Psychology Senior Capstone Experience (SCE)

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Meetings: To be arranged individually with your SCE advisor

Objective: A primary function of the SCE is to engage in critical discussion and high-level thought regarding theory and design within a circumscribed content area in order to answer a novel question that is not directly addressed in existing literature.

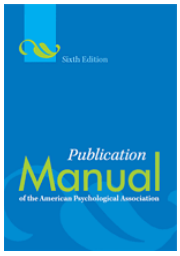
Learning Goals: The following learning goals are practiced during the course of each student's project . . .

- Critical thinking about research papers/journal articles
- Applying APA writing style and using a clear writing style
- Understanding statistics and design
- Effective oral presentation during individual meetings and at the culminating poster session

Resources: From the College's main Psychology webpage http://psychology.washcoll.edu/, click on . . .
. . . 'Senior Capstone' to find downloadable pdf's to guide you through the SCE process.
. . . 'Resources' to access a list of resources that can assist with the SCE and beyond. All students completing a data-driven SCE will need to be familiar with the 'Policy for Research.'

http://libraryweb.washcoll.edu/instruction/courseguides/psychsem.html offers a list of library and online references for researching psychology topics.

By now, you should have a copy of the latest edition of the APA Manual. Additional books concerning APA's writing style (the new 6th edition), GRE, and graduate schools in psychology are available in the Psychology lounge. To borrow a book, fill out the index card and place it in the bin outside of Dr. Littlefield's door. You can also refer to the online information about APA style at http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx and a good video tutorial is available at http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx (just click on 'view the tutorial').



This book is your best guide.

Graduation: Successful completion of the Psychology SCE course is required in order to graduate from Washington College with a major in Psychology. If you are not making adequate progress based on the established deadlines listed on page 3 of this document, then you are at risk for earning a grade of "F" or "fail" as a grade in the SCE course. Earning an "F" means the SCE course needs to be repeated in order to graduate, unless you had another major and successfully completed their SCE.

Assessment: Your SCE final grade will consist of the following components . . .

10% Fall progress toward your SCE (meeting deadlines with solid products submitted)

10% *Psychology Achievement Test* weighted score (This is a standardized test designed by Educational Testing Services. Taking the test is a requirement for graduation.)

20% Poster defense (completed at the end of your last semester at the College. Two psychology faculty members will grade your poster, one of which will be your SCE advisor.)

60% Process (one-third of 60%) and product (two-thirds of 60%) of written thesis

How do you know if you are doing well with regard to *process*? Ask yourself these process-oriented questions:

1. Are my rough drafts in good form?
2. Am I consistently prepared for meetings with my SCE advisor?
3. Have I made necessary adjustments based on feedback from my advisor?
4. Have I used my advisor as a guide but acted as independently as possible?
5. Has my final paper been reworked and refined, making it the best product I can?

<u>The more 'yes' responses, the better your process.</u>

Thesis Honors: Students with superior products will be working themselves toward earning SCE thesis honors. Students will earn an **honors** designation on their project if they earn a grade of A-, A, or A+ on their assessment components. <u>However, the minimum requirement for being awarded SCE honors is that all of the established project deadlines have been met.</u> In addition to meeting all deadlines, honors projects meet one or more of the following criteria, as judged by the SCE advisor:

• the investigator has demonstrated that he/she is capable independent thinking.
• the design of the study is unique, complex, or unusually elegant.
• from its conception to its completion, the investigator has invested exceptional effort, worked diligently to meet all deadlines, and/or overcome unusual obstacles to produce a superior research project.
• the investigator has taken the initiative to present his/her work at a professional conference. There are several professional venues available throughout the year. Talk to your advisor if you are interested in this option.
• the investigator develops the project for publication. Your project may or may not be of sufficient caliber for professional peer-reviewed journals, but even if it is not, there are still places where your thesis could be published. Here are just a few:

-*The Washington College Review*. With modest editing, your literature review may be appropriate for publication in the *Review*.

-The *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research* is a national, fully reviewed, quarterly journal dedicated to the publication of undergraduate student research. Submission instructions can be found at the Psi Chi website, **http://www.psichi.org/pubs/journal/**

-*The Yale Review of Undergraduate Research in Psychology* (JURP) is dedicated to publishing research and literature reviews, **http://www.yale.edu/yrurp/submission.html**

-*Impulse* is an undergraduate Neuroscience online journal, **http://impulse.appstate.edu/**

Notes About Psychology SCE Deadlines: The SCE deadlines listed on the next page are duplicated on the bulletin board in the Psychology Commons area. Please note that there are different requirements based upon whether you choose a data-driven thesis or a theoretical review paper.

1.SCE deadlines should be met by, or in advance of, the due dates (unless some other arrangement has been approved of by your SCE advisor). You MUST consult with your SCE advisor if you cannot meet a deadline.

2.You will be cleared for graduation once your SCE advisor approves of your final SCE paper AND you submit a digital copy of your entire SCE to the WC library.

3.Those who anticipate completing the SCE in December should speak with their SCE advisor to set appropriate deadlines.

Psychology SCE Deadlines

DUE DATE	DATA- DRIVEN	THEORETICAL REVIEW
September 15	Clear SCE topic established Turn in SCE acceptance forms and course checklists	Clear SCE topic established Turn in SCE acceptance forms and course checklists
November 5	Rough draft of introduction	Purpose statement and outline
Before Thanksgiving	Rough draft of IRB or IACUC proposal (An earlier deadline may be applied by your SCE advisor.)	Submit paper that significantly develops at least one major section of your outline
February 15	Deadline to begin data collection Warning email sent to you if adequate process is not being made.	Submit paper that significantly develops another major section of your outline Warning email sent to you if adequate process is not being made.
mid-March	ETS Psychology Major Field Test (exact date TBA)	ETS Psychology Major Field Test (exact date TBA)
March 30	Complete SCE draft Warning letter sent to you and the Dean's Office if full draft was not yet submitted	Complete SCE draft Warning letter sent to you and the Dean's Office if full draft was not yet submitted
Last week of spring classes	Poster Defenses and reception	Poster Defenses and reception
Last day of spring classes	Absolute college deadline for SCE submission to advisor and college library	Absolute college deadline for SCE submission to advisor and college library