PSYCHOLOGY 600: Research Orientation  
Spring 2014

Meeting time: Friday, 10:00-11:40
Meeting location: Life Sciences (South) 244

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Brasser: by appointment at 6330 Alvarado Ct. Ste. 231

Course Description and Objectives
This is a required course in the Psychology Master’s Program and is taken on a CR/NCR basis. The course covers substantive and procedural issues essential for your progress in the program. Thus, attendance of class meetings is mandatory with a 90% attendance record required to earn credit. At the end of the full course sequence, you will have working knowledge of the type of research conducted in the Psychology Department, ethics and logistics of psychological research, informational and mentoring resources, thesis development, continuing education in doctoral programs, and career opportunities for master’s graduates. The course should facilitate your progress through the program and prepare you for applications to doctoral programs, jobs, or both.

Course Structure and Requirements
The course structure will vary depending on the topic, but will typically include informational presentations, panels and discussion. Your active participation is essential for you to benefit from the course. Recommended readings are provided as an additional resource, and we encourage you to read these materials before the class. Most successful graduate students are those who are proactive and learn by participating. Be one of them.

In addition to the writing assignments described below, all students are required to have an individual meeting with one of the advisors before the end of the semester. We have set aside one class day to allow time for some of these meetings, but the meetings typically are set up by appointment. More information will be provided in class.
Below is the information on the texts associated with the class:

**Recommended Texts:**
SDSU Psychology Department (2012). *SDSU Department of Psychology M.A./M.S. Student Handbook*.
Available on MA/MS Homeroom on Blackboard or [http://www.psychology.sdsu.edu/](http://www.psychology.sdsu.edu/).
Graduate → Current MA Students → Master’s Student Handbook
[http://www.montezumapublishing.com/Portals/0/docs/DTM.pdf](http://www.montezumapublishing.com/Portals/0/docs/DTM.pdf)
You will need the manual throughout your studies, especially in the final phases of your thesis development (e.g., formatting).

There may be additional readings that expand on the topics addressed in this reading list.

**Written Assignments**
There will be only two (you’re welcome) written assignments for the class. For all assignments, **please name your assignment file after yourself (e.g., Smith_Goals)**. Submit your assignment through the Turnitin link under “Assignments” on Blackboard. Do NOT use Digital Dropbox on Blackboard to submit your assignments. Both assignments must be completed **on time** to earn credit for the class.

Your first assignment, “Thesis overview,” is to provide a short summary of what you are planning to do for your thesis. The purpose of this assignment is both to get you started on organizing your thoughts for your thesis and to provide a forum to receive feedback on your writing. The summary should be 1.5-2 pages single-spaced, and should more or less be an extended abstract for a proposal (covering the significance of the problem, a brief summary of background literature, the purpose of the thesis, the specific questions being answered or hypotheses being proposed, and perhaps a brief mention of the method to be used). **This assignment is due on January 31**. During class, the summaries will be exchanged to share your ideas with other students and get feedback on your writing.
Your second assignment, “Learning about the Thesis Proposal,” is to attend a thesis proposal and report on what you learn from attendance. The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize yourself with this crucial step in your studies. You will turn in a brief report including (a) the title and the date of the proposal attended, (b) a summary of the topics discussed (e.g., theoretical, methodological, analytical), and (c) what you have learned from the experience and how you intend to apply it when you propose or your thesis. 

_This assignment is due on April 11, but get it out of the way as soon as you can!_

**Differences from Psy 600 in the Fall**

You will note that this semester of Psy 600 is slightly different than the Fall semester. For one thing, we have really front-loaded the semester, to free you up at the end of the semester. You will thank us for this later. For another thing, we have only two written assignments. We strongly encourage you to submit the second assignment well in advance of the April 11 deadline, but we wanted to give everyone the chance to aim for attending a proposal in a research area that is at least somewhat interesting to you. However, proposals happen at unpredictable times, so you may have to go to a proposal meeting outside your area. Finally, the other big difference is that we split up the MA/MS students quite a bit in this semester, to help meet the differing needs of these two groups of students. The goal of the MA track this semester is to help prepare future doctoral students and academicians. The goal of the MS track this semester is to help prepare future interns and practitioners.

**Final Word**

Unlike your other classes, this class is not topic-specific. Rather, it is offered in service of your overall progress in the master’s program. Whereas issues of interest to all master’s students will be covered, we may not be aware of your specific needs if you do not indicate them. Should you have such needs, please feel free to bring them to our attention.

And finally, we reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus; please check your emails and Blackboard for any updates.
**TOPICS AND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

**January 24**  
Quick Overview of the Course  
Dr. May Yeh  
(Attendance required for all MA & MS students)

Getting into PhD Programs  
Dr. Liz Klonoff  
(MA students – attendance is **required**)  
(MS students – attendance is **optional**)

**January 31**  
Scientific Writing  
Dr. Lisa Kath

**ASSIGNMENT DUE:** Thesis Overview – 10am, Blackboard

**February 7**  
IRB Overview  
Amy McDaniel

**February 21**  
Proposing Your Thesis  
Maureen Crawford

**March 7**  
MA/MS split  
MA students – LS-244, “Becoming Visible: Present and Publish,” panel  
MS students – LS-281, “All about Internships,” Brittany Bermingham

**March 14**  
MA/MS split  
MA students – LS-244, “Surviving Academia,” panel  
MS students – LS-281, “Selection and Training,” Dr. Lisa Kath

**March 21**  
Microsoft Excel  
Ryan Mills, MS  
(MS students – attendance is **required**)  
(MA students – attendance is **optional**)

**April 11**  
MA/MS split  
MA students – LS-244, “Grant Writing Tips,” panel  
MS students – LS-281, “Job Analysis and Performance Appraisal,” Dr. Jeff Conte and Dr. Lisa Kath

**ASSIGNMENT DUE:** Career Path Role Models – 10am, Blackboard

**Week of April 25**  
Program of Study and Progress Report – meetings with advisors