb tenses from future to past tense
  o Incorporate any changes requested by the thesis committee
  o Incorporate any changes or new information that occurred after its original writing
  o Include detailed information about your actual subject pool in the “participants” section (rather than just your planned subjects)
Results section. This part will be substantially re-written as compared to the “proposal” version. It should include:
  o Past tense verbs
  o Detailed descriptions of how you coded/transformed your data for analysis
  o What analyses you did to examine each of your hypotheses, what results you found
  o Any other relevant findings (other than hypotheses)

Discussion. Should have its own section and be substantially re-written. You should
  o Summarize the important results and how they relate to your hypotheses
  o Discuss the meaning and interpretation of your findings
  o Discuss any unexpected results
  o Discuss/explain any unexpected findings
  o Discuss the limitations of your study and how they affect your conclusions
  o Provide recommendations for future research

References—make sure they are updated and match what is in the body of the paper

Appendixes—All information from the proposal document should be included. You should also include copies of any tables or figures relevant to your paper.

Grades / Possible outcomes of a proposal defense:
1. **Pass:** Your next step will be to make whatever final changes are necessary, forward the final draft to your committee, and final paperwork. Then you are done! You will be assigned a final grade
2. **Conditional pass:** You will not be required to schedule a 2nd defense, but will not be allowed to submit the final product to the Graduate School without first addressing substantive concerns posed by the committee. You will be assigned a withheld (WH) grade as your grade until you address committee concerns. At that point, you will be assigned an appropriate letter grade. Before submitting your project to the Graduate School, you must provide your committee with a revised product that addresses their concerns and then receive their approval to submit the final product.
3. **Fail:** Your committee will give you feedback that you aren’t ready to defend your thesis and will advise you to reschedule a defense when you are more prepared. If you are staying in touch with your committee members, this outcome is fairly rare. You will be assigned a withheld (WH) grade as your grade until you are ready for your defense.

In situations where the student fails to adequately complete the thesis within the time allotted and fails to present reasonable justification for an extension, a grade of F will be assigned.
Suggested Schedule for Summer 2023

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Work to complete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Data Analysis &amp; Writing of Results Section</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Writing of Discussion Section</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>First draft of full manuscript to advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Revisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Email finalized manuscript to committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Final thesis defense</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Completing requested edits from committee</td>
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Important University Dates

**July 7**
Thesis/dissertation drafts to be completed and checked for graduate/doctoral students completing work for degrees in May 2022.
Applications for thesis/dissertation examinations are due.

**July 21**
Last day to have a thesis/dissertation/comprehensive exam. Results of examinations to be filed by academic unit head.

**August 4**
The deadline for all theses/dissertations/deficient coursework to be submitted to appropriate offices.

**August 4-5**
Commencement.

**Note:** You are responsible for knowing and abiding by all thesis-related policies and procedures as stipulated by the Graduate School: [http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/108.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/graduate/108.asp)
University Policies

Academic Integrity (A-9.1)
Please copy and paste the following information regarding Academic Integrity into your syllabus. In addition, you may include your own guidelines for academic integrity as appropriate.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54)
Please copy and paste the following information regarding Withheld Grades into your syllabus. Add additional information as needed to meet your departmental or course needs.

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities
Please copy and paste the following statement and place in your course syllabus.

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.