

Fontbonne University Course Syllabus  
**Senior Research Seminar I**  
PSY 496 (3 credit hours) — Fall 2018

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**Class time and location:**

Wednesdays 2-3:15pm

**Room: AB 103**

Important Dates:

Sept 1: Last day to add/drop course, change from credit to audit

Oct 18: Last day to withdraw from course, change between credit and pass/fail

**Professor:** Dr. Jason Finley

*email:* [jfinley@fontbonne.edu](mailto:jfinley@fontbonne.edu)

*phone:* (314)-719-3610

*office:* East Building 310A

*office hours:* Mon 2-3:30pm & Wed 3:30-5pm

Also by appointment (just email me and we'll schedule a time to meet)

**Website:** Schoology: [fontbonne.schoology.com](http://fontbonne.schoology.com)

**Prerequisites:** PSY 100, PSY 320, PSY 330, and senior class standing or permission of instructor

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**Required course text:**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. [spiral-bound version recommended]

**Recommended text:**

Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1999). *The Elements of Style*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Required Readings:**

Various readings will be posted on our class web site. These will help you understand and navigate the research process. You should do the readings before class (see schedule below), and come prepared to discuss them.

**Course Description:**

Catalog text: "First semester of the capstone experience for psychology seniors planning to apply to graduate programs. Students will plan, research, and design an independent empirical research study in a particular area of psychology. Research proposals will be submitted to the University's IRB and will be summarized in an APA-format paper at the end of the semester. In addition, students will prepare for graduate study or careers in psychology. This course is the first semester of a year-long capstone experience."

Welcome to the senior capstone course for psychology majors! Here you will bring together the knowledge and skills you have developed throughout your undergraduate education. I will help you shape your curiosity and creativity into an empirical research project that you will conduct from start to finish this year. At the end of this Fall semester you will have a complete plan for the collection of data, which you will do in the Spring semester (PSY 497).

I'll tell you straight out: this course will take a good deal of work. But don't freak out; you can totally do this! I'll be here to guide you the whole way, and you'll be building very valuable skills, and you'll ultimately end up gathering new empirical data on a topic of personal interest to you. That is, you'll be doing science! Yes it will take work, but it will be rewarding, fun, and interesting. You'll see!

### **Goals and Objectives:**

The learning activities, assignments, and exams in this course (and PSY 497 in Spring) assess your mastery of these learning outcomes:

- **Critical and Creative Thinking**

You will improve your skills at thinking like a scientist about mind and behavior, transforming your curiosity into testable questions, and critically evaluating evidence. My approach to doing research is this: unbounded creative curiosity first. Then rigor. Finally practicality.

- **Research Skills**

You will improve your skills as you conduct every stage of an empirical research project on a topic that is of personal interest to you. That includes: generating ideas and forming them into empirically testable hypotheses; searching, reading, critically evaluating, and synthesizing published research; specifying the variables of interest; choosing an appropriate research method (descriptive/observational, correlational, experimental); designing your study; finding and/or creating materials and measurements; maintaining high ethical standards and obtaining Institutional Review Board approval; running your study to collect data; using appropriate statistics to analyze your data; and clearly communicating your results to colleagues verbally and with visual aids.

- **Writing Skills**

You will improve your writing skills, particularly using APA (American Psychological Association) style, which is a formulaic, technical writing style that is the standard for research publications in psychology.

### **Course Format:**

The format of the course is laboratory seminar-style, so active participation and discussion is expected by everyone. We will meet weekly either as a group at the normally scheduled day/time or individually at times we will arrange (for the weeks labeled "individual meetings" in the schedule below). During our meetings we will

actively discuss the assigned readings, review and practice research method topics, keep track of where everyone is at in their research projects, and collectively troubleshoot any challenges that arise in projects. I also might occasionally regale you with thrilling insider tales from the world of psychology research and graduate education. This course will require a lot of individual effort from you outside of class. Remember too that I'll be available during office hours for any additional help at any stage of your project.

### Classroom Etiquette/Logistics:

- If you have a laptop computer, please do bring it to class. It will be useful to have your computer with you as I help you throughout the various stages of your project. But don't use it for goofing off. SRSLY! (No, really, I'm serious.)
- **Put your phone away and keep it away. DO NOT USE YOUR PHONE DURING CLASS. Everyone can see you doing it.**
- No antimatter in class; trust me on this.
- This will be interactive and less formal than a typical class. Speak up whenever you have questions, answers, ideas, etc. We will all benefit from a dynamic dialogue. Also remember to be courteous to each other.
- Research is a creative, collaborative process that relies on frequent and open communication. Please check your email regularly, stay in touch, and come to see me any time you have a concern with the class or with your project.

### Evaluation:

Your grade in this course will be based on:

Attendance/Participation	10%
Brainstorming assignment	10%
Research Proposal	45%
Draft 1 (initial proposal): 10%	
Draft 2 (cover, intro, references): 10%	
Draft 3 (cover, intro, method, materials, references): 10%	
Draft 4 (final proposal paper): 15%	
MPA abstract	10%
IRB Submission	15%
Final Proposal Presentation	10%
Total:	100%

Final letter grades will be based on the following scale:

92.5	≤	A	≤	100
89.5	≤	A-	<	92.5
87.5	≤	B+	<	89.5
82.5	≤	B	<	87.5
79.5	≤	B-	<	82.5
77.5	≤	C+	<	79.5
72.5	≤	C	<	77.5
69.5	≤	C-	<	72.5
59.5	≤	D	<	69.5
0	≤	F	<	59.5

**NOTE: Students must earn at least a B- in PSY496 to enroll in the second half of the PSY 497 in the spring. Being unable to enroll in PSY497 could delay your planned graduation date.**

#### **Attendance/Participation (10%):**

It's critical that you attend and participate every week, whether it's our regular group meeting or an individual meeting with me during the weeks when we'll be doing that (see schedule below). If for any reason you need to miss a meeting, it's your responsibility to let me know, and obtain any information from another student, and/or catch up with me in office hours. Attendance will be taken every week. Here's how attendance figures into your grade: Every class you attend will earn you 0.833% toward your final grade, up to a maximum of 10%. Oh, also you have to be awake and participate or it doesn't count!

#### **Brainstorming Assignment (10%):**

To help you generate research ideas. Instructions will be on course website.

#### **Research Proposal (45%):**

This is the main event: the proposal for your senior research project! Your project can focus on any aspect of psychology that is of personal interest to you. We will work together to develop a feasible topic and plan for your project, and this semester you will write a research proposal paper in APA style. This writing will be done in stages, with 4 drafts due on the dates given in the schedule below. I will give you feedback on each draft to help you improve: how well you provide the key information required by each section in the draft, the clarity and logic of your writing, adherence to APA style, quality and relevance of the references you choose, and the quality and feasibility of your research design. You will get full credit for each draft if you turn it in on time and complete!

Please feel free to meet with me prior to the due date for any draft to discuss your ideas for your proposal, and I will be happy to recommend particular journals that are related to your paper topic or discuss your topic in further detail on a one-on-one basis.

1. Draft 1 [10%]

Initial Project Proposal

Once you have decided on a topic for your paper, you will research your topic in the library using PsycINFO, Cambridge Scientific Abstracts, MEDline, Social Sciences Citation Index, or any other research search engine that contains abstracts. You will also begin to formulate what variables you will be investigating, a testable hypothesis, a rough idea of what method you'll use, and what potential results you might find. On the due date in the schedule, you will turn in an Initial Project Proposal. I'll give you a template and an example for this document, but briefly it will have to contain:

- A preliminary title for your project
- The overall objective of your project
- References to at least 2 peer-reviewed sources
- Hypothesis
- Operational definition of variables
- An outline of the method you propose
- Expected/potential results

2. Draft 2 [10%]

From your searches you will select a minimum of 10 high quality sources related to the topic. Please be aware that you will have to sift through many more sources than 10 to find adequate sources for your literature review. You will write a logically organized introduction section giving background and a set up of your proposed project. Included in this section are the specific hypotheses you are planning to test with your project. Draft 2 will consist of:

- Cover page
- Introduction section
- Reference section with at least 10 sources

3. Draft 3 [10%]

In addition to revising your introduction section based on my feedback, you will now also write a method section that describes your research project in enough detail that others could replicate your study. Your project may use descriptive/observational, correlational, or experimental methodology. Be very clear about your variables and how they relate to your hypotheses. Draft 3 will consist of:

- Cover page [revised]
- Introduction Section [revised]
- Method section
- Specification of any materials you will be using
- Reference section [revised]

4. Draft 4 [15%]

Final Proposal Paper [approximately 8-16 double-spaced pages]

In addition to making revisions to your work from Draft 3, you will now also write an abstract, and preliminary Results and Discussion section. You won't have any actual data yet (you will do data collection in the Spring), but will instead write about what results you expect you may find in your project, based on theory and/or previous findings in the research literature. You will include the statistical tests you would use to analyze your data in this section.

Draft 4 will consist of:

- Cover page [revised]
- Abstract
- Introduction Section [revised]
- Method section [revised]
- Specification of any materials you will be using [revised]
- Preliminary Results and Discussion section
- Reference section [revised]

**MPA Abstract (10%)**

The Midwestern Psychological Association ( <http://midwesternpsych.org/> ) is a regional professional organization that holds an annual meeting every spring in Chicago. At the meeting, psychologists from all stages of their careers (professors, grad students, undergrads) present talks and posters about their research. You will write an abstract of your planned project for submission to the 2020 MPA meeting. Last year, several Fontbonne students got to go and present posters of their projects and they had an amazing experience!

**IRB Submission (15%):**

In order to begin data collection during the spring semester, it is necessary to obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to leaving for winter break. We will discuss how to complete an IRB packet in class. IRB packets should be submitted as soon as you have finalized your methodology and located or created the materials necessary to conduct your study. All submissions to the IRB require an attachment that contains the materials you will be using for your study. IRB packets should be submitted to the Fontbonne IRB committee before we leave for Thanksgiving break (due date in schedule below).

**Final Proposal Presentation (10%):**

During the last two weeks of the semester, we will have a symposium in which each student gives an oral presentation of his or her research proposal. Your presentation should be 8-10 minutes in length, and will parallel the structure of your final proposal paper. We will cover presentation style and format in more detail when the time comes (see schedule). The purpose of this assignment is to:

1. Give you experience presenting research to a group of peers using oral communication skills
2. Give you practice in creating scientific presentations using Power Point presentation software
3. Learn how to use the library, read primary sources, and condense the information from these sources into a short talk.

***Basic Wellness Needs***

Your physical, mental and emotional health is important and can affect your performance in this class. Fontbonne University provides many services to help students, including counseling, health services, food and housing assistance, and emergency funds. If a service is not available on our campus, you may benefit from a referral to a provider in the greater community. If you are facing such challenges and believe it may affect your performance in this course, I encourage you to seek assistance in the Student Affairs office on the first floor of Medaille Hall, adjacent to the AMC lobby, or you can call that office at (314) 889-1411. Their hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. If you are comfortable doing so, you also may contact me. I will offer any assistance that I can and help you connect with the appropriate resource.

**Academic Integrity/Honesty:**

Unwavering honesty is absolutely paramount in doing science and being a scholar. It is an essential value that every good scholar holds in his or her heart. My colleague, Dr. Rebecca Foushée, has written nicely about this importance: “The scientific enterprise is an organized framework for finding truths and understanding reality, and it works for many reasons. One primary reason it works is that research professionals place a great deal of faith and trust in the work of their colleagues, including any public statements/reports made by their fellow scientists. Whenever this trust is broken, the entire structure of scholarly inquiry – regardless of discipline – is placed at risk. Therefore, one main goal of scientific training is to foster and encourage ethical behavior, academic honesty, and original, creative thought among future generations of scholars.”

I take academic honesty very seriously, and you should too. The Fontbonne statement on academic integrity may be found in the catalog, in *The Griffin Scratch Student Handbook*, and in Policy Manual VI, Section 6.1.11. I’ll excerpt from it here.

“According to its mission, Fontbonne University is committed to graduating students who are prepared to think critically, to act ethically, and to assume responsibility as citizens and leaders. Fontbonne University expects the highest standards of integrity from its students. Violations of academic integrity have a broad impact on the University and will result in University review and action.

A violation of academic integrity includes, but is not limited to, any act of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and dissimulation and any act of aiding and abetting academic dishonesty. The Fontbonne statement on academic integrity may be found in the catalog, in *The Griffin Scratch Student Handbook*, and in Policy Manual VI, Section 6.1.11.”

- “Cheating is a purposeful deception in the preparation and/or submission of papers and assignments and the taking of exams, tests, or quizzes.”
- “Fabrication is the deliberate falsification or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise, such as making up a source, giving an incorrect citation, misquoting a source.”
- “Plagiarism is the representation of the words and ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. Plagiarism includes failing to give a citation for using work from another person or source. Modifications and rephrasing do not reduce the requirement for giving a citation. This also applies to information obtained electronically, such as from the Internet.”

Here are some guidelines to avoid plagiarism:

- DON’T COPY/PASTE unless you put quotes around the copied text and cite the source of the text.
- If you’ve paraphrased text from somewhere, cite the source.
- If you’re using ideas from somewhere, cite the source.
- If you’re ever unsure, just check with me.

So, seriously, don’t EVER do any of the above (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism). Engaging in any such academic dishonesty will result in the student receiving a score of zero on the assignment and being reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. More than one offense will result in an automatic F grade.

### ***Nondiscrimination***

Fontbonne University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. If you have concerns that you or someone else has been discriminated against, it is your right to bring those concerns to the attention of the University’s Title IX coordinator, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Medaille Hall 85-99, (314) 889-1416 the Director of Human Resources, Ryan Hall 103, (314) 889-1493. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic nature) should be discussed directly with your instructor and can

also be brought to the attention of your instructor's Department Chair. Additional information on Fontbonne's policy of nondiscrimination is available in the catalog, in *The Griffin Scratch Student Handbook*, and in Policy Manual II, Section 2.1.2.

### ***Accommodation of Students with Disabilities***

Fontbonne University offers accommodations to students with documented physical, visual, hearing, learning, or psychiatric disabilities. Any Fontbonne student is eligible for special services or accommodations if: 1) The student self-identifies that he or she has a disability and needs accommodation; 2) The student provides appropriate and verifiable documentation of the disability; and 3) The student provides notification in a timely fashion. For academic accommodations, contact the Academic and Disabilities Resources Coordinator at (314) 719-3627. Ryan Hall 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
<http://www.fontbonne.edu/academics/academic-services-support/>

**Note also: free tutoring for any student**

### ***Writing Support Services***

The Kinkel Center provides free writing support to all students at Fontbonne University. Trained writing specialists are available to assist you at any stage in the writing process, from brainstorming and organizing ideas, to polishing a final draft. Each appointment is an hour and tailored to meet the expressed needs of you, the client. The goal is to have a substantive conversation about your project where we can collaboratively develop some usable strategies, techniques, and principles that can be applied to future projects in your collegiate and professional life. The instructions for making an appointment are on the [Kinkel Center page](#). Appointments are held in Ryan 304. For off campus students, sessions can be conducted electronically. To request an electronic appointment, send a message to [writing@fontbonne.edu](mailto:writing@fontbonne.edu) All writing support inquiries can be directed to Matt Nelson, the Academic Writing Support Coordinator, at [mnelson@fontbonne.edu](mailto:mnelson@fontbonne.edu).

### ***Subject-to-Change Clause:***

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate instructional and/or student needs. It is the student's responsibility to keep aware of such changes.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Due (11:59pm)</b>	<b>Reading (do before class)</b>	<b>Extra Readings</b>
Wed Aug 28	Intro & Overview		Newman (2013)	Hershey, Jacobs-Lawson, & Wilson (2005)
Wed Sept 4	Generating Ideas		Martin (2008) Ch. 3	Leong & Muccio (2005); McGuire (1997)
Wed Sept 11	Exploring the Landscape of Sources	Brainstorming	Mitchel, Jolley, & O'Shea (2013)	Cozby & Bates (2015) Ch. 2
Wed Sept 18	Planning/Designing the Research		Martin (2008) Ch. 7	
Wed Sept 25	Materials, tools, techniques		Roediger & McCabe (2007)	
Wed Oct 2	Preparing for GRE & grad school apps		Kuther & Morgan (2019) Ch. 15	
Wed Oct 9	<b>Individual Meetings</b> as needed	Draft 1: Proposal	Bem (2003); APA Manual sections 2.05, 2.11, chapter 3	Smith (2016)
Wed Oct 16	Writing Skills			
Wed Oct 23	<b>Individual Meetings:</b> Method, Revision	Draft 2		

Date	Topic	Due (11:59pm)	Reading (do before class)	Extra Readings
Wed Oct 30	Writing Skills: Method, Results Choosing Appropriate Statistics	(MPA abstract due Tues Nov 5)	APA Manual sections 2.04, 2.06, 2.07, 2.08; Statistics Decision Trees	
Wed Nov 6	Ethical Approval: Institutional Review Board	Draft 3	Dell, Schmidt, & Meara (2008); APA Ethical Principles	visiting artist Deborah Aschheim?
Wed Nov 13	<b>Individual Meetings: IRB</b>	IRB Submission		
Wed Nov 20	NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING			
Wed Nov 27	Posters and Powerpoint Presentations to Communicate Your Ideas			
Wed Dec 4	<b>Individual Meetings as needed</b>			
Wed Dec 11, 2-3:50m	Proposal Presentations, Discussion	Draft 4: Final Proposal Paper		