

## PSYC 318W EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY PROJECT PROPOSAL

**General Overview:** Often the first step of research is to *propose* a problem to be addressed, hypotheses to be tested, methods to collect necessary data, and analyses on the data to assess hypotheses. Scholars regularly write such proposals to move toward master's or doctoral degree research, or to request and hopefully receive grant funding to carry out plans listed in the proposal. You can think of a proposal as *lighting a match to fire up* an idea and move it through to action.



Your first formal writing assignment for this class is to write just such a proposal. It seems daunting – but it is not that bad *if* you work through the steps. This document outlines what you need and when you need to accomplish this first assignment.

**Key Points:** Please attend to the following information.

- **Role:** You will write the proposal *as a student seeking an honors thesis in psychology*. We actually require such a proposal for honors students, so perhaps many of you will use this paper as a springboard to pursuing an honors degree. Note: This is an *individual* project; no group work is allowed.
- **Audience:** Your audience is a committee of faculty members who will assess whether the proposal has merit and whether you will be approved to conduct the project for your thesis.
- **Format (genre):** This is scientific writing. It is formal and follows the rules of APA format.
- **Task:** Choose **one** of the following research questions to use as the backbone for your proposal. You will use your chosen question to guide all activities to complete this project. You must declare this question with your TA by the declaration date (below). Once declared, changes cannot be made. This keeps you focused on task to meet all milestones to complete the assignment on time.
  - (1) Can posture predict someone's dishonest behaviors?
  - (2) Does support for environmentally-friendly politicians change after experiencing extreme weather?
  - (3) Do aversive personalities act more sadistically in everyday situations?
  - (4) Does regular speaking to infants affect their language growth?
  - (5) Can testosterone influence trust in other people?

Each of these topics has a “seed” article provided in Blackboard. Use it to kick-start your project and assist you with terms and finding literature. NOTE: You **cannot** propose a replication study of the seed article. You must propose something **new** on the topic.

**Interdisciplinary Writing:** This assignment is among those the university may use to evaluate its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to improve interdisciplinary writing. The full rubric the university uses is given in Blackboard. This rubric has been modified for grading this assignment (again, see Blackboard for the

modification). Among each task below and due date, the Student Learning Outcome (or SLO) associated with the activity is listed (e.g., SLO 1, etc.).

**Assignment Schedule (due to Blackboard SafeAssign by the beginning of the lab class date listed that is relevant to the student unless indicated otherwise; hard copies in class also where indicated):**

- Jan. 22/23 **Due in Lab (0 points but loss of choice if incomplete):** Research Question choice DECLARED. If not declared, or if you are late to class, the question will be assigned to you. So be on time! This is more fun when you have a choice!
- Jan. 27/28 **Due to BBoard (10 points):** References – a brief write-up (2-3 paragraphs) of what you would like to do for your project. Discuss *briefly* your topic area, hypotheses, variables of interest, and method. Attach your list of references. These references should be from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic book chapters, or academic books. You should have at least 7 *not including* your seed article (so at least 8 total). You will present your work thus far (orally) to your classmates in order to get valuable preliminary feedback as you start to write. **SLO 1 & 2.**
- Jan. 29/30 **Due to BBoard (15 points):** Annotated Bibliography – you will write a paragraph or two summarizing and assessing EACH of your 8 or more references (includes the seed article). You need to answer these questions for each reference: (1) What were the main points, arguments, and findings of the article? (2) What were the limitations of the article? (3) How does this article compare to your other articles? (4) How does this fit into your research idea?" (For assistance with what an annotated bibliography is and its importance, see Purdue Owl: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>) **SLO 3.**
- Feb. 3/4 **Due in Lab and to BBoard (graded as part of lab participation):** A draft of your Introduction is due by this date. You must have a hard copy printed and brought to class (as well as posted to BBoard) for peer review activities. **SLO 4**
- Feb. 5/6 **Due in Lab and to BBoard (graded as part of lab participation):** A draft of your Abstract, Methods, and Proposed Analyses is due by this date. You must have a hard copy printed and brought to class (as well as posted to BBoard) for peer review activities. **SLO 4**
- Feb. 10/11 **Due to BBoard (25 points):** Rough draft – you are required to submit a full rough draft of your proposal and turn it in by this date. You should have included feedback in this draft that you have received from early drafts of each section. **SLO 1 – 5.**
- Feb. 12 - 20 **Lab TA 1-on-1 meetings (0 points):** Paper consults – you will sign up for a specific time to meet with your TA to discuss your paper. On the syllabus for the "Proposal Consult" days, you do not need to come to lab unless your meeting is scheduled on that day. The days you do not have lab are for you to work on your paper. Please take advantage of them. NOTE: First come / first served on sign-ups for consults.

Feb 24/25

**Due to BBoard (75 points); SLO 1 - 6:** Final paper. This is the full proposal due on this date taking into account all feedback to date. In addition, you will add 1 page to the very end of the paper entitled "Reflection." On this page you will follow these instructions:

You have now spent the first half of the semester learning the process of research construction via the creation of a proposal. On this one page, remaining in APA format, reflect upon your work thus far. For example, you can write about challenges you faced in searching for literature, or determining which methods and stats to consider. You can write about writing itself. For example, you can discuss your style of writing, how you took time to do it, how you edited, how you received feedback (did you like feedback your peers gave you?), etc. You must be thoughtful here and integrate your reflections with the work on the project to receive full credit for this page. The grade for this page is built into the 75 points total for this final paper.

Feb. 26 – Mar. 6

Presentations – you will present your project (using PowerPoint) to your classmates. You must attend all days of presentations. (These count as lab participation.) You will provide a 1-page summary handout of your proposal, and provide a hard copy for each person in your lab section on the day you present. You will be graded by your fellow classmates and your TA. (50 points)