

PSYCHOLOGY HONORS PROGRAM

St. John Fisher College

This program is designed for the outstanding psychology major. The program has two major objectives: (1) to provide the student with an opportunity to undertake in-depth studies in the field, and (2) to better prepare the student for graduate level study and independent research.

I. ADMISSION TO THE HONORS PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY

A. Provisional admission to the program requires:

1. An overall GPA of 3.3 or higher and psychology GPA of 3.5 or higher.
2. Completion of at least 12 hours of course work in psychology (transfer students must present transcripts from prior institutions).
3. Entry into the program begins with the Qualifying Paper (see Section III. A.). The Qualifying Paper is typically done during the first or second semester of the junior year. It can begin as early as the second semester of the sophomore year, but no later than second semester of the junior year.

B. Full admission to the program requires:

1. Successful completion of the Qualifying Paper (see Section III. A.).
2. Final approval by the psychology faculty.

II. GRADUATION WITH HONORS IN PSYCHOLOGY

To graduate with Honors in Psychology, the student must:

1. Qualify to graduate *cum laude*, which requires an overall GPA of at least a 3.3, and at least 60 graded credits taken at St. John Fisher College.
2. Have at least a 3.5 GPA in psychology courses and courses required for the major.
3. Complete two psychology courses with honors .
 - a. Honors Readings (Psyc 496H)
 - b. Honors Research Project (Psyc 499H). The completed Honors Research Project must be approved by the department and the Provost, and must be presented at a colloquium.
4. Be approved for graduation with Honors in Psychology by the Psychology Department faculty.

III. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A. The Qualifying Paper

The first phase of the Honors Program is the Qualifying Paper. Full admission to the Psychology Honors Program is based on satisfactory completion of the Qualifying Paper. The two goals of the Qualifying Paper are: 1) To enable the student to conduct a literature review in an area of interest; and 2) To enable the Qualifying Committee to evaluate the student's ability to think critically, work independently, manage time, and write proficiently in order to determine the student's competence and readiness for further Honors work.

This phase of the program can occur as early as the second semester of the sophomore year, but not later than second semester of the junior year. The typical timing is the first semester of the junior year. This phase of the program does not count for course credit and is done in addition to a student's normal course load. It is expected that it will require diligent work throughout one semester.

Students interested in the Honors Program should discuss their plans with a faculty member as early as possible. In the semester that the student plans to undertake the Qualifying Paper, they need to have a Committee formed (see Section IV.A), and a written proposal for their paper completed by the fourth week of the semester. The Chair of the Committee will be the faculty member most familiar with the student's area of interest. The written proposal will describe his/her area of interest, the focus of the review, and the resources that will be needed. The Committee will review the proposal early in the semester and either approve or return it to the student for redevelopment. Once the paper is completed to the satisfaction of the Committee, the student will have achieved full admission to the Honors Program in Psychology. Detailed guidelines for the Qualifying Paper are attached.

B. Honors Readings (Psyc 496H)

The second phase of the program is the 3-credit Honors Readings (PSYC 496H) course, which should be taken the semester following the completion of the Qualifying Paper (typically second semester junior year). The Honors Readings course will prepare the student for the Honors Research Project and will conclude with a thorough review of the literature and a written research proposal in the student's area of interest. The students' Program Committee (see section IV. B) supervises the Readings course. The faculty member closest to the student's area of interest will chair the Program Committee. The review of the literature and research proposal must be approved before the student can enroll in and begin the Honors Research Project. Honors Readings may be taken only once. If work is not completed within the semester, a grade of Incomplete is assigned.

C. Honors Research Project (Psyc 499H)

The 3-credit Honors Research Project (PSYC 499H) course is the final phase of the Honors Program. It consists of a major research project designed and carried out by the student. This course is normally taken during the first semester of the senior year. Students must complete at least one psychology laboratory course before enrolling for the Honors Research Project. This project will be undertaken after the student's Program Committee has approved the written proposal, typically developed during the junior year as the conclusion of the Honors Readings course. The Program Committee will evaluate the student's progress and will determine whether the student has met the objectives of the project. If the student's performance is judged to be inadequate, the project may be rejected or the student may be required to correct the deficiencies that were noted by the committee. The student's Program Committee will establish the general nature of the Honors Research Project and criteria for evaluation.

IV. COMMITTEES

There will be two committees for the honors program: the Qualifying Paper Committee and the Program Committee. Membership on the committees will be established by the student in conjunction with the concerned faculty members. Committees will be formed for different students as needed.

A. The Qualifying Paper Committee

This committee will consist of three full-time faculty members, at least two of which must be in the Psychology department. The faculty member whose expertise is closest to the student's area of interest should chair the committee. The Qualifying Paper Committee will review, approve, and evaluate these research activities.

B. Program Committee

Each honors student will have a Program Committee. The Program Committee will be formed when the student is fully admitted to the honors program, and will consist of three full-time faculty members (these may or may not be the same faculty from the Qualifying Paper Committee), at least two of which must be in the Psychology department. The Program Committee will continue throughout the student's Honors Program. The student will choose the chair of the committee, and it is recommended that the chair be the faculty member closest to the student's area of interest who will then have responsibility to monitor the student's progress through the program.

The duties of the Program Committee include:

1. Supervision and approval of the program of studies of the honors candidate.
2. Approval, supervision and evaluation of the Honors Reading course and Honors Research Project, including hearing the oral defense of the completed project,
3. Recommendation of the candidate for graduation with Honors in Psychology. This recommendation will be made to the department as a whole when the Program Committee feels the student has met the requirements of graduation with honors in psychology.

Note: College policy allows no more than 12 credits of independent work. Thus, students completing the Honors Program and doing Fieldwork (also independent) need to closely monitor their independent credits.

PROGRAM PROGRESS - PSYCHOLOGY HONORS PROGRAM

Student Name _____

I. Qualifying Paper:

Topic: _____

Qualifying Paper Committee Members:

Name	Signature
1 (Chair).	
2.	
3.	

Full admission granted to the Psychology Honors Program:

Committee Chair: _____ Date: _____

Honors Program Committee Members:

Name
1 (Chair).
2.
3.

II. **Honors Readings Course** Semester _____

Proposed topic: _____

Successful completion date: _____ Committee Chair: _____

III. **Honors Research Project** Semester _____

Proposed research project: _____

Approved for graduation with Honors in Psychology: Date: _____

Name	Signature
1 (Chair).	
2.	
3.	

Guidelines for the Qualifying Paper

The papers that students research and produce as Qualifying Papers for entrance into the Honors Program in Psychology are likely to be the most thorough and substantial papers they have produced to date in their academic careers. This statement is not intended to be intimidating, but rather to indicate that you are undertaking a new and challenging task. It is intended that your work will be diligent throughout the semester, entail serious library research, and careful writing and revision. This work will be undertaken with the guidance and assistance of a psychology faculty member and departmental committee, so you will have support in your new undertaking. However, the paper is primarily designed to be an independent piece of work.

Students should discuss their plans with a full-time faculty member in the Psychology department as early as possible. In the semester that the student plans to undertake the Qualifying Paper, they need to have a Committee formed and a written proposal for their paper completed by the fourth week of the semester. The written proposal will describe his/her area of interest, the focus of the review, and the resources that will be needed. The Chair of the Committee should be the faculty member most familiar with the student's area of interest. The Committee will review the proposal early in the semester and either approve or return it to the student for redevelopment. Once the paper is completed to the satisfaction of the Committee, the student will have achieved full admission to the Honors Program in Psychology.

Description of the Paper and the Task:

The Qualifying Paper is best described as a "Literature Review Paper", in the style of those published in *Psychological Review*. It is expected that the student will conduct an extensive and thorough review of the literature in their area of interest. This implies that they will read/survey all (or nearly all) the literature in their area of interest. This will be done by gathering, reading, and reviewing primary sources of professional literature. The student will become a "mini-expert" in their area of interest. It is then out of this knowledge and understanding of their area of interest that they will write the Literature Review Paper. Thus, the student will, in their own words, with appropriate citations, "review" and summarize the theories, research results, and methodologies that have been used in their area of interest.

Detailed Guidelines for the Paper:

Content:

- For the paper, you need to identify one topic area. Make sure that you define your topic narrowly enough so that you don't have to read a whole mountain of research articles, but also make sure that your topic is broad enough so that you are sure that there are actually a good number of research studies about it. Sometimes, this is one of the most challenging steps. The chair of your committee can help you with this.
- When writing your paper, assume that the reader is an intelligent person but has little or no knowledge of the area you have selected. It is your task to educate your readers. You are the expert in your area of interest. The information you present should be *accurate* (this includes appropriately *citing the sources* for the information you present in your paper).
- Your paper should contain three major areas, although they are not necessarily labeled as such (see the *APA Publication Manual* for how to title and subtitle your sections): (1) an introduction to the topic area, (2) a review of relevant literature (theories, empirical data, and methodologies), (3) an integration of the literature (what are the main points, what is lacking, what should be done next).
 - The first section is a general introduction to the paper. Like the introduction to any paper, this should include enough about the importance of the problem to make sure the reader is interested, a clear thesis statement, and possibly a subsection discussing the organization of the remainder of the paper.
 - The second, which is by far longest section of the paper, should be a review of the literature related to your topic. When reviewing the literature, it is not enough to just state that Jones (1989) did this study and then Smith (1990) did another study, and then Franken (1994) did

another study. Instead, explain what your topic is, organize your paper into relevant topical areas, and then describe how each of these studies relates to your topic and the sub-topic, which you are discussing. A good paper will include a complete background to the question, full discussion of the issues, and then solid scientific evidence from peer-reviewed journals. Personal experiences, anecdotes, opinions, general information from the internet, and newspaper or magazine articles may be important to understanding the problem, but certainly do not constitute scientific evidence.

- The third section is where you should show your understanding of the literature you have read. This is the time when you exercise your cognitive abilities by critiquing, integrating, highlighting important controversies, and combining the ideas you have read. This is also where you can be creative and suggest new ideas and topics that still need to be researched. However, your critiques and ideas must stem from things that you have discussed earlier in your paper

Style and Organization

- There are no requirements for the length of the paper or the number of references that you need to include. The length of your paper and the number of references are determined by the topic that you have chosen and the amount of previous research that has been done on that topic. However, a typed paper that is 15 – 25 pages long (body of the paper), and containing 10 – 25 cited references would probably be typical for this task.
- Your paper should be well written, using *correct grammar and spelling*.
- Your paper should be *well organized* and relatively easy for your reader to follow. The information should be arranged in a *logical* fashion, and transitions from one idea to another should *flow smoothly*.

Your paper should be written according to American Psychological Association (APA) format, i.e., you should follow the formatting conventions outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition)*. Font size, double-spacing, margins, and formatting of the source citations (within the text of your paper) and the references section (at the end of your paper) are especially important.