PSYC 495
Honours Thesis
Sem 01, W, 4:15–6:45pm, L-PY 244
Lab 51, W, 6:50–8:50pm
Concordia University, Montréal
Fall-Winter 2019–2020

Dr. Rex B Kline
Psychology, L-PY 151.06
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Office hours, Fall, W, 1–3pm;
Winter, W, 11am–1pm
TA, Kristina Coulter,
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Undergraduate Calendar
6 credits
Prerequisite: PSYC 311, 316

Open to final-year honours students with permission of the Department. This course requires the student to propose and conduct a study, and submit a thesis written according to the APA format. Students are also required to give an oral presentation in class on their proposal and on their final thesis. The work is supervised by a faculty member selected by the student, typically from within the Psychology Department.

Note: Students who have received credit for PSYC 430 may not take this course for credit.

http://www.concordia.ca/academics/undergraduate/calendar/current/sec31/31-250.html

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About Our Section

Objectives

This seminar is associated with the research thesis carried out by students enrolled in the Psychology Honours program. Course readings and activities support the conduct of the thesis through the development of skills about (1) the accurate conceptualization of research aims, analysis, and design; and (2) clear oral presentation and writing skills. Recent developments in statistics reform and inference in behavioral science research are also considered.

Articles or Chapters

All articles or chapters on the reading list are available through the Library’s Course Reserves site at https://reserves.concordia.ca

Fall


Winter


**Videos or Web Sites**

Sources for videos or web sites on the reading list are listed next:


**Communication Tasks**

There are a total of four communication tasks (CT) each intended to help students build project comprehension and convey its rationale to a general science audience. Their due dates are listed in the course schedule.

**CT1. 30-second summary.** After reading Frank (1986), present a 30-second summary of thesis rationale, methods, and hypotheses. The key is to mention only the very most essential things about your project. You can read the summary.

**CT2. Summary by 3s + 10 slides.** Write a three-sentence summary of essential take-home messages about your thesis. Address the overall research aim or purpose in this summary. Next, write three sentences for each of the major parts for the fall term presentation, introduction, methods, and expected results. Finally, generate drafts of no more than 10 slides for the introduction only.

**CT3. Proposal outline.** Write a draft of the first paragraph of your introduction in which the essential study aim is stated. Outline the rest of the introduction except the last paragraph; write a draft of the closing paragraph. Include a reference list with at five entries.
CT4. **Hypothesis–analysis match.** Outline the correspondence between your analyses and hypotheses; that is, explain the connection between each substantive analysis and the corresponding research question.

### Schedule and Deadlines

Items due at 4:15pm unless otherwise indicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, readings, activities, and due dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 4, 2019</td>
<td>Course begins. Welcome &amp; overview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frank (1986)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 11</td>
<td><strong>Joint PSYC 485/495 lab safety meeting (RF 110).</strong> Required attendance. No class nor lab meeting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bester (1979)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 18</td>
<td><strong>CT1 due.</strong> Thesis requirements, presenter schedule.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lindberg (2015)</td>
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<td>McMillan (2009)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reynolds (2016a, 2016b, 2016c)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 25</td>
<td>Avoiding PowerPointlessness.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kline (2020b)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td><strong>CT2 due.</strong> What’s wrong with psychology research?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kline (2020a)</td>
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<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Writing clearly.</td>
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<td>Elefteriades (2002)</td>
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<td>Lang (2011)</td>
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<td>Oct 16</td>
<td><strong>Ethics submission due.</strong> Describing measures and score precision.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Borsboom &amp; Molenaar (2015)</td>
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<td>Oct 23</td>
<td><strong>CT3 due.</strong> Open forum, lab practice session.</td>
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<td>Oct 30</td>
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<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Presentations and lab practice sessions.</td>
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<td>Nov 13</td>
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<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Presentations, no lab.</td>
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<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>No class nor lab meeting.</td>
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<td>Dec 2</td>
<td><strong>Thesis proposal due, 12:00pm.</strong></td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, readings, activities, and due dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 8, 2020</td>
<td>Course resumes. Orientation and contingencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td><strong>Joint PSYC 485/495 effect size lecture (RF 130).</strong> No lab meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td><strong>CT4 due.</strong> Open topic, no lab.</td>
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<td>Feb 19</td>
<td><strong>No class nor lab meeting.</strong></td>
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<td>Feb 26</td>
<td><strong>No class nor lab meeting.</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>No class, lab practice session, 4:15pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td><strong>Presentations and lab practice sessions.</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 18</td>
<td><strong>Presentations, no lab.</strong></td>
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<td>Mar 25</td>
<td><strong>Presentations, no lab.</strong></td>
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<td>Apr 1</td>
<td><strong>Thesis due.</strong> Closing ceremony.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 8</td>
<td><strong>Thesis due.</strong> Closing ceremony.</td>
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Thesis and Related Requirements

Student and Faculty Research Agreement
Thesis students and their supervisors are to complete and sign the Undergraduate Student and Faculty Research Agreement at

[http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/agree.pdf](http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/agree.pdf)

The Agreement specifies responsibilities, tasks, and other activities related to student thesis projects. The signed agreement will be submitted to the instructor of the thesis course.

Thesis Manual
Final versions of the theses submitted at the end of the winter semester for all sections of PSYC 485 and PSYC 495 must respect the requirements outlined in the document listed next:


Examples of two theses, the first for a human study and the second for an animal study, by, respectively, Averil Parker and Esthelle Ewusi-Boisvert, can be downloaded from


Proposal
The written thesis proposal is submitted at the end of the fall semester. The proposal should include a brief literature review; an outline of the rationale and hypotheses for your study; a Method section with information about participants, procedures, and analyses; and a summary of possible outcomes and implications. No Abstract is required.

The proposal is limited to 10 pages excluding the title page and the list of references all in 2.0 line spacing, 12-point Times Roman font (or its equivalent), and 1” margins on standard-size paper. Your supervisor is asked to sign a form stating that he or she had sufficient time to review the proposal before the submission deadline:

[http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/proposal.pdf](http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/proposal.pdf)

An example of a thesis proposal by Averil Parker is available at

Presentations

Each student will give two presentations about the thesis. The fall semester presentation deals with the rationale, background, and proposed methods for the project, and the reporting of the results is emphasized in the winter term presentation.

Presentations are limited to 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions and discussion. You should distribute an accompanying handout that includes a bibliography. The handout for the fall term is limited to 2 pages (or 1 double-sided page), and the version for the winter semester is limited to 4 pages (or 2 double-sided pages), both on standard-size paper (8½ × 11”). Presentations are evaluated in three areas:

- Handout (completeness, layout, usefulness of bibliography)
- Presentation of substantive issues (main points, appropriate level of detail, clarity)
- Presentation style (preparation, organization, delivery)

Examples of fall and winter semester presentation slides by Joanne Ramil are listed next:

http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/slides1f.pdf
http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/slides1w.pdf

Listed next are examples of fall and winter presentation handouts by Averil Parker:

http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/handout1f.pdf
http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/handout1w.pdf

Ethics Certification

Students are required to submit three documents about ethics certification for their thesis projects:

1. **Department of Psychology Ethics Protocol Form.** Students who are conducting human studies must complete and submit the Concordia Psychology Human Ethics Form:

   http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/human.doc

   Students working on animal studies must complete and submit the Animal Utilization Ethics Protocol Form—Undergraduate:

   http://psychology.concordia.ca/fac/kline/495/animal.doc

   The appropriate ethics protocol form must be signed by the thesis supervisor.

2. **Certificate for completion of ethics-related training.** Students who carry out animal research projects must submit a certificate which states that he or she has taken Concordia’s Seminar on Animal Care.
Students who work on human studies must complete the Tri-Council Policy Statement Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE) tutorial devised by the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (PRE) at

http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/index/

Students who have already completed Module 1 from the online ethics course by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) before September 1, 2018, can submit their certificate in place of taking the CORE online tutorial.

3. Ethical certification from the University or external setting (for projects where data are collected outside of Concordia). Submit a copy of the ethics certificate issued to your supervisor for the larger research program under which a student thesis project is conducted. At Concordia, ethics certificates for human studies are issued by the University Human Research Ethics Committee, and certificates for animal studies are issued by the Concordia Animal Ethics Committee. The certificate must cover the period of thesis data collection.

Also review the appropriate documents about research ethics listed next:

Concordia University Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research
http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/common/docs/policies/official-policies/VPRGS-12.pdf

TCPS Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

Concordia University Policy on the Ethical Use of Animals in Research and Teaching

Canadian Council on Animal Care Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals

Evaluation

Your course grade is based on the quality of your thesis submitted at the end of the semester and also on course-related activities; that is, your grade for PSYC 495 reflects more than just the thesis. Specifically, your supervisor will evaluate your written thesis and also participation in your lab group. My own evaluation will reflect thesis quality and that of other course-related work, including the presentations, proposal, and learning activities. Marks from your thesis supervisor and myself will be considered at the end of the academic year in deciding on your grade for the whole course.

Attendance in both class and laboratory is mandatory. Missing class to collect data is not an acceptable excuse. A voluntary Psychology Undergraduate Research Exposition (PURE) at the end of the winter semester gives thesis students the chance to present their findings in a poster session or in an oral presentation.