

**PSY 401: ADVANCED RESEARCH  
Fall 2011**

**Website:** <http://psych.hanover.edu/classes/seniors/>

|   |   |       |  |
|---|---|-------|--|
| Meeting Time & Place:<br>MWF, 11-11:50am<br>SCC 147 | Faculty contact information                         |       |  |
|   | Ellen Altermatt                                     | x7317 | <a href="mailto:altermattel@hanover.edu">altermattel@hanover.edu</a> |
|   | Bill Altermatt                                      | X7318 | <a href="mailto:altermattw@hanover.edu">altermattw@hanover.edu</a>   |
|   | Skip Dine Young                                     | x7319 | <a href="mailto:youngst@hanover.edu">youngst@hanover.edu</a>         |
|   | John Krantz *                                       | x7316 | <a href="mailto:krantzj@hanover.edu">krantzj@hanover.edu</a>         |
|   | Alexis Green  | x7238 | <a href="mailto:green@hanover.edu">green@hanover.edu</a>             |
|   | *address general questions about the course to John |       |  |

### Overview and Course Objectives

With your participation, we expect this course to:

1. engage you in advanced issues of research and design
2. provide practice in the art of collaboration via close interaction with your colleagues
3. develop critical thinking as applied to psychological research
4. prepare you for the empirical project you will conduct next semester

### The Empirical Research Project

By the end of this academic year (winter term) you will have developed, conducted, analyzed and reported your own research project. This project will be conducted either individually or with one other person.

This fall you will develop and write a formal research proposal including an introduction, method section, proposed analyses section, and detailed (week-by-week) timeline for conducting the project during the next term. By the end of the Fall term, all the materials you will need to conduct your research in the Winter term should be collected and prepared. This project needs to be an advanced piece of research; by that we mean a project with more depth than the projects you have conducted as part of coursework in Research Methods or other classes. It should be equivalent in scale to an “Independent Study.”

**Note:** It is expected that you will work in pairs on your projects. If you wish to work individually, you will need to justify your choice. At the end of the first week, you will submit to the faculty the name of your partner (who should be in agreement) or write a justification for working alone. The department faculty will then decide the pairing. You will need compelling reasons to work alone.

## Detailed Information about Assignments and Course Activities

Research Journal / Retrospective Report. You have a choice of keeping a weekly journal or writing a retrospective paper at the end of the course.

1. If you choose the *research journal* option, you should keep a weekly record of your progress – thoughts on the project, the challenges you encounter, how you overcame them, choices you made which helped move you forward, etc. Each journal entry should be at least half a page in length. The journal should reflect the development of your ideas rather than simply catalog your ideas. The evaluation of your journal will be based upon how well you show the development of your ideas.
2. Alternatively, you may elect to write a 7-10 page *retrospective paper* in which you reflect on your experiences in 401. What have you learned about conducting research? What were some of the important challenges you faced in completing your project? Knowing what you know now, what do you wish you had known when you were beginning 401?

### ***Week 1: Prepare for the semester***

This week we will introduce you to the course and you will begin the process of settling on a research topic. You should begin by examining recent years' senior projects (see the psychology library or the department website for copies) and by searching PsycINFO for relevant studies. At the end of Week 1, we need to know whether you will complete your project with a partner or if you wish to work on your project alone. Email John with this information (and a justification, if you choose to work alone) by Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.

### ***Week 2: Preliminary Topic Ideas***

This week you will share preliminary topic ideas with the class. By the end of Week 2, you will submit a short paper (one or two paragraphs) describing your preliminary topic ideas. Email this description to John by Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.

### ***Week 3: Small Group Presentations / Research Ideas & References***

This week you will lead a discussion with a small group about the steps you've taken so far. Your presentation should include answers to the following: What was the preliminary, broad topic area that interested you and how have you narrowed it down? What led you to be interested in this topic? What have you done to research this topic? What problems have you encountered so far? What have you learned so far? In preparation for this presentation, you should read at least three articles or book chapters on your topic. You should plan to facilitate / direct the conversation, and you should have organized information and questions for your classmates that will generate a helpful conversation about your ideas. Do not feel pressured to have a complete study worked out at this point. By the end of this week, you will submit a short paper (one or two paragraphs) describing your research ideas and a list of 10 references (properly formatted in

APA style) that you have reviewed (at least the abstract). Email these materials to each psychology faculty member by Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11 a.m.

### ***Weeks 4 & 5: Conferences with Faculty***

During scheduled class time (and outside class time as needed), you will meet with at least 3 faculty members to discuss your ideas. Each faculty member will have a copy of your preliminary research ideas and your reference list. Come prepared to explain your thoughts and ask questions. We will track how many faculty you meet with and this will figure in your participation grade. Meetings typically run 30 minutes.

By Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, email each member of the department a 1-page paper describing (1) your research question(s) and methods and (2) the two faculty members with whom you feel you could work most effectively on your project. We will use this information to assign you to your faculty thesis advisor. You will spend the next several weeks working with that advisor to develop your proposal. To every extent possible, both student and faculty needs will be considered when assigning pairings (but do note that it is unlikely we'll be able to make everyone happy).

Note that on Monday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, the class will meet to hear a presentation about careers by Margaret Krantz, Director of the Career Center. On Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, the class will meet in the computer lab, SCC 148, to be introduced to web-based research methods, including a tool to assist in the development of web surveys.

### ***Week 6: Small Group Discussions / Research Ideas & Abstracts***

This week, you will lead a small group discussion of your or your team's research ideas as developed thus far. Note that both members of a team are expected to be active presenters. Bring a handout describing your research question(s) and methods. In addition, provide citation information and abstracts for 5 articles along with a paragraph describing how each article is relevant to your intended study. Articles may be relevant for a number of reasons. For example, they may contribute theoretically to your proposed study or they may suggest methods or measures you might use. Bring a one-page handout to the first group meeting with one copy for each group member of your group including the faculty leader. The handout should be designed to facilitate their presentation, perhaps focusing on previous findings, theory, or methods. In addition, to this meeting bring a hard copy of the assignment of 5 article citations, abstracts, and relevancy. Advisor assignments will be announced by Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Weeks 7, 8, & 9: Advisor Meetings / First Draft Due***

During weeks 7, 8, and 9, we will not meet as a class. Instead, you should arrange a regular weekly meeting time with your advisor to discuss your proposed study. You and your thesis advisor should begin to work together. During these weeks, you should 1) be preparing to present your proposal to the class (see below), 2) begin working on the first written draft of your proposal, 3) track down any materials (e.g., questionnaires, stimuli) you will need for your project, and 4) submit your journal to your advisor as a progress check (if you're keeping a

journal). If you are not keeping a journal, this may be a good time to start drafting your retrospective report. You will be asked to turn in the first draft of your written research proposal and the materials you will need (e.g., questionnaires) to your thesis advisor by Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. This is un-graded but required and will figure in to participation grade

### ***Weeks 10 & 11: Presentations***

At some point during these weeks you will make a **formal presentation** of your research ideas so that your classmates can help you refine and anticipate problems with your design. Your presentation should include a description of the relevant literature, your proposed methods, a rough idea of how you will analyze your data, and the timeline for completing the project. Of course, some aspects of this proposal may be rough and some aspects of your design will change (perhaps dramatically) as a result of the feedback you receive. However, you should consider this a serious design proposal and consider yourself a moderator of the discussion of the proposal. Have questions ready if necessary to prompt your classmates' feedback. You will have 15 – 20 minutes for your presentation & discussion. This is a letter-graded assignment. Please email your PowerPoint file to John the day before your presentation. As you prepare for your presentation, be sure to work on revisions to your first draft.

### ***Week 12: Second Draft of Proposal Due***

By Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, submit the second draft of your proposal to your advisor. Your grade on this assignment accounts for current quality *and* progress from first draft. Pace your work as the semester progresses! Also note that standards for grading drafts are generally different than those for final papers. A high grade on a draft does not necessarily translate into a high grade on a final paper.

### ***Weeks 13 & 14: Advisor Meetings***

During weeks 13 & 14, we will not meet with a class. During these weeks, you should meet with your advisor, make revisions to your second draft, and finalize your journal or retrospective report.

### ***Finals Week: Final Proposal and Journals or Retrospective Reports Due***

Final Written Proposal Due. On (or before!) the day the final exam is scheduled, you will submit a detailed, APA style research proposal that will include a full literature review, methods section, proposed results, and a timeline.

Research Journal or Retrospective Report due to your thesis advisor.

### Schedule

| Week                             | Deadline   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>1</b><br>9/5-9/9              | <b>Course Introduction</b><br>Class meeting Monday<br>Faculty research presentations on Wednesday<br>No class Friday<br>Look at past senior thesis reports (on bookshelf in SC 147 and on department website: <a href="http://psych.hanover.edu/classes/seniors/">http://psych.hanover.edu/classes/seniors/</a> )<br>Find partner<br><b>By Friday, indicate a partner or write a justification for working alone</b>   |
| <b>2</b><br>9/12-9/16            | <b>Present preliminary topic ideas in large group</b><br>Class meeting Monday<br>Class meetings on Wednesday and Friday as needed<br>Begin literature search, request ILLs<br><b>Preliminary topic ideas are due Friday of this week</b>   |
| <b>3</b><br>9/19-9/23            | <b>Present initial ideas in small groups</b><br><b>MEETINGS WILL BE ARRANGED BY YOUR FACULTY LEADER</b><br>Continue literature search, request ILLs; Read literature, take notes<br><b>Research ideas and 10+ references are due Friday of this week</b>   |
| <b>4 and 5</b><br>9/26-10/7      | <b>Meet individually with 3+ faculty members about research ideas</b><br>Class meets Monday 9/26 to hear presentation by Career Center: Margaret Krantz<br>Class meets Wednesday 9/28 to be introduced to web-based research methods: John Krantz<br>Continue literature search, request ILLs; Read literature, take notes<br><b>Submit two choices for faculty advisor and 1-page description of research question(s) and methods by Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup></b>   |
| <b>6</b><br>10/10-10/14          | <b>Small group discussions of research ideas</b><br><b>MEETINGS WILL BE ARRANGED BY YOUR FACULTY LEADER</b><br><b>Prepare a handout describing your research question(s) and methods, citation information and abstracts for 5 articles, and a paragraph describing how each article is relevant to your intended study.</b><br>Continue literature search, request ILLs; Read literature, take notes<br>Begin work on first draft: title page, references page, outline of Methods section<br>Advisor assignments announced Friday of this week                   |
| <b>7, 8, and 9</b><br>10/17-11/4 | <b>Meet with advisor</b><br>No regular class meetings<br>Continue literature search, request ILLs; Read literature, take notes<br>Track down any necessary questionnaires or study materials<br>Continue work on first draft: Introduction, Methods, Expected Results<br>Submit journal to advisor for progress check, if keeping journal<br>Begin working on presentation<br><b>Submit first draft of proposal and copies of all materials to advisor by Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup></b><br>First drafts will be returned by Friday, November 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| <b>10 and 11</b><br>11/7 -11/18  | <b>Presentations</b><br>Meet in class all scheduled days<br>Ask questions during presentations<br>Continue literature search, request ILLs; Read literature, take notes<br>Revise first draft  |

| <b>Week</b>                    | <b>Deadline</b>   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>12</b><br>11/21-11/25       | <b>Meet with advisor</b><br>No regular class meetings<br>Thanksgiving Break begins Wednesday<br>Revise first draft<br>Read literature, take notes<br><b>Submit second draft of proposal and copy of all materials to advisor by Tuesday, November 22<sup>rd</sup></b><br>Second drafts returned by Friday, December 2 <sup>rd</sup> |
| <b>13 and 14</b><br>11/28-12/9 | <b>Meet with advisor</b><br>No regular class meetings<br>Read literature, take notes<br>Revise second draft<br>Pilot test study by having friends go through procedure  |
| Finals Week<br>12/12-12/16     | <b>Submit proposal</b> to advisor and second reader.<br><b>Submit journal or retrospective report</b> to advisor  |

### Grading

|   | Percentage<br>of Final<br>Grade |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Midterm progress  | 5                               |
| Proposal presentation   | 20                              |
| Second draft of proposal  | 15                              |
| Research Journal / Retrospective Report                               | 5                               |
| Class attendance, participation, & making regular progress on project | 15                              |
| Written Proposal  | 40                              |
|   |                                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100</b>                      |

### Letter Grades

Letter grade interpretations are given by the following interpretation of the final average:

| Grade | %      | Grade | %     |
|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| A     | 93-100 | C     | 73-76 |
| A-    | 90-92  | C-    | 70-72 |
| B+    | 87-89  | D+    | 67-69 |
| B     | 83-86  | D     | 63-66 |
| B-    | 80-82  | D-    | 60-62 |
| C+    | 77-79  | F     | 0-59  |

### ***Late Penalties***

To encourage timely preparation, there is a penalty for assignments that are submitted late. Assignments submitted after class on the day they were due will receive a -10% penalty. An additional -10% penalty will accrue with each additional day late.

### ***Attendance & Participation***

Since we have arranged this course so that each of you will benefit from each other's input, it is vital that you attend all classes and participate fully. Your participation will be graded because we'd like to emphasize its importance and give credit to your important efforts in this area. Listen carefully, ask questions when you are confused or have a helpful suggestion, and work hard to elicit feedback from other students when you are responsible for leading the discussion.