Capstone Honors Research (B499): Frequently Asked Questions

What is Capstone Honors Research, and why should I get involved?

The Capstone Honors Research option is intended to serve students who desire to work closely with a faculty member on an individual research project that will culminate in an honors thesis that fulfills the capstone graduation requirement. In the course of this experience you will learn how psychological research is conducted from start to finish, you will develop a close relationship with a faculty mentor who can serve as one of your primary references for future letters of recommendation, and you will hopefully develop friendships with a small group of about 12 psychology majors who share similar interests in psychological research.

Completing an honors thesis is a noteworthy achievement, and there are several reasons why it could be beneficial to your long-term career goals. First, if you are interested in obtaining research experience but have not yet connected with a particular faculty member in the department, this program can help to get you involved. Second, the capstone honors research seminar provides a supportive small-group environment for students facing the excitement, challenge, and (occasional) frustrations of conducting research. Third, this program will help you to develop skills in writing grants to provide funding for your research project. You will be required to submit a proposal to the IUPUI Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) that may help to support your research activities. You will also be made aware of other sources of potential funding for your research. Finally, participation in honors research can help those thinking of going to graduate school by connecting you with a faculty member who in turn can advise, mentor, and recommend you.

How much time will I need to commit?

You can expect to work on your research project for at least 10 hours per week, throughout both the fall and spring semesters. You must start in the Fall semester and end in the Spring semester. Students are encouraged to begin conceptualizing their research project with their advisor and reviewing relevant literature during the summer before B499 begins. There are two components to the capstone honors research experience:

(1) Conducting your own research project under the guidance of a faculty member in Psychology. You will help to design a research study, collect and analyze data, write up a report of their work (possibly submitting it for publication), and present your findings at a national, regional, or local research conference.

(2) Attending capstone honors research seminar meetings. You will participate in seminar that meets every other Friday, from 12:00 – 1 PM. Seminar meetings are led by Dr. Rob Stewart, and will focus on a diverse array of topics related to research in psychology (e.g., research presentations by faculty or invited guests, student-led discussions on topics related to their research, instruction in grant proposal preparation, advanced statistical analyses, and scientific writing).
How many credits are involved, and how will my grade be determined?

You will be expected to enroll in at least 3 credits for B499 (Capstone Honors research) during the fall semester, and this will satisfy your capstone requirement for the psychology major. You are welcome to register for an additional 3 credits of B499 in the spring semester (pending the approval of your primary faculty advisor), but you are not required to do so. The overall grade for this credit will be determined based on two sources: 1) your faculty mentor will assess the learning and skills you develop through carrying out your research project (70% of B499 grade), and 2) the seminar facilitator (Dr. Stewart) will assess your performance on activities aligned with your participation in the Capstone Honors Research Seminar (30% of B499 grade).

Who is eligible to participate in Capstone Honors Research

Capstone Honors Research participants may be self-nominated or nominated by faculty and staff associated with the Department of Psychology. Before participating, students must complete B305 (statistics) and B311 (research methods) and a core course related to your area of interest (e.g., B320 if you wish to pursue an honors thesis in behavioral neuroscience; B370 if you wish to pursue an honors thesis in social psychology). You must maintain an overall GPA of 3.3, with 3.5 GPA in Honors and Psychology courses. Individuals who do not meet the GPA requirement, but who are highly motivated to pursue honors thesis research, may be considered for admission following an interview with the Departmental Honors Liaison (Dr. Rob Stewart).

Applications for Capstone Honors Research are available in the Psychology Advising Office (LD 123). Completed applications should be returned by the last Friday in April to Dr. Rob Stewart.

What is the Department of Psychology Honors Program, and do I have to be involved in it to participate in Capstone Honors research?

You are encouraged (but not required) to participate in the Department of Psychology Honors Program when completing Capstone Honors Research. If you complete the Departmental Honors requirements, you will earn a designation on your official transcript that indicates that the Psychology Honors Program was completed.

To graduate with Honors in Psychology, students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.3, with a 3.5 GPA in Honors and Psychology courses (with a minimum grade of “B” (3.0) in Honors courses). Honors coursework must include:

- 6 credit hours in Psychology courses
- 6 credit hours outside Psychology
- 3 credit hours minimum in B499: Capstone Honors Research in Psychology