



# psychology

## Undergraduate Program Guidelines For Honors in Psychology: 2007-2008

Honors Director: Prof. Joachim Krueger, 863-2503, Joachim\_Krueger@brown.edu

Schedule of Events and Due Dates for Honors Research Projects	
Sept 28 - Friday	Submit required forms for declaration of Honors
Dec 14 - Friday	Submit progress report to Honors Advisor & sponsor
Mar 21 - Friday	Submit draft of thesis to sponsor
Apr 4 - Friday	Submit final copies of thesis to sponsor and Psychology Department office, Hunter 273, before 12:00 noon.
Apr 16 - Apr 17	Oral Exams
Apr 25 - May 6	Reading Period
May 7 - Wednesday	Schlosberg Colloquium and Honors Dinner
May 7 - May 16	Final Exams

The Honors Program in Psychology gives undergraduates a special opportunity to carry out an empirical research project under the direction of a faculty member. **The research project should be developed by the student in consultation with his or her faculty sponsor during or prior to the student's sixth semester.** This allows the sponsor and student a chance to set up a summer research program and/or a reading list before the summer break. A project proposal is submitted to the Psychology Department for approval early in the student's 7th semester. The research is to be completed in time for an honors thesis to be written and an oral examination to be taken at the end of the eighth semester. Participation in the program allows students to develop an understanding of research and acquire research skills and background. The program also provides the opportunity for outstanding senior concentrators to receive their undergraduate degree with Honors in Psychology. We strongly encourage all qualified A.B. and Sc.B. concentrators to consider the Honors Program.

The decision to conduct an independent research project is a significant commitment on the part of both the student and the sponsor. Be prepared to devote from 10-20 hrs/wk to

your independent research project. Since there are a limited number of positions with each professor or sponsor, there sometimes are more students interested in conducting research than there are positions. It is important to establish a relationship with potential sponsors by the student's 6th semester, usually the semester before you would like to begin if not sooner. Additionally, depending on the field, you may want to begin your research in the sixth semester or the summer before the seventh semester. In this case you should consult with a potential sponsor in the fifth semester.

The criteria for admittance into the Honors program include:

1. Although not a firm cut-off, the usual grade point average for Honors students is at least 3.5 for courses in the concentration.
2. A.B. or Sc.B. concentration in Psychology, completion of Psychology 9 (or equivalent), and completion of one of the advanced laboratory courses by the end of semester 6.
3. A completed application form signed by both the student and the faculty sponsor.
4. Approval of the research proposal and educational plan by the Honors committee.
5. PY197/199 should be taken while performing your honors project (usually during your senior year), unless your honors advisor is not a member of the Psychology Department Faculty (see below.) You can obtain the proper section number for PY197 or PY199 from your sponsor, or, failing that, the Registrar's office. You should take either two semesters of PY199, or one semester of PY197 (Fall) and one semester of PY199 (Spring) as decided upon with your sponsor.

## *Finding a sponsor*

Faculty sponsors for Honors thesis research should be members of the Departments of [Psychology](#), [Neuroscience](#), or [Cognitive & Linguistic Sciences](#). See departmental web pages for listings of faculty research interests. An abbreviated description of Psychology faculty research interests can also be found [here](#). (Faculty from other departments who teach a course in the Psychology Department may also be able to serve as sponsors, if approved by the Psychology Concentration Committee.) Choose potential sponsors doing work in the area of experimental psychology, cognitive science, or behavioral neuroscience that you are interested in. Generally it is best to call or email a faculty member and make an appointment to discuss the possibility of working with her/him. Any questions concerning the appropriateness of research for Honors should be addressed to the Psychology Honors Advisor.

## *Type of Research*

Honors projects are expected to be **empirical and quantitative**. The typical study is experimental in the traditional sense, containing design features such as manipulation of independent variables, control groups, random assignment to conditions, and quantitative statistical analysis. Survey studies or observational studies may also qualify if a rigorous quantitative approach is used. Studies in the following types may be considered but only

on an *exceptional basis*: quantitative modeling (e.g., computer simulations), meta-analyses, analysis of archival data (e.g., from large data bases such as censuses). It bears repeating that such projects do not lie at the core of the mission of the honors program. *To have such a study admitted, students and their sponsors need to present a careful rationale.* Projects dedicated to literature reviews, theoretical analysis, or single-case analyses do not qualify as honors projects, though of course such work may still be done for course credit (e.g., py197).

## ***Filing for Honors***

Students interested in the Honors program should attend a general orientation meeting held periodically by the Honors Advisor. Once you have tentatively arranged a research project with a faculty sponsor, the project and educational plan must be formally approved. Certain projects may not be judged appropriate for Honors in Psychology. On the Honors Application Form, [available online](#) or from the Departmental office, describe the project you wish to undertake and obtain the signature of your faculty sponsor. There is also a section that must be completed by your sponsor. *These signatures constitute a commitment by **both the student and the faculty member** to perform the honors project and participate in the educational plan. The Honors Advisor must be notified in writing should either party change this commitment.*

All students, especially students whose sponsors are not in the Psychology Department, should feel free to consult with the Honors Advisor at any time during the process of completing Honors requirements.

## ***Deadlines***

Students wishing to graduate with Honors in May must submit an Honors Application electronically no later than 4:00 p.m. on the preceding September 28. You can download the application form [here](#). The Department will review the proposal promptly and may arrange a meeting to discuss the project with the student.

At the end of semester 7, students must submit to their sponsor and the Honors Advisor a report of the progress of their Honors project during that semester. The specific content of this progress report should be discussed by the student and the sponsor; it may vary from laboratory to laboratory depending on the student's activities during that semester. For example, some students spend semester 7 doing library research; these students would be expected to complete the introduction to their thesis for a progress report. Other students collect data during semester 7; these students might write up a methods and results summary. Progress reports should be about 2-3 pages in length. Progress reports for Honors in the 2007-2008 academic year are due December 14, 2007.

The Honors project is completed during semester 8. Since the demands of each Honors project may vary, each student should work out a specific schedule for the completion of the project with her or his sponsor. A draft copy of the thesis should be submitted to the

sponsor by *Friday, March 21*, and final copies must be submitted by *April 4 before noon*. Sponsors are expected to provide feedback to the student regarding editing the draft of the thesis.

An oral presentation of the thesis is scheduled for end of April. Each student will give an oral presentation to members of the psychology faculty which is also open to the public. The oral presentation gives the student an opportunity to describe the Honors Research Project, and allows the faculty the opportunity to learn about the research being conducted by undergraduates within the Department and to assess the accomplishments of each candidate. Sponsors are asked to attend at least two oral defenses in addition to their student's.

Honors in psychology are given for excellence in scholarship and independent research. While independent research is a requirement for receiving an Honors Degree, simply completing such a project does not guarantee Graduation with Honors.

1. The student is expected to maintain a 3.5 GPA or better through her/his senior year.
2. An appropriate independent research project must be completed to the satisfaction of the student's faculty sponsor, and the student must present a thesis describing the research project. The thesis must be written independently by each student; theses written by more than one student are not acceptable. The thesis is read and signed by the faculty sponsor and then, following the schedule outlined below, is submitted for review to the Psychology Honors Committee.
3. The thesis will be judged by the Psychology Honors Committee to merit Honors if it is of high quality and if the project has a clear focus in the area of psychology. The Committee will evaluate the type and amount of work done and the quality of the written thesis.
4. An oral presentation must be given in the Spring. All students are welcome to attend these presentations.
5. Students conducting honors projects are expected to attend the Psychology Department colloquia held throughout the year. Following the year's final colloquium (on the first Wednesday in May) an Honors Dinner is held to recognize and celebrate the year's honors students.