Information about the 2017-18 Honors Psychology Thesis
Includes Psych 4850E Honors Thesis & Psych 4851E Honors Thesis (Science) & Psych 4852 (DCN)

Although students enrol in one of the three honors psychology thesis courses (Psych 4850, Psych 4851 or Psych 4852), all students are together in one large thesis class. This class has one Honors Thesis Coordinator (Dr. Kuiper) and several section leaders (teaching assistants). Lectures, meeting times, assignments, and course activities are all the same, regardless of the thesis course (Psych 4850 or Psych 4851 or Psych 4852) in which a student is enrolled.

Honors Thesis Coordinator: Dr. Nick Kuiper, Dept. of Psych. Rm. 309E, Westminster Hall, UWO  kuiper@uwo.ca

1. What is an honors psychology thesis? The honors thesis is a major undergraduate research project carried out by a 4th year honors specialization student under the direction of a qualified thesis supervisor. The thesis is an empirical project that involves data. It is not a purely theoretical paper, nor just an in-depth review of the literature. Some honors thesis projects may involve the collection of original data whereas other honors thesis projects may draw from existing data sets that may be available from the student’s thesis supervisor. The student is expected to play a role in various phases of the thesis research project, including conceptualization, preparing materials and procedures, data collection and analyses, and write-up. If a proposed project is not suitable for an honors thesis, the Psychology Honors Thesis Coordinator may require modifications or the development of an alternate project.

At the end of the academic year a written thesis is to be handed in and marked by the student's thesis supervisor and a second reader (selected by the Honors Thesis Coordinator, Dr. Kuiper). In addition, students also present their completed thesis work at a poster session (typically in late March or early April). Final details concerning all presentations and assignments will be included in the 2017-18 course outline for Psych 4850/51/52, available on the OWL thesis course website, by early Sept 2017.

2. Who can serve as a supervisor? All full-time faculty members of Western’s Department of Psychology may serve as supervisors for 4th year honors psychology theses. In addition, our department has a number of cross-appointed and research adjunct faculty members with full-time appointments in other parts of this university, such as the Business School, Communicative Disorders, DAN Management & Organizational Studies, Psychiatry, Education, Brescia and Huron University College. These cross-appointed and research adjunct faculty members may also be available to serve as 4th year honors thesis supervisors (but please check first with the Honors Thesis Coordinator). To help you in your search for a supervisor, you can learn about faculty research interests on the Psychology Department website. This site will provide you with information concerning the full-time faculty members in our department, as well as the cross-appointed and research adjunct faculty members. Also feel free to contact Dr. Kuiper if you have any questions about potential supervisors.

It may also be possible for some senior Ph.D. level psychology graduate students or postdoctoral fellows in the psychology department to help co-supervise a thesis (under the supervision and direction of a full-time faculty member in the Psychology department). In addition, some Ph.D. level psychology faculty members in the affiliated university-colleges (Brescia, Huron & Kings) may also be available to supervise a 4th year psychology thesis. Finally, it may sometimes be possible to make arrangements for Ph.D. level psychologists working in various applied settings in London to supervise an honors psychology thesis. Any potential psychology thesis supervisor must have the appropriate qualifications and experience to conduct and supervise psychological research that would be suitable for the needs and requirements of our department’s honors thesis course. Thus, in all instances, you should first check with the Honors Thesis Course Coordinator regarding a potential supervisor.

3. How do you obtain a supervisor? It is your responsibility to locate a supervisor and persuade that individual to supervise your thesis. Please prepare carefully before you meet with a potential supervisor to discuss the possibility of supervision. You should be able to provide this person with an idea of what you might wish to do for a thesis topic. In this regard, familiarity with the potential advisor’s research interests is very highly recommended. When talking to this person you should be able to indicate how your proposed project relates to his/her areas of research interest and expertise.

You should begin your search for a supervisor by canvassing the full-time faculty members in the Psychology Department. In all cases, final approval for your selection of a thesis supervisor must be obtained from the Honors Thesis Coordinator. This approval by Dr. Kuiper is particularly important if you are considering a supervisor who is not a full-time faculty member in Western’s Psychology Department. It is your responsibility to check with Dr. Kuiper as soon as possible, since some individuals you may be interested in may not be suitable as supervisors for an undergraduate psychology thesis.

Information about potential supervisors will be discussed in class at the start of the fall term. It is to your advantage, however, to secure a supervisor well before this. This is particularly important if you would like to do a thesis project in an area of psychology that is in high demand. If you have not already done so, start thinking about a
supervisor now, and, if possible, make your thesis supervision arrangements for 2017-2018 as soon as possible (i.e., during the Winter Term of your 3rd year). If you have questions about potential thesis supervisors and/or thesis projects contact Dr. Kuiper via email.

**Further Information regarding Supervisors for Psych 4851E (Science):** Psych 4851E is reserved for students in the Honors BSc Psych program who are conducting psychological research in cognition, sensation and perception, behavioural or cognitive neuroscience, or developmental cognitive neuroscience and are being supervised by a psychology faculty member conducting research that would fall under the NSERC mandate. For the most part, any psychology faculty member doing research on the biological basis of behavior and/or basic cognitive processes will meet the requirement to be a thesis supervisor for Psych 4851E.

This includes:

**Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience (BCN), Cognition and Perception (C&P):** Any psychology department faculty member (core and affiliated) in either BCN or C&P.

**Clinical:** Depending on the project (e.g., if it involves MRI's or mathematical modelling), then Prof. Hayden and Prof. Neufeld could qualify.

**Developmental:** Prof. Ansari, Prof. Morton, Prof. Archibald and (depending on the project), Prof. Cohen would qualify.

If you or your prospective supervisor are not sure whether the topic area of the thesis meets the requirements for enrolling in Psych 4851E, then please contact the Honors Thesis Coordinator as soon as possible (Dr. Nick Kuiper kuiper@uwo.ca).

4. **What else is involved in this course besides the thesis?** Completion of a Research Ethics Confirmation Form for your thesis project will be due by the mid-portion of the fall term. Students also give talks about their introduction and method to small groups in the class. Throughout the year, written portions of your thesis will be handed in and marked by either the course coordinator or section leaders (i.e., Ethics Confirmation Form, Introduction and Method sections). All of this work will contribute to your final grade in the course. Final details regarding these presentations and assignments will be included in the course outline (available Sept. 2017 on the OWL thesis course website) and in various information sheets posted on the OWL thesis course website throughout the 2017-18 academic year. Please see the current year course outline for a general overview of the thesis course and assignments. Please note that the 2017-18 course outline has not yet be finalized, and there probably will be some changes (although none are expected to be major).

5. **When does the Psychology Honors Thesis Course (4850/51/52) meet?** The current year thesis course (2016-17) has meetings that are scheduled during the following times: Fridays from 9:30 to 11:20 and Fridays 12:30 to 2:30. Students also meet in smaller groups to present talks. These talks will be in the same time periods the course is scheduled for, but in smaller seminar rooms (e.g., in the Social Science Centre and Westminster Hall). Details of scheduling of lectures and talks will be included in the course outline (available on the OWL website by Sept 2017), and throughout the 2017-18 academic year.

6. **Are There Any Textbooks for the Thesis Course?** Since each student conducts an individualized thesis research project, there are no textbooks for this course. Each student, however, should have access to the most current version of the APA Publication Manual.

7. **Who is eligible and required to complete an Honors Thesis?** All students registered in the 4th year of the Honors Specialization programs in Psychology, Animal Behaviour, or Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience (DCN) are eligible and required to take Psych4850E - Honors Thesis OR Psych4851E – Honors Thesis (Science) OR Psych 4852E (DCN). Psych 4852E is reserved for students in 4th year of the DNC program. If you are a 3rd year DCN student you need to contact the Head of the DCN program during your 3rd year to discuss plans for your honors thesis project and supervision. Psych 4851E is reserved for students in the Honors BSc Psych program that are conducting psychology research in cognition, sensation and perception, or behavioural and cognitive neuroscience, or developmental cognitive neuroscience and are being supervised by psychology faculty members conducting research that would fall under the NSERC mandate. Psych 4850E is for those registered 4th year honors thesis students that are not in Psych4851E or Psych4852E.

8. **How do I enroll in the Honors Thesis Course?** For Psych 4850E and Psych 4851E, if you have been formally accepted into one of the Psychology Honors Specialization modules then you may enroll directly online once your registration is open. However, if you are in the DCN module, you will need to contact the Psychology Undergraduate Program Advisor (Ramona Fudge, Rm 7402 SSC, psycoun@uwo.ca) for information on how to secure Special Permission to enroll in your thesis course - Psych 4852E. For Psych 4850E and 4851E, if you encounter difficulty enrolling online and the Registrar's Helpline (519-661-2100) is unable to help you, then contact Ramona Fudge (contact information immediately above).
9. Invitation to Attend the Honors Psychology Thesis Poster Sessions Fri., March 31, 2017  Students from this year’s thesis class will present their honors thesis research on Friday, March 31. It is expected that there will be a total of six 50 minute sessions, starting at 9:30 am and ending at 3:20 pm (with approximately 12 new posters each hour). All sessions will be in the SSC, 7th Floor Alcove (beside A/B elevators). You are invited to attend as many sessions as you wish, as this will give you a good idea of the range and types of projects that students complete for their honours theses. By attending some of these sessions you will also see how other students have prepared their thesis posters (which will be helpful for you next year). Also, by coming to some of these sessions, you will get a chance to talk to some of the current honors thesis students about their experiences, including how they selected a supervisor, formulated their research idea, conducted and wrote-up their study, and so on. As such, attending some poster sessions is highly recommended.