

**Psychology 4998 Honors Thesis Research  
Fall 2023**

**Professor  
& Honors Faculty Advisor**

Dr. Lisa G. Aspinwall  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 3-4 PM &  
Thursdays 1:30-2:30 PM (no appointment needed);  
additional times by appointment for in-person  
or Zoom meetings

**Honors Teaching Assistant**

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**Office Hours:** By request.  
Schedule an appointment via  
<https://calendly.com/mirindawhitaker/4998>

**Time & Location of Course:** This class will meet in person every other Tuesday starting August 22 from 12:25pm-1:45pm in Gardner Commons 4660. We are committed to working with you to ensure you have access to all resources and a fulfilling learning experience in this course. Please review the Class Schedule (see pp. 5-6) for a detailed breakdown of meeting times and assignments. Feel free to bring a lunch or a snack to class.

**Inclusion, Access, and Mutual Respect:** It is one of our top priorities to make this class and our shared learning environment accessible and welcoming to all students. Please assist us in this effort by alerting us to any aspect of the course, including lectures, readings, discussions, or other activities, that may not further this goal. Please do your part by approaching class discussions with an open mind and a commitment to mutual respect for your fellow students, your instructor, and your teaching assistant.

**We are fully committed not only to the letter but also the spirit of the ADA.** If you qualify for accommodations in any aspect of the course, *we encourage you to use them, starting with the first class.* Please see the professor as soon as possible so that we can work together to make arrangements.

Please help us identify any information on the class website that may not be of optimal quality for use with screen readers or other assistive technologies. We will do our best to find a higher-quality version.

Please also let us know if you have suggestions for improving access to other class activities, such as small group discussions or class presentations.

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability and Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability and Access.

**Course Description:** PSY 4998 is designed to help you make plans and progress to complete all aspects of your Honors Thesis and keep you on track to finish in Spring 2024. In this course you will continue to develop your thesis ideas, expand your literature review, draft your method section and analytic plan, identify skills and resources you will need to complete your project, make a project completion timeline with your advisor, and learn to critically evaluate your own and others' research and writing. In Spring 2024, the PSY 4999 course will be primarily focused on completing the write up of your thesis (results and discussion, including tables and figures) and presenting your work.

\*\*\* Do not forget that you are required to **present your work** to fulfill the thesis requirements. Each student should prepare to present their work in the form of a poster or oral presentation at the

Undergraduate Research Symposium and/or CSBS Student Research Day in the Spring. You might also apply for other opportunities like [Research on Capitol Hill](#) (abstracts due October 31, 2023). We will integrate presentation preparation and practice into this course, and you should also consult your research advisor or graduate students in the lab for resources.

For your convenience, we have included a list of deadlines for both this course and the Honors College on your Canvas calendar, on the completion agreement form, and in the class schedule located on the last pages of this syllabus.

**Learning Goals:** In addition to expanding your knowledge of the literature and methods surrounding your thesis topic through your work with your faculty research advisor, this course will further develop your skills in the areas of Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking, Communication (both written and oral), and Professional Development (through the expansion of your self-regulation and project-management skills as you complete your thesis and through other activities, such as the provision and receipt of constructive peer feedback).

### **Important Administrative Details**

**NOTE:** The following rules are presented in the interest of fairness for all students. Please read this information carefully!

*Withdrawals:* The last day to drop or delete classes is September 1, and the last date for course withdrawal is October 20. Please consult University policies regarding withdrawals for medical or other personal circumstances.

*Incompletes:* Incompletes are given only for extraordinary circumstances. For an incomplete to be given, the student must be passing the course and have completed the majority of the assignments. Please see your registration guide for more detailed information.

*T-Grades.* If you meet the requirements of this class, your initial final grade in PSY 4998 will be the mysterious grade of T (which means thesis work in progress). This grade will convert to the more typical letter grade only after you successfully complete your thesis, your presentation, and all other aspects of PSY 4999. Your grade in PSY 4998 and PSY 4999 is jointly determined by your faculty research advisor and the HFA, Dr. Aspinwall. The conversion of the T grade into your final letter grade must be handled manually by Dr. Aspinwall. Please see us or the CSBS advisors if you suspect that a T grade could create problems for scholarships or for your transcript if you are applying to other programs and opportunities. (There's nothing wrong with a T grade – it's just that almost no one knows what it means.)

**Class Attendance:** This class is taught in person and has a substantial experiential component. Students should not attend class if they are feeling ill, have been potentially exposed to COVID-19, or feel unsafe attending in person. If you would like to participate on Zoom due to these circumstances or other personal or familial situations, please contact us no later than 24 hours prior to class in order to give us enough time to make the necessary arrangements.

With advance notice of 24 hours or more, we will record lectures and other activities for students observing religious holidays or other schedule conflicts. You can facilitate the religious accommodation process by giving us written notice of days on which you will be unable to attend by the end of the second week of class. It is crucial for us to know about a planned absence prior to the day of class in order to ensure that you are not assigned an in-class partner during peer reviews.

**Missing Deadlines & Other Hardships:** As part of this course, you will be establishing a timeline and committing to a signed contract (thesis completion agreement) with your faculty mentor. Course deadlines are set in place to keep students on track with their thesis. With our approval, you and your faculty research mentor may propose an alternative schedule of deadlines.

With two weeks advance notice, we may be able to help you out of a jam (e.g., 3 exams on the same day, 3 papers due before the midterm, 3 weddings to attend, etc.). Without advance arrangements, no exceptions

will be made to class deadlines except for unusual extenuating circumstances. If you have a schedule conflict, submit a written request to the professor as soon as possible. In the request, include the reason, documentation of the reason, your name, and e-mail address.

**Academic Dishonesty:** The grade you earn in this course should reflect your own effort and accomplishment. Get help in office hours, ask for an extension, do anything but cheat. It is important that your work reflect your own effort and accomplishment (and learning!).

**Your work must be your own.** Although it is often helpful to discuss assignments and course materials with other students and such activities are an important part of this course, **no group projects are allowed**; your thesis must represent your own individual and original work. Similarly, **ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence apps may not be used in whole or in part in the preparation of your thesis.** All theses submitted through Canvas will be submitted to Turn It In for review for originality. Class assignments including thesis drafts that have substantial overlap in text with other submitted papers or with papers and other materials available on the Internet including AI-generated text will be referred to the university as potential instances of plagiarism. Please see below for more details on plagiarism and academic misconduct.

**You must give others appropriate credit for their ideas.** It is your responsibility as a student to understand how to discuss other authors' work in an appropriate way. It is your instructors' responsibility to answer any questions you may have about such issues. If you have any questions about appropriate ways in which to use and discuss another author's work in your own papers, please ask.

As a student, it is in your best interest to try to prevent plagiarism and other forms of cheating. Please be attentive to such issues when you are preparing your thesis for this class.

**General Information and Suggestions for Doing Well in Psych 4998:** Your Honors Thesis is the culmination of multiple semesters of work. Putting together the literature review, method section, results section, and discussion section, along with references and any tables and figures, will allow you to use knowledge you've learned throughout your academic career. A critically important element of this process is seeking early and frequent feedback from your peers, your faculty research advisor, the Honors Faculty Advisor (Dr. Aspinwall), and the Honors TA. Thus, the best thing you can do to get the most from this experience is to meet our recommended target dates for each of these parts of your thesis, so that you have time to benefit from the feedback you will receive to create the best possible final Honors Thesis.

**You can do this!** Over the course of this year, you will develop a number of skills and should treat this process as a learning experience and opportunity for growth. Completing an Honors Thesis is a substantial accomplishment that will prepare you for graduate school and/or the work force and distinguish you as the talented and bright scholars that you are. With that being said, perfection is not the goal. Be patient and kind with yourself and your progress. It may feel like an insurmountable task now, but if you show up, put forth effort, and pace yourself, we have no doubt that you will succeed.

### **Additional Policies and Resources**

***University Safety Statement.*** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).

***Wellness Statement.*** Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., are common experiences that can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources, contact the [Center for Student Wellness](http://www.wellness.utah.edu) – [www.wellness.utah.edu](http://www.wellness.utah.edu) (801-581-7776). The Counseling Center is

another excellent resource, offering services that include counseling and a mindfulness clinic (see <http://counselingcenter.utah.edu>).

**Department of Psychology Academic Misconduct Policy.** The Department of Psychology has a zero-tolerance policy for academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarizing, research misconduct, misrepresenting one's work, and inappropriately collaborating. This applies to any work students turn in for evaluation or course credit.

Definitions can be found in the Student Code at <http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>.

If you are suspected of academic misconduct, the process proceeds according to the rules found in the Student Code, University Policy 6-400(V). If you are found responsible for misconduct, consequences range from failure on the assignment to dismissal from the program, consistent with both University and Psychology Department Policy. The Psychology Department Policy can be found at: [https://www.psych.utah.edu/undergraduate/files/acad\\_misconduct\\_policy.pdf](https://www.psych.utah.edu/undergraduate/files/acad_misconduct_policy.pdf)

Major Offenses include:

1. Cheating on a test, quiz, problem set, or other independent work
2. Plagiarism in written work: Copying any quantity of text from another source or another student without quoting and citing the copied text.
3. Plagiarism in written work: Flagrant misuse of citations, such that a student clearly attempted to represent ideas that were not theirs as if they were, even if the ideas were presented in the student's own words.

**Addressing Sexual Misconduct.** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801- 581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585- 2677(COPS).

**Additional University policies:** Student Code: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>  
Accommodation Policy (see Section Q): <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>

**Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language.** If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language development and writing. These resources include the Department of Linguistics ESL Program (<http://linguistics.utah.edu/esl-program/>); the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.utah.edu>) the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu/>); and the English Language Institute (<https://writingcenter.utah.edu>). Please let us know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

**Class Schedule**

Class will be held in person every other Tuesday from 12:25-1:45 PM starting August 22. Unless otherwise noted, assignments should be submitted to Canvas by 11:59 PM on the due date.

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>
1	August 22	<b>Class</b> -Review Canvas layout -Student thesis completion agreement – must be signed by your faculty research mentor -Making a timeline for your thesis -Writing your abstract	
2	August 29	<b>No Class</b> -Work on your abstract. -Meet with your faculty research mentor.	-First draft of abstract <b>due 9/5 at noon</b> -Thesis Completion Agreement <b>due 9/8</b>
3	September 5	<b>Class</b> -Literature review and bibliography -Peer review abstracts	-Abstract revision <b>due 9/12</b>
4	September 12	<b>No Class</b> -Work on literature review and bibliography -Email your Honors College Thesis Proposal form to Virginia Solomon; must be signed by your faculty research mentor & Dr. Aspinwall.	-Honors College thesis proposal <b>form due 9/15</b> to Virginia Solomon.
5	September 19	<b>Class</b> -Data Collection plans -Introduction writing	-Bibliography <b>due 9/25</b>
6	September 26	<b>No Class</b> -Work on introduction. -Check in with your faculty research advisor about your introduction.	First draft of introduction <b>due 10/2</b>
7	October 3	<b>Class</b> -Methods section -Peer review introductions	
8	October 10	<b>No Class – FALL BREAK</b>	
9	October 17	<b>Class</b> -Presenting research -Start work on methods section	Revised introductions <b>due 10/17</b>
10	October 24	<b>No Class</b> -Continue working on methods section -Check in with your faculty research advisor about your methods section.	First draft of methods <b>due 10/30</b>

11	October 31	<b>Class</b> -Writing analytic plans -Peer review methods section	Revised methods <b>due 11/6</b>
12	November 7	<b>No Class</b> -Work on data analysis plan -Check in with faculty research advisor about statistical analyses and the state of your data set.	First draft of data analysis plan <b>due 11/13</b>
13	November 14	<b>Class</b> -Peer review of data analysis plan	
14	November 21	<b>No Class – THANKSGIVING WEEK</b> -Dr. Aspinwall and Mirinda will be available via Zoom by appointment during regularly scheduled class time for individual consultation	Revised data analysis plan <b>due 11/28</b>
15	November 28	<b>Class</b> -Data collection check in -Timeline for thesis analysis -Troubleshooting and running stats -Meet with faculty research advisor to plan work over winter break.	
16	December 5	<b>No Class</b> -Dr. Aspinwall and Mirinda will be available via Zoom by appointment during regularly scheduled class time for individual consultation -Be prepared to begin Spring 2024 semester of PSY 4999 with your introduction and methods sections polished and ready for final feedback. Make sure that your faculty research advisor has provided feedback on these sections and your revisions to them!	