

Rutgers University, Department of Psychology
Senior Honors Thesis

PROFESSOR

	Office Hours	Office	Phone	Email/Web
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TEXT (REQUIRED):

- Selected papers and articles.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The goal of this course is to help you to become proficient researchers. You will work on an independent research study within the Child Study Center at Rutgers, and you will be responsible for the experimental design, data collection, data coding and analyses, literature review, and presenting your results in both written and oral formats. In addition to gaining firsthand knowledge about infant and child learning and development, you will also acquire technical and practical skills that you can use in other avenues of research (critical thinking, oral and written presentations, collaboration, personal responsibility). In particular, at the Child Study Center we stress the following:

- Careful attention to detail
- Address your questions empirically
- Respect your students, participants, materials
- Strive for personal excellence

GENERAL LAB REQUIREMENTS:

The methods and tutorial courses provide a year-long research apprenticeship. You must maintain an A or B grade to continue this course in the following semester. Your grade will depend on the following:

- Pass Human Ss tutorial here: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>
- Attend & participate in weekly lab meetings
- Master hands-on procedures for data collections by end of first semester in lab
- You are required to recruit your own research participants (the number and age of participants will vary per honors thesis)
- Preparation of readings, talks, written material for lab meetings & formal presentations, including your honors thesis paper due at the end of the year
- Oral presentation of your work (depending on the state of the project, this may be in the form of a poster or talk at the end of the school year)
- Ability to describe and discuss all ongoing work in the lab
- Assist in end-of-semester lab clean
- Failure to complete any of these tasks could result in the loss of one or more letter grades, or not being invited back to the lab for future semesters.

LAB POLICIES

- **If you must miss an experimental session for which you have been assigned to participate, you must alert us in sufficient time to find a replacement. Failure to do so may result in losing a letter grade or failing the course. Arrive one half-hour prior to the data collection (allow extra time for set-up).** For emergencies the night before a data collection or the morning of a data collection, email and/or telephone the other researchers on the data collection.
- If you are unable to make your regular schedule hours on a given day, you are required to give notice at least one week prior. If you are taking vacation days, you are also required to give one week's notice.
- Allow sufficient time for set-up and clean-up for data collections. Wash & dry all toys and put them away after data collections. Don't leave toys on changing table/counter.
- Keep us updated about permanent and occasional changes in your schedules.
- **Never under any circumstances remove original data from the lab.** This includes all paperwork, videotapes, and coded data. Any original data outside the lab violates guidelines for subject confidentiality and if you were to lose data, we would have to run additional subjects. The lab is organized so that all lab documents and data are shared on a password protective server. You can access the data from any computer in the lab.
- **Be extremely careful about notating data.** Pay special attention to filling out cover sheets, returning altered files to LABSHARE (**any files that are left on other computers will be deleted**), putting computer files and hard copies in their appropriate folders, and notating the top of each spreadsheet and hard copy. Follow the protocols for set-up and procedures (if protocol is unclear, fix it).
- Put all supplies and equipment away when you are finished with them.
- Take your weekly jobs seriously and be responsible about **keeping the lab tidy and hygienic**. Throw away your trash. If you are the last one in the lab, make sure all lab doors are locked.

You should understand everything you do. If you don't understand a procedure, lab rule, analysis, concept, etc., ask someone. Please do not do things by rote without understanding the rationale.

HONORS THESIS TIMELINE:

You will be responsible for setting up and attending a weekly project meeting with either Dr. LoBue, or the graduate student responsible for mentoring your thesis project. This meeting is mandatory, and if for some reason you have to cancel your weekly meeting, you are responsible for giving your mentor 48 hours notice, and to reschedule the meeting for another day. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of your grade. At your first meeting, set specific dates for all of the milestones below:

Honors Thesis Schedule

FALL SEMESTER
Set up weekly meetings with your mentor to go over this syllabus and fill in due dates. <i>Due: (Week 1)</i>
FALL SEMESTER

<p>Ensure that all IRB requirements are met for your study and pass the Human Ss tutorial here: http://orsp.rutgers.edu/Humans/hscp.php.</p> <p><i>Due Date: (Week 2)</i></p>
<p>FALL SEMESTER</p> <p>Write a Set-up and Procedure Manual detailing every aspect of your study, so that anyone unfamiliar with your work can read it and easily master the procedure.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 3)</i></p>
<p>FALL SEMESTER</p> <p>Begin literature review of your chosen topic. Your mentor will assist you in making a reading list. You start reading 2-3 articles per week. After you read each article, you will be required to write a 1-paragraph summary of each that you will bring to your weekly meetings.</p> <p><i>Due: (Weeks 3-ongoing)</i></p>
<p>FALL SEMESTER</p> <p>Begin data collection on your project. This will involve weekly recruitment and scheduling of participants.</p> <p><i>Due: (Weeks 4-ongoing)</i></p>
<p>FALL SEMESTER</p> <p>Write a draft of the Methods Section of your Honors Thesis Paper. Use your weekly readings for models of how to write an appropriate methods section.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 6)</i></p>
<p>FALL SEMESTER</p> <p>After your mentor approves your Methods section, you will outline the Introduction of your Thesis Paper with your mentor</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 8)</i></p>
<p>FALL SEMESTER</p> <p>Write your Introduction based on the articles you have gathered throughout the semester, and the outline you created with your mentor.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 12)</i></p>
<p>SPRING SEMESTER</p> <p>Complete Data Collection.</p> <p><i>Due: (Weeks 1-ongoing)</i></p>
<p>SPRING SEMESTER</p> <p>Put data into an analyzable format. This might include coding behavioral data, entering survey data into an Excel sheet, or the like.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 4)</i></p>
<p>SPRING SEMESTER</p> <p>Meet with mentor to analyze your data. Build any graphs/tables that best represent your findings.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 5)</i></p>
<p>SPRING SEMESTER</p> <p>Write the Results section of your Honors Thesis Paper. Your mentor will help you outline it.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 6)</i></p>
<p>SPRING SEMESTER</p> <p>Outline your General Discussion with your mentor, much in the same way that you outlined your Introduction.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 8)</i></p>
<p>SPRING SEMESTER</p> <p>Finalize your Honors Thesis Paper. Have your mentor read it over one final time.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 9)</i></p>
<p>SPRING SEMESTER</p> <p>Turn your Honors Thesis Paper to Dr. LoBue for grading.</p> <p><i>Due: (Week 10)</i></p>

SPRING SEMESTER

Ask a second faculty member to sign off on your final paper.

Due: (Week 11)

SPRING SEMESTER

Present your results at the year's final lab meeting, and at the department Honors Presentations.

EVALUTION:

Your grade will be determined based on two important criteria.

Graduate Mentor Evaluation (75%): Your graduate student mentor is responsible for assigning you a grade based on whether you met all of the deadlines above, and whether you followed all of the Child Study Center requirements. Failure to meet any of these guidelines will result in a decrease in your final grade.

Final Paper (25%): Your grade will also be determined by the quality of your final paper. Dr. LoBue will assign your paper a grade when you hand it in during the second semester of your honors thesis. She will not receive any feedback from your graduate mentor, and she will not have seen your paper before you turn it in. However, you will have had the opportunity to meet and receive feedback from your graduate mentor throughout the honors thesis project, so take advantage of the fact that they are willing to provide you with extensive feedback before you hand in your final paper.

IMPORTANT LAB INFORMATION:

The lab website is located at <http://childstudycenter.rutgers.edu/Home.html>

The email address and calendar are located at www.gmail.com

SECURITY:

Lab doors should be locked at all times when you are not in the lab in sight of the door. You must protect yourself and your belongings from intruders and the lab equipment from theft. If you share the door code with anyone who is not a member of the lab, we'll have to recode all of the doors.

LAB MEETINGS:

We will meet each week as a group to make plans for the following week, schedule data collections (bring your schedule books to each meeting!), evaluate weekly progress, learn procedures, and discuss presentations or readings. Lab meetings and readings are mandatory. You will present the progress of your weekly project meeting.

DATA COLLECTION ATTIRE:

During data collections, you should dress in clean, neat clothes. Wash your hands after you enter the waiting room with the parents. Wash your hands immediately after you change infants' diapers. Wash your hands immediately after the baby/child leaves the lab. Keep your fingernails clipped to the skin so that you don't scratch the babies. Remove rings on your fingers that stick up, dangling jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, earrings), & all rings not in your ears (tongue rings, eyebrow rings, nose rings). Wear washable shirts that do not gap at the neck & skirts that cover your legs when you sit on

the floor. Pin your hair back. Carry parents' belongings, not their babies going in and out of lab/building.

PROFESSIONALISM:

This is a professional lab. You are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times while you are in the lab, in your interactions with anyone associated with the lab, and if you are representing the lab in a professional setting such as a data collection, seminar or conference. During data collections, do not answer personal questions from parents and do not ask personal questions of parents. Do not comment about parents' behaviors.

COLLABORATION:

There are no projects that can function without the help of many researchers, for some of whom it is not their primary project. As a lab member, you are involved in some way with all lab projects. You should be as careful, meticulous, and responsible with secondary projects as with your primary project. Please use the opportunity to discuss and think about secondary projects as a way to expand your knowledge and further your own work. What you learn in helping others will serve you and your issues.

AUTHORSHIP:

When possible, students and staff will have the opportunity to submit ongoing work to professional conferences. If you would like to participate, names will be listed by order of contribution (conceptual) or alphabetically. Students/staff who make a substantial conceptual contribution to projects will also have the opportunity to be named as authors on the journal articles. Authors are responsible for preparing the manuscripts and presentations, revising them after review, and reading page-proofs. Additional information about the lab's authorship guidelines can be found in a word document in LABSHARE called "Authorship Guidelines."