

# PSY309H1 S

## Research Specialization: Practicum

### Winter 2025 Syllabus

#### Course Meetings

##### PSY309H1 S

Section	Day & Time	Delivery Mode & Location
LEC0101	Thursday, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	In Person: SS 2116

Refer to ACORN for the most up-to-date information about the location of the course meetings.

#### Course Contacts

**Instructor:** Geoff MacDonald

**Email:** [geoff.macdonald@utoronto.ca](mailto:geoff.macdonald@utoronto.ca)

**Office Hours and Location:** Thursdays 3:00 - 4:00, SS4010

**Teaching Assistant:** Victoria Liu

**Email:** [victoria.liu@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:victoria.liu@mail.utoronto.ca)

#### Course Overview

Research Specialists learn about the research opportunities within our department, and develop skills in the areas of critical thinking, writing, and oral presentation. Students also conduct a pre-thesis research project under the supervision of a faculty member. Students should complete a PSY lab course (PSY3\*9H1) prior to taking this course; however, taking the lab course concurrently will be considered in consultation with the instructor. Enrolment is restricted to PSY Research Specialists.

Welcome! This course aims to help you begin your formal training as professional psychological scientists. This practicum course will allow you the opportunity to work on a prethesis research project for 6-8 hours per week within the lab of a Psychology faculty member to gain the experience needed to complete your thesis next year, to learn about research opportunities within the Department, and to prepare you for graduate study in psychology. Class activities will largely focus on equipping you for success as a psychologist by challenging you to develop better critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills. Upon completion of the course, you will emerge as a better writer, better speaker, more insightful thinker, and better prepared for continued study in a psychology graduate program.

#### Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will make significant progress on being able to:

- Conduct research in an academic lab

- Design and deliver scientific research presentations
- Produce effective academic writing
- Apply to Psychology graduate programs

**Prerequisites:** PSY202H1/ ECO220Y1/ SOC252H1/ STA221H1/ ECO220Y5/ PSY202H5/ STA221H5/ PSYC08H3/ STAB27H3/ STAC32H3

**Corequisites:** PSY319H1/ PSY329H1/ PSY339H1/ PSY349H1/ PSY359H1/ PSY369H1/ PSY379H1/ PSY389H1

**Exclusions:** PSY309H5

**Recommended Preparation:** None

**Credit Value:** 0.5

## Course Materials

American Psychological Association (2020). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th edition). American Psychological Association.

## Marking Scheme

Assessment	Percent	Details	Due Date
Mini-Thesis	40%		2025-04-03
Writing Assignments & Peer Feedback	30%		No Specific Date
Attendance, Class Participation, & Presentations	30%		No Specific Date

PSY309 has a unique grading scheme. You gained permission to enrol based on your request for admission to the Research Specialist program in Psychology, which requires demonstrated academic excellence and commitment to obtaining a deep understanding of psychology. We therefore assume that you will do well in the course and, if you perform the required work conscientiously, you can expect a high grade and to continue in the Research Specialist program during your fourth year. Having said that, we go out of our way to deemphasize grades. You will submit work on a weekly basis throughout the semester, including frequent presentations, and conduct a major laboratory research project. You can expect comprehensive feedback and corrections on all of this work but without specific grades assigned on each item (except for the mini-thesis project, for which the supervising faculty member will recommend a grade). At the end of the course, we anticipate assigning you a grade of A in response to conscientious effort, excellent performance, and perfect attendance. If you do not perform satisfactorily in the course, your grade will reflect that underperformance. That said, worrying about grades often increases cognitive load and will therefore pose a distraction from the true task at hand: learning how to become an excellent psychological scientist. Please do not preoccupy yourself with grades but, rather, focus on honing your skills.

## Mini-Thesis

Each of you will work in the lab of a tenure-stream St. George campus Psychology faculty member for 6-8 hours per week. Every experience will be different, but all will involve taking an active role in developing or implementing a research project. Throughout the term, you will regularly present about your progress in your lab, culminating in a final paper describing the project. Your work in your lab, your final presentation, and your final research report will constitute this portion of your grade.

## Frequent Writing Assignments & Peer Feedback

You will complete frequent writing assignments to build the critically important, cognitive muscle of writing.

## Attendance, Class Participation & Presentations

You are embarking upon a unique, small class experience. Your input will shape this experience for everyone else in the course. Therefore, it is mandatory for you to not only attend every meeting, but to actively participate in all of our (sometimes goofy) class activities. Be ready to present in almost every class meeting. If you are not able to come to class, contact me ASAP.

## **Late Assessment Submissions Policy**

For any written work submitted without any related documentation, a 5% penalty will be applied for every 24-hour period or portion thereof the work is submitted late. Assignments will not be accepted more than 4 days after the due date. Missed class attendance and presentations will receive a zero.

## **Course Schedule**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Week 1</b> Jan. 9	<u>Introductions</u> Prepare to discuss: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A mundane fact about yourself</li><li>2. Why you got interested in psychology research</li><li>3. What your future career goals are</li></ol>
<b>Week 2</b> Jan. 16	<u>Presentation Skills</u> Gernsbacher, M. A. (2019). How to envision, design, and deliver engaging research presentations. In R. J. Harnish, K. R. Bridges, D. N. Sattler, M. Munson, S. Bridgen, F. J. Slack, & S. M. Smith (Eds.). What I wished my mentor had told me.

	<p>Prepare:</p> <p>Presentation on paper of your choice</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> Jan. 23</p>	<p><u>Making Effective Posters</u></p> <p>Morrison, Mike (2020, July 13). How to create a better research poster in less time. [Video]. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYk29tnxASs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYk29tnxASs</a></p> <p>Stapelton, Andy: (2022, July 18). What makes a great research poster? [Good and Bad Examples] [Video]. YouTube. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwiTqrVfDFU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZwiTqrVfDFU</a></p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Poster for a paper of your choice (same paper as Week 2)</p>
<p><b>Week 4</b> Jan. 30</p>	<p><u>Writing Skills</u></p> <p>APA Manual, Chapter 4 (Skim the other chapters)</p> <p>Mensh, B., &amp; Kording, K. (2017). Ten simple rules for structuring papers. <i>PLoS Computational Biology</i>, 13(9), 1-9.</p> <p>Apostolou, M., O, J., &amp; Esposito, G. (2020). Singles' reasons for being single: Empirical evidence from an evolutionary perspective. <i>Frontiers in psychology</i>, 11, 746.</p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Presentation critiquing Apostolou et al. (2020) from a writing perspective</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> Feb. 6</p>	<p><u>Mini Thesis Presentations</u></p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Mini-thesis overview presentations</p> <p>Mini-thesis introduction draft</p>
<p><b>Week 6</b> Feb. 13</p>	<p><u>Emotion Regulation and Research</u></p> <p>Porter, T., Elnakouri, A., Meyers, E. A., Shibayama, T., Jayawickreme, E., &amp; Grossmann, I. (2022). Predictors and consequences of intellectual humility. <i>Nature Reviews Psychology</i>, 1(9), 524-536.</p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Opening statement on intellectual humility and research for roundtable discussion</p>
<p><b>Week 7</b></p>	<p>Reading week!</p>

Feb. 20	
<b>Week 8</b> Feb. 27	<p><u>Life as an Academic Psychologist</u></p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Faculty interview presentations</p> <p>Mini-thesis methods section</p>
<b>Week 9</b> Mar. 6	<p>No class – use this time for mini-thesis projects</p>
<b>Week 9</b> Mar. 13	<p><u>Applying to Graduate School</u></p> <p>Appleby, D. C., &amp; Appleby, K. M. (2006). Kisses of death in the graduate school application process. <i>Teaching in Psychology</i>, 33(1), 19-24.</p> <p>Landrum, R. E., Alvarez, L. D. C., Jones, K. N., &amp; Burton, L. (2022). Graduate admissions in psychology: using quantitative and qualitative measures to understand the frequency and fatality of applicant errors. <i>Teaching of Psychology</i>, 0(0), 1-14.</p> <p>Taylor, A. D., &amp; Topor, D. (2019). What I wish my advisor had told me about applying to graduate school. In R. J. Harnish, K. R. Bridges, D. N. Sattler, M. Munson, S. Bridgen, F. J. Slack, &amp; S. M. Smith (Eds.). <i>What I wished my mentor had told me</i>.</p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Presentation on emailing your Week 2/3 paper author</p>
<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 20	<p><u>Presentations of Mini-Thesis Projects 1</u></p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Final presentations</p> <p>2-page graduate school personal statement</p>
<b>Week 11</b> Mar. 27	<p><u>Presentations of Mini-Thesis Projects 2</u></p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Final presentations</p>
<b>Week 12</b> April 3	<p><u>Presentations of Mini-Thesis Projects 1</u></p> <p>Prepare:</p> <p>Final presentations</p>

## **Policies & Statements**

### **Religious Accommodations**

As a student at the University of Toronto, you are part of a diverse community that welcomes and includes students and faculty from a wide range of cultural and religious traditions. For my part, I will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, examinations, or other compulsory activities on religious holy days not captured by statutory holidays. Further to University Policy, if you anticipate being absent from class or missing a major course activity (such as a test or in-class assignment) due to a religious observance, please let me know as early in the course as possible, and with sufficient notice (at least two to three weeks), so that we can work together to make alternate arrangements.

### **Students with Disabilities or Accommodation Requirements**

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have an acute or ongoing disability issue or accommodation need, you should register with Accessibility Services (AS) at the beginning of the academic year by visiting <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/accessibility-services/>. Without registration, you will not be able to verify your situation with your instructors, and instructors will not be advised about your accommodation needs. AS will assess your situation, develop an accommodation plan with you, and support you in requesting accommodation for your course work. Remember that the process of accommodation is private: AS will not share details of your needs or condition with any instructor, and your instructors will not reveal that you are registered with AS.

### **Academic Integrity**

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019) (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>). If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me. Note that you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from me or from other institutional resources. For example, to learn more about how to cite and use source material appropriately and for other writing support, see the U of T writing support website at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca>. Consult the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters for a complete outline of the University's policy and expectations. For more information, please see [A&S Student Academic Integrity](https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity) (<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>) and the [University of Toronto Website on Academic Integrity](https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca) (<https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca>).

### **Specific Medical Circumstances**

If you become ill and it affects your ability to do your academic work, consult me right away. Normally, I will ask you for documentation in support of your specific medical circumstances.

This documentation can be an Absence Declaration (via ACORN) or the University's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the details of the nature of the illness. If you cannot submit a VOI due to limits on terms of use, you can submit a different form (like a letter from a doctor), as long as it is an original document, and it contains the same information as the VOI (including dates, academic impact, practitioner's signature, phone and registration number). For more information on the VOI, please see <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>. For information on Absence Declaration Tool for A&S students, please see <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/absence>. If you get a concussion, break your hand, or suffer some other acute injury, you should register with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

### **Accommodation for Personal Reasons**

There may be times when you are unable to complete course work on time due to non-medical reasons. If you have concerns, speak to me or to an advisor in your College Registrar's office; they can help you to decide if you want to request an extension or other forms of academic consideration. They may be able to email your instructors directly to provide a College Registrar's letter of support and connect you with other helpful resources on campus.

### **Quercus Info**

This Course uses the University's learning management system, Quercus, to post information about the course. This includes posting readings and other materials required to complete class activities and course assignments, as well as sharing important announcements and updates. New information and resources will be posted regularly as we move through the term. To access the course website, go to the U of T Quercus log-in page at <https://q.utoronto.ca>. SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT GRADES POSTED ONLINE: Please also note that any grades posted are for your information only, so you can view and track your progress through the course. No grades are considered official, including any posted in Quercus at any point in the term, until they have been formally approved and posted on ACORN at the end of the course. Please contact me as soon as possible if you think there is an error in any grade posted on Quercus.

### **Questions About Grades**

You must wait for at least 48 hours following the return of an assignment/assessment before bringing a grade concern to me or the t.a.; this time is useful for thinking through your concern and making sure you can articulate clearly what that concern is. Additionally, grade concerns must be brought to my attention within 14 days of the return of the assignment/assessment. Please write a short paragraph detailing your grade concern, including a copy, photo, or scan of the original assignment, if relevant, and email it to me. Note that in agreeing to resubmit your work for remarking, you are agreeing to a re-evaluation of the entirety of your work; your grade may go up, go down, or stay the same.

### **Late/Missed Assignments**

For any written work submitted without any related documentation, a 5% penalty will be applied for every 24-hour period or portion thereof the work is submitted late. Assignments

will not be accepted more than 4 days after the due date. Missed class attendance and presentations will receive a zero.

## **Departmental Guidance for Undergraduate Students in Psychology**

The Department of Psychology recognizes that, as a student, you may experience disruptions to your learning that are out of your control, and that there may be circumstances when you need extra support. Accordingly, the department has provided a [helpful guide](#) to clarify your and your instructor's responsibilities when navigating these situations. This guide consolidates Arts & Science Policies for undergraduate students in one place for your convenience. As an instructor in the department, I will frequently consult with these recommendations when providing you with support, and I recommend that you also consult it to learn more about your rights and responsibilities before reaching out to me.

## **Mental Health and Well-Being**

Your mental health is important. Throughout university life, there are many experiences that can impact your mental health and well-being. As a University of Toronto student, you can access free mental health and wellbeing services at Health & Wellness (<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/>) such as same day counselling, brief counselling, medical care, skill-building workshops, and drop-in peer support. You can also meet with a Wellness Navigation Advisor who can connect you with other campus and community services and support. Call the mental health clinic at 416-978-8030 ext. 5 to book an appointment or visit <https://uoft.me/mentalhealthcare> to learn about the services available to you.

You can also visit your College Registrar to learn about the resources and supports available: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/college-registrars-offices>

If you're in distress, you can access immediate support: <https://uoft.me/feelingdistressed>