

PSYCH DEPT. THESIS PROGRAM

**VIRTUAL
INFO SESSION!**

DR. JULIE BOLAND
THESIS PROGRAM DIRECTOR
JEBOLAND@UMICH.EDU

RACHEL WATSON
THESIS ADVISOR
REWATSON@UMICH.EDU

EMAIL US BOTH AT
PSYCH.UGTHESIS@UMICH.EDU

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN A THESIS?

- A two semester research project with a faculty mentor
- Hands-on research: laboratory, survey, qualitative, secondary analysis, etc.
- Writing results in a publishable manuscript
 - Note – while the goal is publication, most undergraduate theses are not published
- Learning what it takes to be a researcher - a lot of work!

WHY DO A THESIS?

- Fully immersed research experience
- Build relationship with faculty member
- Potential to publish, present work at professional conference
- Honors thesis students graduate from LSA Honors College
- Great for graduate school applications
- Great on a resume

WHY **NOT** TO DO A THESIS?

- Your mom wants you to
- Your significant other wants you to
- You already have multiple time commitments outside of research/classes
- You don't really like research/writing

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- **LSA requires Honors thesis students to have a 3.4 overall GPA**
 - Students w/ less than 3.4 can apply for Senior Thesis instead – just need 3.5 major GPA – and have the option to convert to Honors for 2nd semester if overall GPA improves
 - If you don't meet either GPA requirement, we can sometimes make exceptions for Senior Thesis w/ letter of support from faculty mentor
- **Psych & BCN majors apply online the summer before senior year**
 - deadlines in mid-June and mid-August
 - Apply for whichever deadline you can - the 2 deadlines help the dept. so we don't have 50 applications to review at the same time!
- **Must already have their faculty mentor's support before applying**

STEPS TOWARDS APPLYING

- Figure out research interests & which area of psychology excites you the most
- Identify potential mentors in your area (next slide)
 - Can work with mentors outside Psych dept. (social work, psychiatry, med school, Ross, etc.) but must have at least ONE mentor/co-mentor who is a Psychology faculty member
 - See [“What if my mentor is not in the Psych dept.?”](#) section of Psych website
- Join lab(s) and gain research experience
- Important to have at least **1-2 semesters** of experience in the lab you plan to complete your thesis in *before* applying. i.e., you should find the lab you plan to stay in by/during your junior year!

FINDING A MENTOR

- Find researchers doing work in areas you are interested in – [visit the Psych dept. website](#)
- Before you contact them, do your homework!
 - Find their most current articles
 - Do you want to read more?
 - Are you excited by the methods?
- Make initial contact
 - Show you are familiar with their work
 - Ask if there is a role for you on their next project
 - No mass e-mails!

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Begin research by/during jr. year and discuss possibility of Thesis by end of jr. year/summer before sr. year
- [Click here for current Senior thesis application deadlines](#) (see bottom of website)
- [Click here for current Honors thesis application deadlines](#)
- Submit application online:
 - Enter personal/academic info, & attach research proposal (3-4 pages)

CURRICULUM

- Psych 424 (Honors) or Psych 428 (Sr.) in 1st term (research/experiential lab)
- Psych 426 (Honors) or Psych 429 (Sr.) in 2nd term (methods lab)
- Must enroll for appropriate # of credits to use as labs for major – check with Psych Thesis Advisor!
- Courses are letter graded by your mentor
- Must attend 1-1.5 hr. workshops/seminars on Friday mornings with Thesis cohort
 - Note – workshops are structured around the typical fall/winter sequence. Students planning to start in winter and finish in fall should discuss attendance w/ Psych Thesis Advisor

FIRST TERM

- Design project, IRB, data collection, data workshops, meetings with mentor and with Thesis Program Director
- Time commitment 10-15 hours per week
- Aim for data collection to be completed this term
- Workshops: Data analysis, Resume/CV, Applying to Grad School, etc.

SECOND TERM

- More Workshops: conference presentations, creating posters, thesis writing, etc.
- Complete rough draft due March 1
- Final thesis due April 1
- Late April: present poster of your findings at annual Psychology Department Research Forum

THE THESIS

- APA format
- Length? About as long as your mentor's typical manuscripts
 - Can depend on research area norms
 - ULWR (25-40+ pages)
- Goal: publishable manuscript
- Evaluated by two independent readers
- 2 Awards for Best Thesis of the Year (one for Psych and one for BCN)

OTHER MISC. DETAILS

- Some funding available through LSA Honors; mentor's research may already be funded
- Support system: Weekly office hours w/ Faculty Director; writing workshops; stats consulting; Psych Thesis Advisor
- Thesis students go on to do great things!

QUESTIONS?

ABOUT: FINDING A MENTOR/CREATING YOUR PROPOSAL:

CONTACT DR. JULIE BOLAND

THESIS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

JEBOLAND@UMICH.EDU

ABOUT: APPLICATION/LOGISTICS/CURRICULUM/REQUIREMENTS:

CONTACT RACHEL WATSON

THESIS ADVISOR

REWATSON@UMICH.EDU