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**Faculty of Health**  
**Department of Psychology**  
**PSYC 4001B 6.0:**  
**SPECIALIZED HONOURS THESIS SEMINAR**  
**Thursdays from 11:30-2:30pm in VH 3005**  
**Fall/Winter 2024-2025**

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**Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Steele

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**Course Time & Location:** Thursdays 11:30-2:30 in VH 208. Classes are not recorded. Some information covered in class will be available online through eclass, along with additional resources. **Students are expected to attend each class in person.**

**Course Prerequisite(s): Course prerequisites are strictly enforced**

- HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology)
- HH/PSYC 2020 6.00 (Statistical Methods I and II) or substitute
- HH/PSYC 2030 3.00 (Introduction to Research Methods) or substitutes
- HH/PSYC 3000 3.00 (Professionalism and Communication in Psychology)
- HH/PSYC 3010 3.00 (Intermediate Research Methods)
- HH/PSYC 3031 3.00 (Intermediate Statistics I)
- Students must have been accepted into the Specialized Honours Program in order to enrol in this course.
- Completed at least 84 earned credits

**Course Credit Exclusions**

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

**Course Website:** [eClass](#)

## Course Description

Throughout this course, each student will carry out an individual piece of psychological research in consultation with a thesis supervisor, resulting in a final written thesis. In addition, students will attend a seminar designed to provide additional resources and experience. Students will practice presenting their ideas and research results to others and will learn more about how to do so effectively. Students will also have the opportunity to learn about how to broaden their interest in psychology through post-graduate studies. We will discuss how to create a strong graduate school application, and ultimately how to be accepted and excel in graduate school.

Another important goal of this course is to create a community where students can learn from each other and become more familiar with what it means to be a graduate student in psychology. The requirements of this seminar course are relatively small; however, the opportunities for individualized learning are great. To some degree it is up to each student to make use of this seminar to fully reap the potential benefits. Students are encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions, and request material to be covered in order to ensure that their individual needs are met to the greatest extent possible.

## Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. use data analytic software for analysis of psychological data.
2. design, execute, analyse and interpret results from a study examining a specific research question.
3. express in written form psychological findings using APA style.
4. express in written form, a research study in psychology.
5. recognize limits of conclusions based on inferential statistics.
6. critically identify limitations of individual research endeavors.
7. apply ethical principles of the CPA code of ethics to their own research.

## Specific Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, students will demonstrate:

1. enhanced presentation skills
2. increased research skills
3. increased knowledge of how to excel in graduate school

By the end of this course, students will have demonstrated the ability to conduct research, to present research findings (verbally, in writing, and in a poster format), and to critically evaluate others' research ideas. In addition, students will demonstrate an advanced knowledge of what is required to create a strong graduate school application and ultimately to excel in a post-graduate studies.

## Strongly Recommended Text:

1. **Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th Edition)**



### Other Texts to Consider:

2. Zinsser, W. (2006). *On writing well: The classic guide to writing nonfiction*. 30th Anniversary Edition. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
3. Duarte, N. (2010). *Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
4. Reynolds, G. (2008). *Presentation Zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery*. Berkley, CA: New Riders.

### Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2024-2025](#)).

### Late Work/Missed Tests or Exams

**If you miss a deadline without adequate justification, you will receive a grade of zero for that component.** If you have a reason for missing a deadline or presentation (e.g., illness), you may request accommodation from me and/or your thesis supervisor. **You also need to complete the [Missed Tests/Assignment Form](#)** before or within 48 hours after the original deadline or you will receive a grade of zero. If extenuating circumstances impact your ability to complete your thesis project on the anticipated timeline, this might require that you take deferred standing (<http://myacademicrecord.students.yorku.ca/deferred-standing>). Further extensions or accommodation may require you to submit a formal petition to the Faculty. If you do not have data collected in time to present on poster day or do not have a thesis ready to provide to a second reader, you will receive a grade of '0'; if some justification is provided, some grade adjustment will be made (typically 1 letter grade for each missed deadline). Please make your thesis supervisor aware of this and plan accordingly. If you have any concern that you might not meet these deadlines, please contact me immediately to set up a meeting.

## Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to [Undergraduate Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Important Dates](#)

	Fall (Term F)	Year (Term Y)	Winter (Term W)
Last date to add a course <b>without permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	September 18	<b>September 18</b>	January 20
Last date to add a course <b>with permission</b> of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	October 2	<b>October 16</b>	January 31
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	November 8	<b>February 7</b>	March 14
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript – see note below)	November 9 – December 3	<b>February 8 - April 4</b>	March 15 - April 4

### Add and Drop Deadline Information

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are **different**, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the [Refund Tables](#).

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

You may [withdraw from a course](#) using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as 'W'. The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

## **Information on Plagiarism**

Your thesis is meant to make a unique contributions to the field. You may be asked to submit your thesis and presentation slides using plagiarism detecting software (i.e., Turnitin). If you are not sure whether your writing may have elements that could be seen as plagiarism, I would encourage you to reach out to me to clarify, or book an appointment with [the writing centre](#) to be sure. If plagiarism is detected in your proposal or thesis, this could result in a grade of zero and you failing the course. It should go without saying that you are also expected to write your thesis. Please consult with your supervisor regularly who will provide suggestions, written feedback, and editing support. While you are welcome to receive inspiration from a variety of additional sources, and are encouraged to reach out to the writing centre for support and assistance, you are responsible for the main aspects of writing and editing your thesis.

## **Academic Integrity for Students**

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#)

## **Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

## **Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

## Course Materials Copyright Information

These course materials are designed for use as part of the PSYC 4001 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law (see [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#)).

## Calumet and Stong Colleges' Student Success Programming:

[Calumet](#) and [Stong](#) Colleges aim to support the success of Faculty of Health students through a variety of **free programs** throughout their university career. As a senior student, if you have not yet contributed to one or more of these programs, you might consider getting involved.

- [Orientation](#) helps new students transition into university, discover campus resources, and establish social and academic networks.
- [Peer Mentoring](#) connects well-trained upper-year students with first year and transfer students to help them transition into university.
- [Course Representative Program](#) supports the academic success and resourcefulness of students in core program courses through in-class announcements.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\)](#) involve upper-level academically successful and well-trained students who facilitate study sessions in courses that are historically challenging.
- [Peer Tutoring](#) offers one-on-one academic support by well-trained Peer Tutors.
- Please connect with your Course Director about any specific academic resources for this class.
- Calumet and Stong Colleges also support students' [Health & Wellness](#), [leadership and professional skills development](#), [student/community engagement and wellbeing](#), [Career Exploration](#), [Indigenous Circle](#), [awards and recognition](#), and [provide opportunities to students to work or volunteer](#).
- For additional resources/information about Calumet and Stong Colleges' Student Success Programs, please consult our websites ([Calumet College](#); [Stong College](#)), email [scchelp@yorku.ca](mailto:scchelp@yorku.ca), and/or follow us on Instagram ([Calumet College](#); [Stong College](#)), Facebook ([Calumet College](#); [Stong College](#)) and [LinkedIn](#).
- Are you receiving our weekly email (Subject: "Calumet and Stong Colleges - Upcoming events")? If not, please check your Inbox and Junk folders, and if it's not there then please contact [ccscadm@yorku.ca](mailto:ccscadm@yorku.ca), and request to be added to the listserv. Also, make sure to add your 'preferred email' to your Passport York personal profile to make sure you receive important news and information.

### Course Requirements and Assessment:

<b>Thesis Proposal:</b>	10%	Due to supervisor by <b>December 15</b>
<b>Poster Day:</b>	5%	<b>Monday April 7th from 10:30-12:30pm</b> (poster needed for class on April 3rd)
<b>External Thesis Evaluation:</b>	20%	Full thesis due by <b>Mon April 14th @ noon</b> (feedback within 1 week)
<b>Supervisor Thesis Evaluation:</b>	50%	Due by <b>Thursday April 24 @ noon</b>
<b>Seminar Participation:</b>	15%	Details provided below

A **Thesis Proposal** which includes the Introduction (literature review) and Method sections must be **submitted to your supervisor no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>** or by another date coordinated with your thesis supervisor (no later than January 15<sup>th</sup>). This work is graded by your thesis supervisor and is worth 10% of the final course grade. This deadline will ensure that you begin writing in the first term and that progress is made in your research project; this will also allow you to writing receive feedback from your supervisor. It is highly recommended that some or all of the thesis data be collected by the end of the Fall Term, or by mid-February at the latest.

**Poster Day** participation is mandatory. You will receive a pass (5/5) or fail (0/5) grade for taking part. Poster Day is tentatively scheduled for Monday April 7<sup>th</sup> from 10:30am-12:30pm in Vari Hall. The poster presentation will provide an opportunity to receive feedback about your thesis before submitting your thesis draft.

The **External Thesis Evaluation** will be provided by another professor, sometimes referred to as the “second reader”, who evaluates the final product (the written thesis) and not the process (e.g., the amount of work and/or thought that was involved in getting to the final product). The seminar course director is responsible for assigning a second reader to each thesis and the grade is worth 20% of the final grade. In order to give the second reader enough time to evaluate the work and provide his/her grade to the supervisor, you will be required to submit a full draft of the thesis by no later than **Monday April 14<sup>th</sup> at noon**.

The **Supervisor Thesis Evaluation** accounts for 50% of the final grade and reflects an evaluation primarily of the final product, with consideration also being given to your contributions to the process (ideas, creating stimuli, recruiting and running participants, etc.). The final version of your thesis is due to the undergraduate office and your supervisor no later than **Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup> at 12noon**.

**Seminar Participation** is a required component of the Specialized Honours Thesis course. As such, the course director will contribute 15% towards the student’s final grade. Students’ presentations (2 – worth 5% each) as well as their attendance, peer feedback, and contributions during class discussions (5%) will be graded. If you must miss a class, please let me know in advance.

## CLASS SCHEDULE (Fall)

### **Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup> - Introduction / Orientation**

We will meet one another and have an open discussion as a group about how this seminar course can best meet your needs. We will talk about getting started into your thesis research and the thesis write-up. We will also start taking about: pre-registration of studies and replicability as well as thinking about graduate programs, preparing to apply for graduate programs (personal statements, letters, and CVs), and funding post-graduate studies.

### **Thursday September 19<sup>th</sup> – Starting into your thesis proposal / Explaining your research**

During this class we will talk generally about how to start into your thesis write-up, including how to find relevant articles and strategies to take when reading the articles that you find, as well as how you can best articulate your research question(s). We will talk about the typical structure of the thesis proposal, as well as how to write clear, effective academic papers and how to avoid writing mistakes. **In preparation for this class think about what (if anything) feels the most daunting to you about the thesis process and come with questions.** In the second half of the class we will talk about how to best explain your research to others. Throughout this course you will be speaking about your research in informal and formal contexts. **In preparation for this class I ask that you give some thought to what makes for a good academic talk.**

### **Thursday September 26<sup>th</sup> - No class this week; time to work on your thesis**

### **Thursday October 3<sup>rd</sup> – Formulating good research questions**

During this class each student will be asked to discuss their thesis with the class informally for no more than 5 minutes. What is your main research question? What data will you collect to answer this question? The goal is to begin thinking about how to best explain your work to others, to learn what questions others have about your topic, and to get suggestions about your research project and how to present your work succinctly. **Please come prepared to share a brief description of your project, no matter what stage you are at.** We will conclude by talking about your more formal November presentations.

***\*\*Many scholarship applications are due December 1<sup>st</sup> (tri-council agencies), but some may be due as early as October. These take time to put together and should be started as early as possible. Please see eclass and/or visit the Graduate Office (2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the BSB) for more information.***



#### **Thursday October 10<sup>th</sup> – Applying for graduate school**

In the first half of this class we will discuss the components of applications for graduate programs in psychology, with a greater focus on how to construct a good resume/CV to share with graduate programs and when/how to ask for letters of recommendation. **In preparation for this week, please review your CV (resume) and ideally bring it to class with any questions that you have. If you are uncertain of what to include in your CV, or how to format your information, please come with questions.** For the second half of the class, graduate students here at York University will come and speak about their experiences applying to and being in graduate school in psychology. Topics to be covered include: becoming a competitive applicant, whether to write the GREs, deciding on programs/schools, and applying for funding for research intensive graduate programs. **Please come prepared with any questions; attendance for this class is optional but strongly encouraged for anyone considering post-graduate studies.**

#### **Thursday October 17<sup>th</sup> – No class (Fall Reading Week)**

#### **Thursday October 24<sup>th</sup> - No class this week; time to work on your presentation**

#### **Thursday October 31<sup>st</sup> - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/5 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions. You will be asked to provide peer feedback online.

#### **Thursday November 7<sup>th</sup> - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/5 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions. You will be asked to provide peer feedback online.

#### **Thursday November 14<sup>th</sup> - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/5 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions. You will be asked to provide peer feedback online.

#### **Thursday November 21<sup>st</sup> - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/5 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions. You will be asked to provide peer feedback online.

**Thursday November 28<sup>th</sup> - Research Presentation (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/5 of you will be asked to do a 10 min presentation outlining your thesis proposal and we will spend another 10 minutes asking questions and making suggestions. You will be asked to provide peer feedback online.

**December 15<sup>th</sup> – Thesis Proposal Due (Worth 10% of your final grade)**

Please provide your thesis proposal (including the introduction and method sections of your thesis) to your thesis supervisor by this date (or by another date arranged with your supervisor – no later than January 15<sup>th</sup>).

**CLASS SCHEDULE (Winter)**

**No Classes in January and most of February** – During these months you will want to make good progress on your thesis. Individual meetings are available during class time when requested.

**Thursday February 27<sup>th</sup> - The results are in! How to present research results.**

In this class we will talk about how to share your findings. We will review how to create a great poster presentation. We will also discuss how to best present your results visually, in a presentation and in your thesis, as well as how to discuss null findings. Finally, we will talk about how to write a solid abstract.

**Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup> - Research Presentations (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 8 min presentation on the results and interpretation of your findings.

**Thursday March 13<sup>th</sup> – No Class (Prepare your research presentation or poster)**

**Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup> - Research Presentations (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 8 min presentation on the results and interpretation of your findings.

**Thursday March 27<sup>th</sup> - Research Presentations (Worth 5% of your final grade)**

During this class 1/3 of you will be asked to do a 8 min presentation on the results and interpretation of your findings.

**Thursday April 3<sup>rd</sup> - Presenting your poster to a broad audience**

Please come with your poster presentation printed as a one-page document. Be prepared to answer the question “So, what is your research about?” in both a two-minute summary and a

five- minute summary. Time yourself. You will want to start by stating your research question (a) In this study, I(we) was(were) interested in examining XX; next explain how you did this (b) We had x participants complete..., (c) explain what you found, how this fit with your hypotheses, and, importantly (d) why this is important/interesting. To move from a shorter to a longer explanation, you might provide more information on the method, results, theory behind the study and/or implications of the findings.

**Monday April 7<sup>th</sup> – Poster Day from 10:30-12:30 in Vari Hall**

**Monday April 14<sup>th</sup> – Thesis due for Second Reader by 12noon (worth 20% of your final grade)**

- Ideally your thesis supervisor will have provided feedback on *at least* one draft of your thesis before the thesis is submitted to the second reader. **You should receive feedback by Monday April 21<sup>st</sup>** that you can work to integrate into your final thesis.

**Thursday April 24<sup>th</sup> – FINAL thesis due by 12noon (worth 50% of your final grade)**

**A softcopy of your thesis is due to by 12noon. Additional details will be provided on eclass. Please note that you will also be expected to submit your thesis through Turnitin.**