

The Psychology Senior Capstone Experience (SCE) Guide:

Part 1

We encourage students to begin gathering articles to support their SCE during the Statistics and Design II course (PSY 309) and to continue conceptualizing their project ideas during Junior Seminar (PSY 399). Students are matched with SCE advisors during the Junior Seminar course. If you are a Psychology major who has questions about the SCE process or you have not yet been matched with an SCE advisor by the end of your junior year, please talk to the department Chair.

Included in this part of the Psychology SCE Guide are some tips from past psychology majors that may help you in thinking about your SCE project. Also included is the general format for the SCE project. Be sure to use the 6th edition of the APA Manual for formatting the body of your paper. You may borrow a copy of the APA Manual from the psychology lobby or refer to it in Miller Library. Accurate and easily accessible information is also available at <http://www.apastyle.org/>

Seniors will want to regularly refer to the SCE syllabus or the psychology bulletin board adjacent to the atrium area of the Toll Science Center for upcoming SCE deadlines/goals. Any questions can be directed to your SCE advisor.

SCE Tips from Past Psychology Majors

1. You'll be working with your topic for the whole year; make sure it's something that really interests you!
2. Make sure that your thesis topic applies to your concentration, if you have one.
3. Your senior year flies by, so start reading applicable literature in research journals.
4. Communicate regularly with your thesis advisor to make sure that the two of you are always on the same page.
5. Be open to new ideas and ways of studying what you are interested in.
6. Design an experiment you know how to analyze. Before creating a data file, play with some sample data to make sure that you understand how to analyze it.
7. Be prepared to make adjustments if something goes wrong or circumstances interfere (i.e. snow days).
8. Begin your data collection and analysis as soon as possible. Try to get the largest subject pool possible.
9. The more revisions, the better the thesis.
10. Try to meet, **or beat**, all deadlines.
11. If you want honors on your thesis try to finish early enough in order to present your thesis at a conference – this will set you apart from the rest.
12. Always keep the most updated electronic copy of your thesis in more than one place – mistakes/accidents happen!
13. If you are a double major and you have to do two theses, do yourself a favor and try to finish one in the fall and one in the spring. You will thank yourself later!
14. Practice running experiments on, and giving your final presentation to, your friends. This way you will have experience performing both tasks before the real thing, and your friends can give you suggestions for improvement.
15. Everything will get done. Try not to get discouraged! Remember, this is all a learning experience!

Full Title of Your Senior Capstone Experience Thesis

Your full name

Washington College

This Senior Capstone Experience thesis is has been submitted to, and approved by, my
Psychology Department research advisor, Insert Name of Advisor Here, in partial
fulfillment of the Bachelor of Arts (or Bachelor of Science) degree requirements.

Acknowledgements

This page is optional. You can opt to put a personal touch here by thanking those who supported you or provided you with resources during the SCE process.

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(This section can be broken down if you have subtitles within your introduction. For those choosing the theoretical review option, your introduction will state the purpose and plan for the paper. Then, you will include subtitles as appropriate to your topic. Theoretical review papers may or may not have a method or results section.)	
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Abstract

Add a succinct summary of your study here. There is no indentation of the first line of this paragraph. Pages 25 through 27 of your APA Manual will guide you in writing a brief, but comprehensive, summary.

Keywords: Type all words pertaining to the main idea of your thesis that would be useful for those who are searching your topic

Your Full SCE Thesis Title

Add your text here. Subheadings are typically helpful in the writing process, and they also can make it easier to read the finished product. It is a good idea to add to the reference list as soon as you mention contents of the reference in the body of the paper. In other words, work on your reference pages as you write.

Data-Driven Option

A good introduction in its final form is **at least** 10 double-spaced pages long. You will begin with a statement of the problem under investigation. You will be sure to define all important terminology. You will review the literature that is closely related to your topic, usually giving more emphasis to work that is most similar to your project. At the close of the introduction, you will clearly state your hypotheses. In addition to the introduction, this SCE thesis option **must** include Method, Results, and Discussion sections.

NonData-Driven Option

This SCE thesis option does not typically have Method or Results sections. A good paper in its final form is **at least** 30 double-spaced pages of text, not including tables, figures, references, and appendices. You can write either a review article or a theoretical article, depending upon your topic of choice and the direction you decide to go with your paper. While your SCE advisor may direct you toward papers to use as samples, there are a number of professional journals that publish review articles. You can model your review after articles in the following journals: *Psychological Review*; *Psychological Bulletin*; *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*; and *Annual*

Review of Psychology. Additional journals which may be particularly helpful to Behavioral Neuroscience concentrators are *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, and *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*.

Method

Participants

Thoroughly describe human participants and/or animals. A summary table is often helpful in describing participants/subjects.

Materials and Procedure

Thoroughly describe apparatus and measures used. Whenever possible, comment on the reliability and validity of instruments used.

Procedure

Describe the procedure in enough detail that if someone had your materials and necessary expertise, they could easily replicate your study.

Results

In this section, you will characterize the numerical findings for each of your hypotheses. Do not forget to include descriptive statistics for your variables. Tables are labeled in numerical order, based upon the order they occur in the paper (e.g., Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 . . .). The same is true of Figures. Consult with your SCE research advisor about the placement of your Tables and Figures. While standard APA format for submitting manuscripts requires placing them after the reference list, some advisors prefer them integrated within the text of the paper.

Discussion

Most discussions begin with a comment about whether or not the original hypotheses were supported. Don't forget to explain each hypothesis, the related findings, and the meaning/implications of the findings.

References

Use reverse indenting and double-spacing throughout. Refer to your APA Manual for the appropriate referencing format for different types of sources. The number of resources you need to thoroughly cover your topic ultimately depends on the topic chosen and what is considered acceptable by your SCE advisor.

Choosing your topic is arguably the most important step in the SCE process. Students choosing topics that are more general or methods examining many variables will likely need more resources than someone who chooses a somewhat novel, less researched, and more specific topic.