Agenda

- Overview of Thesis & Independent Study in Psychology
- Requirements and expectations
- Grading criteria
- Application methods
Overview of Thesis In Psychology (PSYC4008)

- (For psychology major) Students will conduct an independent empirical investigation of a psychological problem.

- Some students who want to pursue further studies in Psychology and related fields would want to do a more ambitious thesis project (e.g., multiple studies, labor-intensive experiments and interview studies) supervised by a teaching staff in the department.

- Course details on the department website: http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1619 (Thesis in Psychology)
Overview of Independent Study in Psychology (PSYC4007)

- (For psychology major) Students will each do an independent empirical research project.

- Regular attendance for research supervision is required.

- Course details on the department website: [http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1619](http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1619) (Independent Study in Psychology)
Similarities

- For final year psychology major students only
- **Full year** courses: 12 credits
- 100% course work
# Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PSYC4008 Thesis</th>
<th>PSYC4007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-requisites</strong></td>
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<td>Core Courses:</td>
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<td>PSYC1001</td>
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<td>PSYC1004</td>
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<td>PSYC2060</td>
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<td><strong>Co-requisite</strong></td>
<td>One capstone course:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>(can take concurrently)</td>
<td>PSYC3052 / PSYC3053 / PSYC3054 /</td>
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<td>PSYC3061 /PSYC3064 / PSYC3068</td>
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<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>• have a GPA 3.3 or above in advanced psychology courses taken in HKU by the end of the 3rd year; (or 4th year for BEd&amp;BSocSc students)</td>
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<td>• From academic year of 2018/19, have a GPA 3.5 or above in the advanced psychology courses taken in HKU by the end of the 3rd year; (or 4th year for BEd&amp;BSocSc students)</td>
<td>Psychology major student, who wants to take the course in the final year.</td>
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<td><strong>Supervision</strong></td>
<td>A teaching staff</td>
<td>A demonstrator / advanced research postgraduate student</td>
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Requirements & Expectations
Reading Past Theses
Requirements

- Read **at least 2** past theses **before** application
- Make sure you understand:
  - what a thesis/independent study is
  - the standard of “A” grade theses
- Brainstorm your research topics/proposal

- Borrowing procedures and past theses titles
  [http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1814](http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1814)
Research Proposal Presentation

- Late November / Early December
- Two faculty members will give feedback on your research design
- You can modify the research design
Research Ethics Application

- **ALL** thesis & IS research projects must undergo research review by Departmental Research Ethics Committee

- Submit Research Ethics Application Form

- Deadline: **Nov 15, 2017**

Research Ethics Application

- Research Integrity
- Available at Research Services, Registry:
  - http://www.rss.hku.hk/integrity/rcr/policy
**Written-up Requirements**

**ALL** thesis and IS should be written up like a journal article including:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Title page</th>
<th>7. Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Table of Content</td>
<td>8. Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Abstract</td>
<td>9. Conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Acknowledgement (optional)</td>
<td>10. Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Introduction</td>
<td>11. Appendix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Methodology</td>
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- Word Count: 8,000 – 10,000 (exclusive of tables, bibliographies and appendices)
- Report submission deadline: April 15, 2018
Grading Criteria

- **Same** criteria for thesis & IS:
  - Knowledge of the research topic
  - Critical analysis
  - Novelty and significance
  - Design of study
  - Data analysis and presentation
  - Writing and organization
## Application Methods

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<th>PSYC4008</th>
<th>PSYC4007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application form</strong></td>
<td>Supervisor Preference Form</td>
<td>Research Area Ranking Form</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Submission</strong></td>
<td>Send the completed form to <a href="mailto:ugpsyc@hku.hk">ugpsyc@hku.hk</a></td>
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<td>(For taking thesis, the department will e-mail students who meet the criterion (a GPA 3.3 or above) at the beginning of July)</td>
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<td><strong>Deadline</strong></td>
<td>Before Aug 15, 2017 (the end of course selection period)</td>
<td>Before Sept 13, 2017 (the end of add/ drop period)</td>
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FAQ: Compulsory?

Question:

- Is thesis / Independent Study is required for psychology major?

Answer:

- No, it is optional and it is not a graduation requirement
- But it is usually required if you pursue postgraduate studies.
FAQ: Exchange?

Question:

- I will go on exchange in 1\textsuperscript{st} sem (or 2\textsuperscript{nd} sem) in my final year. May I take thesis/IS if I am eligible?

Answer:

- You have to seek special approval for the special arrangement. Please visit the General Office.
FAQ: Thesis supervisor list

Question:
- Do I need to approach individual teacher one by one to seek acceptance as his/her supervisee?

Answer:
- A list of thesis supervisor will be sent to eligible students in early July.
- You are free to seek advice from the teaching members on the research topics.
FAQ: Thesis supervisor selection

Question:
- How the selection process to be done?

Answer:
1. Each lecturer will receive all application forms which listed him/her as 1st preference.
2. He/she will select his/her supervisees.
3. Unselected application forms will passed to 2nd preference and so on.
FAQ: Thesis supervision quota?

Question:
- Will I be unselected by any teachers?

Answer:
- You are advised to provide more than one research area or more information about your research topics for supervisors selection.
FAQ: Petition?

Question:
- I am not qualified to take “Thesis in Psychology”. What can I do if I really want to take it?

Answer:
- You may seek special approval from the Department for a petition if your GPA is 3.2 or above.
- However your supervisor selection will be put into the second priority.
For more details:

- Departmental website
  [http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1619](http://www.psychology.hku.hk/~main/?page_id=1619)

- Other FAQ:

- Email to ugpsyc@hku.hk
Thesis in Psychology (4008)

The Dos and Don’ts

...and a sampling of some recent projects

Dr Dorita Chang
07 Jun 2017
Your task

• To experience the scientific process
Do...

• Start early. Spend your initial weeks reading literature.

• Develop a *feasible* proposal
  • Your supervisor may have some plans for you, but it doesn’t hurt to negotiate if you have strong interests
  • Are you really going to collect an N of 500???

• Develop a *spaced* timeline for execution
  • When should data collection be done?
  • When should you start writing?
Don’t...

- Believe that you can start AND finish data collection in April
- Try to write your entire thesis right before the deadline
Your actual experience...

• Will depend on your supervisor –
  • Differing areas of expertise
  • Differing styles

• Use your supervisor as a resource!
How I do it...

- I wait for your contact
- We talk about your interests, my interests, and how they might fit together
- We develop a reading plan (lit search)

• We meet to discuss your readings
• I bug you for your proposal drafts
• You bug me to keep meeting and revising draft, consent forms, etc
• You submit your ethics package to the Department
How I do it...

- We prepare for your proposal presentation – we rehearse as a group internally to make sure you are confident
- We await ethics approval
- We start working on your experimental set up (stimulus, programs, etc.)

- We finalize your set up and you start testing
- I set some internal writing deadlines for the remaining four months
How I do it...

• I largely leave you alone. I expect you to find me if you have questions. You should otherwise be collecting data and writing.

• April 15th (or thereabouts – deadline day)
  • You submit. You get to sleep. I get to sleep.
  • We celebrate (usually over pizza)
What are your options?

• Again, this depends on your supervisor
• E.g., My current projects in the lab use fMRI, MEG, and Psychophysics (with or without eye-tracking) to study the visual system.
Some recent projects

• Visual psychophysics
  • Motion, face and character perception
    • In all sorts of weird body positions... (reference frames)

Contribution of bodily and gravitational orientation cues to letter and chinese character recognition

Reference frames for the motion aftereffect
Some recent projects

• Visual psychophysics
  • Top-down modulations of luminance perception

Face lightness perception: Considering the other-race effect and face-inversion effect
Some recent projects

• Visual psychophysics
  • Perceptual learning & Object perception

Effect of learning on repetition blindness of novel objects across viewpoint variations

Figure 3. Illustration of the procedure of an RSVP trial.
Some recent projects

- Visual psychophysics
  - *Object encoding*

*The role of object familiarity in attribute amnesia*

What was the LOCATION of the target?
What was the IDENTITY of the target?
Some recent projects

• Visual psychophysics
  • Visual attention

Video gaming experience and visual attention
Some recent projects

• Other stuff
  • Natural soundscapes and landscapes vs Relaxation (EEG)

Comparing the effects of natural versus manmade stimuli for electing relaxation
The thesis experience should be fun and rewarding!

Good Luck

Any Qs?
What is an Independent Study (PSYC4007)?

Jun 7, 2017

Lance WONG

(Demonstrator, Psychology Department, HKU)
Why writing an IS (and Thesis)?

- IS (and Thesis) is **NOT** a compulsory requirement for psych majors

- Based on my own experience, there are good reasons of writing it:
  1. most **post-graduate programs** prefer applicants with independent research experience
  2. as a way to **synthesize and apply** what you have learnt in the past few years
  3. as a **conclusion of your UG studies** (trust me, you will only remember your thesis/IS 10 years later)
• While I encourage you to undertake a Thesis/IS, do consider the following…
  > Do you like research?
  > Data collection will require a lot of time and networking
  > A lot of deadlines to meet, and a lot of revision/amendment to make

→ **Common problems** encountered by students:
  > can’t collect enough data (time/connection issues)
  > fail to meet deadlines/simply disappear (supervisors will be furious)
• To prepare for undertaking an IS:
  > pre-requisite: 1004+2060
  > discover your research interest:
    -- take research internship courses/be volunteers in labs
    -- locate and review latest literature on topics that interest you, and read through their limitations and future directions
    -- talk and discuss with the teaching staff!
  > if you have a tutor that you want to work with (for whatever reasons), approach him/her during the summer!
A brief time-line (for IS)

**June/July/August**
- Come up with a topic (optional)
- Contact potential supervisor
- Complete the form and submit

**September**
- Start to meet your supervisor

**November**
- Ethics Approval

**Late November/Early December**
- Student Presentation

**April**
- Submitting your thesis
Past IS titles supervised by me

- “The effect of parental control on children’s academic performance: The moderating role of children’s perception and parent-child relations”
- “Gender stereotypes and children’s playmate preference”
- “Stress, locus of control, and coping styles”
- “Chameleon effect: Mimicry and helping behaviors”
- “Emotionality, self-compassion, and adjustment”
Potential topics in Social Psychology

- A big topic: Cyber-psychology
  - application of social psych theories on the internet
    - FB, Instagram, snapchat….
    - online game (WoW, FF, RO…)
    - online dating
    - instant messaging
Determinants of Self-Reported Bystander Behavior in Cyberbullying Incidents Amongst Adolescents

Ann DeSmet, MSc, Charlene Veldeman, MSc, Karolien Poels, PhD, Sara Bastiaensens, MSc, Katrien Van Cleemput, PhD, Heidi Vandebosch, PhD, and Ilse De Bourdeaudhuij, PhD

Abstract

This study explores behavioral determinants of self-reported cyberbullying bystander behavior from a behavioral change theoretical perspective, to provide levers for interventions. Nine focus groups were conducted with 61 young adolescents (aged 12–16 years, 52% girls). Assertive defending, reporting to others, providing advice, and seeking support were the most mentioned behaviors. Self-reported bystander behavior heavily depended on contextual factors, and should not be considered a fixed participant role. Bystanders preferred to handle cyberbullying offline and in person, and comforting the victim was considered more feasible than facing the bully. Most prevailing behavioral determinants to defend or support the victim were low moral disengagement, that the victim is an ingroup member, and that the bystander is popular. Youngsters felt they received little encouragement from their environment to perform positive bystanding behavior, since peers have a high acceptance for not defending and perceived parental support for defending behavior is largely lacking. These results suggest multilevel models for cyberbullying research, and interventions are needed. With much previous research into cyberbullying insufficiently founded in theoretical models, the employed framework of the Integrative Model and Social Cognitive Theory may inspire future studies into bystander behavior.
Fatal Attractions:
Attachment to Smartphones Predicts Anthropomorphic Beliefs and Dangerous Behaviors

Jessica E. Bodford, PhD, Virginia S.Y. Kwan, PhD, and David S. Sobota, BS

Abstract
As technology’s presence grows increasingly concrete in global societies, so too do our relationships with the devices we keep close at hand from day to day. Whereas research has, in the past, framed smartphone addiction in terms of possessional attachment, the present research hypothesizes that anxious smartphone attachment stems from human attachment, in which Anxiously attached individuals may be more likely to generalize their anxious attachment style to communication devices. In the present study, we found support for this hypothesis and showed that anxious smartphone attachment predicts (1) anthropomorphic beliefs, (2) reliance on—or “clinginess” toward—smartphones, and (3) a seemingly compulsive urge to answer one’s phone, even in dangerous situations (e.g., while driving). Taken together, we seek to provide a theoretical framework and methodological tools to identify the sources of technology attachment and those most at risk of engaging in dangerous or inappropriate behaviors as a result of attachment to ever-present mobile devices.

Keywords: anthropomorphism, attachment, smartphones, texting and driving
Contributions of Social Comparison and Self-Objectification in Mediating Associations Between Facebook Use and Emergent Adults’ Psychological Well-Being

Emily Hanna, MSW; L. Monique Ward, PhD; Rita C. Seabrook, MS; Morgan Jerald, MS; Lauren Reed, MSW, PhD; Soraya Giaccardi, MS and Julia R. Lippman, PhD

Abstract

Although Facebook was created to help people feel connected with each other, data indicate that regular usage has both negative and positive connections to well-being. To explore these mixed results, we tested the role of social comparison and self-objectification as possible mediators of the link between Facebook use and three facets of psychological well-being: self-esteem, mental health, and body shame. Participants were 1,104 undergraduate women and men who completed surveys assessing their Facebook usage (minutes, passive use, and active use), social comparison, self-objectification, and well-being. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling, testing separate models for women and men. Models for each gender fit the data well. For women and men, Facebook use was associated with greater social comparison and greater self-objectification, which, in turn, was each related to lower self-esteem, poorer mental health, and greater body shame. Mediated models provided better fits to the data than models testing direct pathways to the mediators and well-being variables. Implications are discussed for young people’s social media use, and future directions are provided.

Keywords: social networking, mental health, objectification, social comparison
Facebook’s Spiral of Silence and Participation: The Role of Political Expression on Facebook and Partisan Strength in Political Participation

Mihee Kim, PhD

Abstract

This study investigated how Facebook’s spiral of silence influences political participation. For doing so, this study focused on the roles of politically expressive activities on Facebook and individuals’ levels of partisan strength. An online survey (N=277) was conducted with Facebook users. Results showed that a perceived hostile opinion climate on Facebook was negatively associated with political expression on Facebook, which, in turn, was positively related with political participation. This indirect relationship was conditioned by the degree of Facebook users’ partisan strength. Those with weak or moderate levels of partisan strength were less likely to express their minority views, which led to decrease their political participation in the real world. Such indirect relationship was not the case for those with high levels of partisan strength. Theoretical and political implications of these findings were discussed.

Keywords: Facebook, spiral of silence, political expression, political participation, partisan strength
The Relationship Between Online Video Game Involvement and Gaming-Related Friendships Among Emotionally Sensitive Individuals

Rachel Kowert, PhD, Emese Domahidi, MA, and Thorsten Quandt, PhD

Abstract

Some researchers believe that online gaming spaces can be socially accommodating environments for socially inhibited individuals, such as the socially inept, socially anxious, or shy. While previous research has examined, and found, significant links between these populations and online video game play, it remains unknown to what extent these spaces are contributing to tangible social benefits for the socially inhibited. The current study addresses this question by evaluating the link between gaming-related friendships and shyness, as quantified by emotional sensitivity. Drawing from a representative sample of German game players, the results indicate that emotionally sensitive players are using online gaming spaces differently from their less emotionally sensitive counterparts and reporting tangible differences in their in-game friendship networks. This suggests that online games hold the potential to be socially advantageous for shy individuals by allowing them to overcome their traditional social difficulties and generate new friendships as well as strengthen old ones.
More Options Lead to More Searching and Worse Choices in Finding Partners for Romantic Relationships Online: An Experimental Study

Pai-Lu Wu, Ph.D.¹ and Wen-Bin Chiou, Ph.D.²

Abstract

It is not surprising that the Internet has become a means by which people expand their social networks and form close relationships. Almost every online-dating Web site provides members with search tools. However, do users truly benefit from more complete searches of a large pool of possibilities? The present study, based on the cognitive perspective, examined whether more search options triggered excessive searching, leading to worse choices and poorer selectivity. We argue that more search options lead to less selective processing by reducing users’ cognitive resources, distracting them with irrelevant information, and reducing their ability to screen out inferior options. A total of 128 Taiwanese late adolescents and adults with experience in online romantic relationships participated in an experimental study. After entering the characteristics they found desirable in a partner in such a relationship, participants were randomly assigned to receive one of three levels of available profiles. The dependent measures consisted of the number of profiles searched, the average preference difference for all profiles viewed, the preference difference for the chosen profile, and the degree of selectivity. These measures were used to determine whether more attention was devoted to better alternatives and less attention to worse alternatives. The data supported the predictions. Implications and directions for further research are discussed.
The Benefits of Social Technology Use Among Older Adults Are Mediated by Reduced Loneliness

William J. Chopik, PhD

Abstract

Technology has the ability to enhance and enrich the lives of older adults by facilitating better interpersonal relationships. However, few studies have directly examined associations between technology use for social reasons and physical and psychological health among older adults. The current study examines the benefits of technology use in 591 older adults from the 2012 wave of the Health and Retirement Study ($M_{age}=68.18$, $SD=10.75$; 55.5% female). Social technology use was assessed through five technology-based behaviors (i.e., using e-mail, social networking sites, online video/phone calls, online chatting/instant messaging, using a smartphone). Attitudes toward the usability and benefits of technology use were also assessed. Older adults had generally positive attitudes toward technology. Higher social technology use was associated with better self-rated health, fewer chronic illnesses, higher subjective well-being, and fewer depressive symptoms. Furthermore, each of the links between social technology use and physical and psychological health was mediated by reduced loneliness. Close relationships are a large determinant of physical health and well-being, and technology has the potential to cultivate successful relationships among older adults.
Concluding remarks: Personal tips

- Maintain good communication with your supervisor
- Remember the fact that different supervisors have different styles/requirements
- Make sure that your project is feasible
  - Resources?
  - Skills (e.g. statistics, programming)?
  - Time?
- Start data-collection and writing early!!!
Q&A

Email: lancewlw@hku.hk
Office: JCT617