Senior Conference

Spring 2025 // PSY 405

Justin Dainer-Best

2025-01-30

Course Number	Time	Location	Office Hours
PSY 405	Th, 16-17h	RKC 103	M/Th or by appointment

Make an appointment to come to my office hours. The instructor's office hours are as follows (or by appointment):

- Mondays, 3pm–4:30pm
- Thursdays, 10:30am–11:30am

This course does not fulfill distributional requirements. It is worth 1 credit hour and is required for Psychology Majors in the first semester of their Senior Project.

Wherever possible, I hope to work to make this course accessible and approachable for all students. For more information on accessibility for this course, please view the section on that subject below.

Overview

In Senior Conference, psychology majors will cultivate the skills necessary to complete a successful Senior Project and continue to build community among their cohort. Topics will include: scientific writing, approaches to evidence, data collection, data analysis, and data management. Professional development and preparing for life after Bard will also be emphasized.

Weekly meetings will involve discussion of specifics relating to the senior project, attendance at Psychology research talks, and peer review of writing.

In the spirit of truth and equity, it is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that this class will take place on the sacred homelands of the Munsee and Muhheaconneok people, who

are the original stewards of this land. Today, due to forced removal, the community resides in Northeast Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. We honor and pay respect to their ancestors past and present, as well as to future generations and we recognize their continuing presence in their homelands. We understand that our acknowledgment requires those of us who are settlers to recognize our own place in and responsibilities towards addressing inequity, and that this ongoing and challenging work requires that we commit to real engagement with the Munsee and Mohican communities to build an inclusive and equitable space for all.

Objectives

By the end of the course you should. . .

- Have completed the first semester of your senior project, with a fleshed out thesis and plan
- Have learned strategies for approaching the possible senior projects in psychology
- Have gained skills in long-form writing in psychology
- Have learned to communicate the results of a research question

Instructor

The instructor for this course is Associate Professor of Psychology Justin Dainer-Best. In person or via email, you can refer to me as Justin or as Professor Dainer-Best (or Dr. Dainer-Best); I use he/him pronouns.

Materials

There are no materials that you must purchase for this course. All relevant course material and assignments will be made available either online or in class.

While there are online (free) resources available for following APA style, I do strongly recommend considering buying a physical copy of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition* (ISBN 9781433832161) or the Concise edition (ISBN 9781433832734).

Class Policies

Attendance and participation

Part of your grade will come from consistent attendance. Participation—through peer review, asking questions, etc.—will also weigh into your grade. Turning in the assignments for this course is easy. Not doing so consistently will impact your grade.

Late arrivals are disruptive to the class—especially during talks from visiting researchers. Consistent patterns of lateness are unfair to everyone; please be on time.

However, do note: *if you are not feeling well, please do not come to class.* If you have recently been ill, please wear a mask when you attend; masks are effective at reducing spread of many respiratory illnesses. Each of us shares responsibility for the health and safety of all in the classroom.

Accommodations & Accessibility

Bard College is committed to providing equal access to all students. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please contact me so that we can arrange to discuss. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. Together we can plan how best to support your learning and coordinate your accommodations. Students who have already been approved to receive academic accommodations through disability services should share their accommodation letter with me and make arrangements to meet as soon as possible.

If you have a learning difference or disability that may relate to your ability to fully participate in this class, but have not yet met with the Disability Support Coordinator at Bard, you can contact their office through https://www.bard.edu/accessibility/students/; the Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations.

I am available for meetings online as well as those in person.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

It is important to me that this course provides an open and supportive learning environment for all students. It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds and perspectives be able to benefit from this course. I invite you to speak with me if you have concerns or questions regarding issues of belonging, safety, or equity in the classroom. I want our discussions to be respectful of all students. If I am not helping the classroom to feel like an inclusive environment, I invite you to provide me with [anonymous] feedback.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

I expect you to be familiar with what plagiarism is and is not. You may not present someone else's work as your own without proper citation. Using AI-generated text is not a replacement for your own writing, and automated tools to edit grammar and spelling should be used sparingly. You may not copy someone else's work. You may not simply reword text from another source without giving credit, or ask generative textbots to do so. Please cite others' work where relevant, and use your own writing. If you are not sure about the definition of plagiarism, or whether something constitutes plagiarism, please consult with me or with someone at Bard's Learning Commons. Students caught plagiarizing will be reported to the Academic Judiciary Board, will get no credit for the assignment, and may fail the course.

I operate from the standpoint that you are interested in learning this material, and are doing your best to operate with integrity. Using text generators like chatGPT take away your ability to learn from the process of writing, while also increasing your likelihood of generating "slop" (see, e.g., Willison, 2024; OUP, 2024). Do your best to learn from the assignments in this class.

Your faculty expect you to cite sources that you use, including tools that reword your writing like Grammarly, tutors who help you rework a paper, or if you use chatGPT or similar tools to understand a complex topic.

As a student completing their senior project, please also refer to the Psychology Program's Handbook chapter on the senior project, specifically the section on academic integrity.

Late Assignments

On days when assignments are due for peer review, late assignments will receive a penalty. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in up to two days late without any penalty. All assignments must be turned in by the last day of the semester.

Grades

Many aspects of this class will be graded on a pass/fail basis for assignments turned in on-time. All assignments are due by the end of the semester.

Most students who do not receive high grades in this course do so because they do not keep track of assignments or fail to attend classes.

Assignments

Senior Project

During the course of the semester, as you begin work on your senior project, you will turn in portions of it for peer review during this class. You will receive feedback and be given P/F/partial credit.

Participation

Participating in class involves being present, participating in peer reviews, and replying with questions after each colloquium (you may choose to ask them directly, but must submit them).

Writing Fellows Program

Through the Senior Conference, you will be working closely with a Writing Fellow from the Learning Commons. Working with a Writing Fellow is an excellent way to get the most out of the writing component of this class, as you will get feedback on three of your drafts and have the opportunity to revise your papers. Becoming comfortable and proficient at revision is perhaps the single-most important aspect of developing as a college writer, and the tutor assigned to this class will work with you to sharpen these skills.

Your tutor will not be an expert in all aspects of psychology. Rather, they will offer a second pair of eyes on your writing, a chance to strengthen your thesis and argument, and an active sounding board for your ideas. Virtually all writers rely on feedback from their peers on their written work. Because this process has the potential to contribute significantly to your development as a writer, these meetings with tutors are required; your attendance at these meetings will be reported to me. I hope you will make the most of this opportunity to push yourself as a writer.

Schedule

Assignments listed under the "due" column should be turned in before class. You should also come to class prepared to exchange either paper or digital copies with classmates.

Materials relating to individual topics will be posted on Brightspace for your review—e.g., sample senior project statements and IRB materials.

Day	Date	Topic	Due
Thursday	Jan 30	Introduction & Brainstorm; Expectations for Senior Project Statement	
Thursday	Feb 6	Senior Project II Presentations: In two groups	
Thursday	Feb 13	Colloquium: Tracy Trevorrow	Questions due after colloquium
Thursday	Feb 20	Resumés and CVs with CDO Associate Director Maureen Aurigemma	Current CV or resumé
Thursday	Feb 27	Time Management & Finding Sources with Librarian Jeremy Hall	
Thursday	Mar 6	Colloquium: Sara Burke	Questions due after colloquium
Thursday	Mar 13	Research ethics; working with the IRB with Prof. Thomas Hutcheon	
Thursday	Mar 20	(Spring Break: no class)	
Thursday	Mar 27	Scientific writing and preregistration	
Thursday	Apr 3	Colloquium: Ajua Duker	Questions due after colloquium
Thursday	Apr 10	Peer review	2 pages of writing
Thursday	Apr 17	Colloquium: Theresa Law	Questions due after colloquium
Thursday	Apr 24	Bernstein Memorial Lecture: Kathleen Bogart	Questions due after colloquium
Thursday	May 1	Planning for the summer; peer discussion; reparation for senior project midway boards	
Thursday	May 8	(Boards: no class)	
Thursday	May 15	(Completion week: no class)	