

## A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO ATTAINING HONORS IN PSYCHOLOGY

### YOU HAVE OPTIONS!

There are **three** ways that Psychology students can graduate with an honors degree.

- Complete the Psychology department honors requirements
- Complete the Liberal Arts Honors Program (LAHP) honors requirements (see [www.utep.edu/lahp](http://www.utep.edu/lahp) for more information, and how to apply to join the program)
- Complete **BOTH** department and LAHP requirements – you will receive recognition for both!

### WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DEPARTMENT & LAHP REQUIREMENTS?

To earn **department honors in Psychology**, you must complete

- **An honors thesis.**  
An honors thesis is a major research project that involves
  - (a) reading and writing about scientific literature,
  - (b) managing data and analyzing it using statistics, and
  - (c) communicating your findings in an APA-formatted research report.

For many students, the project *may* also involve

- (d) helping to design and implement a unique experiment, and
- (e) personally conducting the experiment to collect the data.

The final requirements of the honors thesis are to

- (f) complete any online surveys or attend any information sessions provided by the faculty member coordinating the honors theses,
- (g) present the final research findings to the Psychology department, and
- (h) submit the thesis to be graded by both your research mentor and a second faculty member.

Completing the honors thesis requires that you register for one semester of **Independent Research**, and one subsequent semester of **Honors Thesis**.

**Note** that you will need to have formed a working relationship with a Psychology faculty mentor (i.e., volunteered in a lab, and/or met to discuss a potential project) *prior to* receiving permission to register in the Independent Research and Honors Thesis courses. Thus, this working relationship must be in place *at least two semesters* before you wish to graduate.

To earn **honors in the Liberal Arts Honors Program (LAHP)**, you must first apply to join the program, and once accepted, you must then complete

- 2 LAHP theory methodology courses, which count toward your existing degree plan,
- 2 honors-designated courses, which can be chosen from over 100 courses offered across the departments within Liberal Arts, and will fit in your existing degree plan,
- 1 zero-credit honors seminar taken in the last semester of your degree, and
- **An honors project.**

An honors project may look identical to an honors thesis (see description above), and often will look identical. However, an honors project can take on a different form from a traditional Psychology research paper (and may instead resemble a major literature review, theory paper, or study proposal), if the mentor decides this is appropriate. The requirements for the honors project are more flexible than the honors thesis, and the faculty mentor and LAHP student can develop the honors project to look like an honors thesis, or not.

Completing an honors project **does not** require that the student present their findings in a presentation to the department colloquium. Also, the honors project is **not** submitted to a second faculty member for grading, but is instead reviewed by an LAHP project committee, which is described in the next paragraph.

Prior to beginning the honors project, LAHP students must complete an *LAHP honors project contract* with the project mentor. In the contract, you will designate an LAHP project committee. Many honors students in Psychology work directly with a graduate student, and indirectly with their faculty mentor. In this case, your project committee will include (a) your faculty mentor, (b) the graduate student supervisor, and (c) the LAHP Psychology liaison, Dr. Caleb Lloyd. It is wise to approach Dr. Lloyd if serious problems arise, or to ask advice about applying to graduate school, or other future goals, but your mentor will be solely responsible for assigning you a project topic, managing the completion of the project, reviewing your work, and giving you a grade on your completed project. If you are working directly with a faculty member, and not a graduate student, your project committee should include: (a) your faculty mentor, (b) Dr. Caleb Lloyd, and (c) Dr. Michael Topp, the director of the LAHP program.

Completing the honors project requires that you register in **two** semesters of **Independent Research** with the project mentor.

**Note** that you will need to have formed a working relationship with a Psychology faculty mentor (i.e., volunteered in a lab, and/or met to discuss a potential project) *prior to* receiving permission to register in the two Independent Research courses. Thus, this working relationship must be in place *at least two semesters* before you wish to graduate.

**BOTH OPTIONS SOUND GREAT! I WANT TO COMPLETE BOTH HONORS PROGRAMS!**

Great news! You *can* complete both department *and* LAHP honors without adding any additional work to your degree plan! Both honors programs are rigorous in different ways, with the department honors requiring a major research project, and LAHP honors requiring specialized courses, plus an honors project.

To complete both honors programs, you must first join LAHP. Then, when it comes time to complete your honors project, choose a project that meets the requirements of the Psychology department honors thesis. If you are an LAHP member and you complete the honors thesis requirements, you will complete both honors programs.