

## Guidelines for Honors Thesis Department of Psychology

Beginning in the Fall, 2005, semester, the Psychology Department at Fredonia will implement guidelines for honors theses. The thesis may be done by psychology majors or minors.

### Committee Composition

Students must have a Chair for the thesis; the Chair must be a faculty member in the psychology department.

Thesis students work with a thesis committee consisting of 1-2 faculty members besides the Chair. At least one of the faculty members (i.e., besides the Chair) must be in the psychology department. A third member could be from the psychology department or from another department. Committee members are selected jointly by the student and thesis Chair.

### Proposal, Defense, and Presentation of Thesis

1. Thesis students must have a proposal meeting in which they discuss their planned thesis. They must write a proposal to be distributed in advance of the proposal meeting. The proposal should include a literature review and detailed plan for the study methodology. The proposal meeting should occur no later than six months before the student plans to complete the thesis (e.g., during the Fall semester if the student planned to complete the thesis the following May).
2. The student must defend the thesis orally in front of the committee when the written thesis is completed. Students are expected to give a final draft (i.e., a draft approved by the Chair) of the thesis to the other committee members at least one week in advance of the defense meeting. Students should present their research at an undergraduate research conference (e.g., SCREE, WPUPC). Students may also be encouraged to present their research at a regional or national conference as well.

### Characteristics of the Thesis

1. Although it may vary whether a student does an honors thesis that is wholly independent from the Chair's research area, a thesis that is related to the Chair's research area, or a thesis that represents part of a larger project that the Chair is working on, it is expected that the student demonstrate some independent thinking with the thesis project. That is, it is expected that the student to be involved in the design of the study methodology and measures. If more than one student is writing a thesis based on the same general research project, it is expected that each student write his/her thesis independently.
2. It is expected that honors theses be empirical theses (i.e., research should be conducted). The thesis should be prepared in APA-style. A typical length for the thesis should be approximately 20-30 manuscript pages.

### Course Credit

Students may take up to 6 credits of Honors Thesis credits over the course of 2-3 semesters. The credits will be taken in the Honors department (HONR 400). The rationale for having students potentially take credits over 2-3 semesters is because it may take more than two semesters for

students to develop a good idea for the thesis project, obtain human subjects approval (where applicable), collect data, analyze data, and write the thesis.

2. The Chair has the choice of granting a letter grade for the thesis work each semester in which work is completed or waiting until the thesis is completed to give a grade for all 6 credits of thesis work. The Chair should consider the recommendation of other committee members in selecting a grade for the thesis work, but has the final say in the letter grade(s) granted to the student. The Chair may elect to not have the student continue work on the honors thesis if the student's work in the initial semester(s) is unsatisfactory. In this case, a grade based on work completed should be given to the student.