

Guidelines for a Senior Thesis (PSYC 396) Proposal

Completing a senior thesis and enrolling in PSYC 396 Senior Thesis is one of the ways that students can satisfy the capstone requirement in the psychology major. A total of 4 credits of PSYC 396 is needed to satisfy the capstone requirement.

Students completing a senior thesis typically register for 3 credits of PSYC 396 in the fall and 1 credit of PSYC 396 in the spring. The psychology department chair is the instructor of record for PSYC 396 and students must contact the department chair in order to enroll in the course.

Senior Thesis Proposal

Students completing a senior thesis will work with their faculty moderator to develop a research proposal that contains all of the sections listed below. The faculty moderator must approve the proposal before it is sent to the department chair. **The final proposal is due by October 1st.**

Although the specific requirements of the thesis proposal may vary somewhat from moderator to moderator, all proposals are expected to contain the following sections:

Introduction: The introduction should include a brief literature review sufficient to demonstrate that the proposal is grounded in the literature. This review need not be complete, but it should demonstrate that enough background research has been explored to suggest or support the hypotheses proposed. The introduction will end with the hypotheses and the rationale for the hypotheses.

Proposed Method: The method section should include information about the anticipated number of participants, operationalization of key variables, procedures, and materials.

Predicted Results: The results section should describe the statistical tests the student intends to use to analyze the data and the pattern of results that the student predicts based on the hypotheses presented in the introduction.

Discussion: The discussion section should outline the interpretation of predicted results in the context of the reviewed literature, anticipated conclusions, and consideration of alternative explanations/anticipation of limitations.

References: The reference section should include all sources that are cited in the proposal and should be formatted in APA style.

Appendices: Any surveys questions, tests, or other materials that students plan to use in their study should be included as appendices.

All thesis proposals must be written following the current edition of the APA style manual.