The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology
An Overview of Interdisciplinary Thesis in Psychology (PSYC4009)
(For students admitted in 2022/23, 2023/24 & 2024/25)

(For Bachelor of Psychology students) Students will conduct an independent empirical investigation of an interdisciplinary psychological problem. Thesis research will be supervised by two teaching members of the Department from two different subfields. The thesis should be about 8000 to 10,000 words (exclusive of tables, bibliographies and appendices) and should follow the practice of communication in top multidisciplinary psychology journals. Eligible students will be invited by the Department to apply for admissions into this course, and the admission is subject to the approval by the Department..
Assessment: 100% coursework.
Prerequisites: PSYC1001 and PSYC1004 and PSYC2060

Overview

In this course, you will design and conduct a novel interdisciplinary study and report the results in a research paper, working independently with guidance from 2 co-supervisors from different subfields in psychology. The study should address a well-motivated research question based on a critical analysis of the current literature across at least 2 subfields in Psychology. The research paper will include a literature review, presentation of the methods and results, interpretation of the results and discussion of the implications.

The interdisciplinary thesis should include the followings:
- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- Acknowledgement (if needed)
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Reference

The grading criteria will be based on:
- Knowledge of the research topic   10%
- Critical analysis   20%
- Potential contribution and significance   10%
- Design of study   20%
- Data analysis and presentation   20%
- Writing and organization   20%

Eligibility

A student needs to have an average GPA of 3.60 or above in advanced psychology courses (except PSYC2072, PSYC2073, PSYC2075 and PSYC2112) taken in HKU by the end of the 3rd year in the 4-year curriculum. Eligible students will be invited by the department at the beginning of July.

Application

1. Students who meet the above criterion will be invited and receive a list of potential supervisors.
2. Students can access detailed information about faculty members and their areas of expertise by visiting https://psychology.hku.hk/faculty-members/.
3. Students should contact the potential primary supervisor to discuss the research idea and framework.
4. Following the discussion between the students and the potential primary supervisor, an additional academic staff member will be identified as a co-supervisor, who will contribute an interdisciplinary perspective to the research question.
5. Students should contact the potential co-supervisor and seek his/her acceptance for the co-supervision.
6. Students is required to complete application form with endorsements from both the primary supervisor and co-supervisor, along with a brief summary of the research proposal **before the end of course selection period in August**.
7. For students who are not able to secure a co-supervisor, the application form will be automatically considered by the potential primary supervisor for the course PSYC4008.
8. Please note that late application will not be considered.

Presentation of Research Project Proposal

Around the end of November or early December, each student has to present his/her research project proposal to a small group of fellow students and two members of the departmental teaching staff. Each presentation and discussion will last about 20 minutes. This offers each student an opportunity to get more input before finalizing the research design for data collection.

Ethics Application

Undergraduate thesis research is required to undergo ethics review by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. Applications should be submitted on or before **two weeks after the research proposal presentation.**

Students on overseas exchange and have applied to start doing their project in the 2nd semester, have to submit their application on or before **1st March.**

Failure to submit an ethics application will lead to a failure in the course. Please read the Overview of Ethics Application for more details.

Submission of Interdisciplinary Thesis

1. Please submit your interdisciplinary thesis to Moodle before the deadline.
   a) Please submit as one single file in PDF format including all the chapters.
   b) All covering pages, pictures, tables and charts must be included in appropriate position of the file.
   c) There is no need to submit SPSS, Excel or other files separately.

2. The deadline of submission is **23:59, 15th April**.

3. The penalty for late submission is 2 marks for each calendar day, including Saturday, Sunday and public holidays providing that the student has informed his/her supervisor(s) regarding the late submission of thesis report at least 24 hours prior to the original submission deadline. If the student fails to inform his/her supervisor(s) about the late submission 24 hours prior to the original deadline but submits the thesis after the deadline, the late submission will result in an "F" grade.

4. Requests for deadline extension will not be permitted, except for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances, students should submit a formal application for an extension of the thesis report submission deadline, with strong justifications supplemented by supporting document(s), to the supervisor(s) and the Chief Examiner for consideration and approval.

5. Make sure that due acknowledgement is given when referring or quoting from literature, books, webpages, essays or any other information sources.

6. The softcopy will be checked for plagiarism against a database of articles, books, webpages, and essays submitted by students at HKU and other universities. No credit will be given if the work contains plagiarized materials. Further penalties will also be applied, including a zero mark for the course. Plagiarism will also be reported to your Faculty for consideration of possible disciplinary action. Please be sure to read the website to know more about how to avoid plagiarism: https://tl.hku.hk/plagiarism/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/

7. All raw data and research materials must be retained within 2 years after the completion of course. The department may invite you for an oral examination in addition to the submission of thesis.

Presentation of Research Project

In the revision week of the second semester, students will be invited to present his/her research project findings in the form of a poster presentation.

Frequently Asked Questions

1)   **Is doing an interdisciplinary thesis compulsory for Bachelor of Psychology?**

Ans: No, students can take "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology", "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4007 Independent study in psychology" to fulfill the capstone experience requirement. Alternatively, students may opt for taking one Advanced Lab course (PSYC3xxx) plus one Experiential Learning Project (PSYC4010 or PSYC4011) to fulfill the capstone experience requirement. However, thesis writing or an independent research project is usually preferred for applying postgraduate programme(s).

2)   **Am I qualified to take "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology"?**

Ans: The eligibility is an average GPA of 3.60 or above in advanced psychology courses (except PSYC2072, PSYC2073, PSYC2075 and PSYC2112) taken in HKU by the end of the 3rd year in the 4-year curriculum. The Department will invite students who meet this criterion to apply for course enrollment at the beginning of July.

3)   **Is there any quota for students to take "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology"?**

Ans: No, there is no quota. Students who meet the criterion as stated in question 2 will be invited to take "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology" at the beginning of July.

4)   **When is the application deadline?**

Ans: Students must complete the application form **before the end of course selection period** in August. The results of supervisor matching will be announced before the end of add/drop period.

5)   **Will my course(s) taken on exchange be included for calculating the eligibility of taking "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology"?**

Ans: No, the course(s) taken on exchange is(are) only recognized as credit transfer. The grades will not contribute to GPA calculation.

6) **Will the advanced course(s) taken in year one be included for calculating the eligibility of taking "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology"**

Ans: All advanced PSYC courses with letter grades (except PSYC2072, PSYC2073, PSYC2075 and PSYC2112) taken before the final year of study will be included for calculating the eligibility of taking "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology".

7) **May I take "PSYC4007 Independent study in psychology" if I do not meet the GPA requirement to take "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology"**

Ans: Yes, you may take "PSYC4007 Independent study in psychology" with the supervision of an advanced research postgraduate students or a demonstrator/teaching assistant if you meet the criterion of taking "PSYC4007 Independent study in psychology".

8) **Can I take an Advanced Lab course (PSYC3xxx) together with "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology" in the same semester?**

Ans: Yes, students are highly recommended to take an Advanced Lab course as a disciplinary elective and take "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology" to fulfill the capstone experience requirement.

9) **I am planning to take an exchange programme in the 1st semester (or 2nd semester) of my final year. May I still be allowed taking "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology", "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4007 Independent study in psychology"?**

Ans: Yes, eligible students must seek prior approval (Click Form) for the special arrangement.

10) **I do not meet the GPA requirement to take "PSYC4008 Thesis in psychology" or "PSYC4009 Interdisciplinary thesis in psychology. What can I do if I really want to take it?**

Ans: You may seek special approval (Click Form) for a petition if your GPA in advanced psychology courses is 3.55 or above. If your application be approved, your supervisor matching will be put into the second priority.

11) **How can I know which teaching staff are available to supervise our theses in the coming academic year?**

Ans: A list of potential supervisors will be sent to eligible students in the invitation email at the beginning of July.

12) **What will happen if all my 6 preferences do not select me as their supervisee?**

Ans: You will be contacted by the Department.

13) **What can I do if my research interest does not match the research area of my supervisor?**

Ans: Every supervisor has a limited quota in supervising undergraduate theses. Such case usually happens. You may have to follow the research area of your supervisor.

14) **I am approved to continue my thesis writing / IS project during my exchange to overseas. May I apply to extend the submission deadline?**

Ans: In case of extenuating circumstances (such as research reasons that are out of students' control) that you have genuine needs, you may seek special approval (Click Form) to extend the submission deadline.

15) **Why do I need to fill in 2 past theses in the Supervisor Preference form?**

Ans: It is good for you to read past theses in a topic related to your proposal in advanced. By reading past theses, you may understand what a thesis is. It also shows you are prepared to do a thesis project of comparable scope.

16) **Is it compulsory to present the research findings from my thesis project at the end of the 2nd semester?**

Ans: Yes, you are required to present your research findings in the form of a poster presentation.

Standard Timeline for PSYC4009

Beginning of July	• Department to invite eligible students to apply for taking thesis and interdisciplinary thesis in the following academic year • Students to receive a list of potential primary supervisors
Before the end of course selection period in August	• Students to find information about faculty members and their areas of expertise at Department website • Students to contact the potential primary supervisor to discuss the research framework and identify another academic staff as a co-supervisor • Students to contact the potential co-supervisor and seek acceptance of the co-supervision • Students to submit the **application form** for the Department to proceed supervisor matching • Late application will not be considered
Before the end of add/drop period in September	• Department to announce the results of supervisor matching to students via email.
Late November / early December	• Students to present his/her research project proposal.
Two weeks after the research proposal presentation	• Students to submit **ethics application**.
After presentation and ethics approval	• Students to work on his/her research project and write up the interdisciplinary theses.
23:59, 15th April	• **Interdisciplinary theses submission deadline**
Revision week	• **Poster Presentation**

The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology
Interdisciplinary Thesis in Psychology (PSYC4009)
Application Form

Notes:

(1)   Please read carefully the Overview before completing this application form.

(2)   The completed application form, together with a brief research proposal should be sent to **ugpsyc@hku.hk** before the end of course selection period in August.

(3)   Please be reminded to enroll the course PSYC4009FY in SIS before the end of add/drop period in September.

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Name: _____   University No.: _____

Degree: _____   Year of Study: _____

HKU Email: _____   Mobile No.: _____

Proposed title of the interdisciplinary thesis:

_____

_____

_____

Name of
Primary Supervisor: _____

Name of
Co-Supervisor: _____

Sub-field of
psychology: _____

Sub-field of
psychology: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

For office use only
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Approved by the Department   Date