

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.74-7

## MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Subject FACULTY OF ARTS - DEPARTMENT OF  
PSYCHOLOGY - CHANGE IN REQUIREMENTS  
AND NEW COURSE PROPOSAL - PSYCHOLOGY  
499-10 - HONORS THESIS

Date DECEMBER 27, 1973

MOTION 1: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74-7, the new course proposal for Psychology 499-10 - Honors Thesis."

MOTION 2: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74-7, change in requirements for Honors in Psychology

From: '.... To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the last four levels.'

To: '.... To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the upper levels. No more than eight of these credit hours may be directed studies courses in Psychology.'"

MOTION 3: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.74-7, the addition of a section in Directed Studies as follows: 'Students taking the Majors or Honors in Psychology may count no more than 8 credit hours of Directed Studies towards the

required number of upper division Psychology credits."

(Note: If Senate does not approve Psychology 499-10 for the above, substitute the following:

"Students majoring in Psychology may count no more than 8 credit hours of Directed Studies towards upper division required credits in Psychology. Students taking Honors in Psychology may count no more than 11 credit hours of Directed Studies towards upper division required credits in Psychology.")

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Subject FACULTY OF ARTS - DEPARTMENT OF  
PSYCHOLOGY - CHANGES IN REQUIREMENTS  
AND NEW COURSE PROPOSAL - PSYCHOLOGY  
499-10 HONORS THESIS

Date DECEMBER 27, 1973

Following referral back from Senate for further consideration of proposals by the Department of Psychology, and on receipt of additional explanation from that Department, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies approved the following and recommends approval to Senate:

1. "That SCUS approve the new course proposal for Psychology 499-10 - Honors Thesis."
2. "That SCUS approve change in requirements for Honors in Psychology

From: '.... To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the last four levels.'

To: '.... To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the upper levels. No more than eight of these credit hours may be directed studies courses in Psychology.'

3. "That SCUS approve the addition of a section in Directed Studies as follows: 'Students taking the Majors or Honors in Psychology may count no more than 8 credit hours of Directed Studies towards the required number of upper division Psychology credits.'"

(Note: If SCUS does not approve Psychology 499-10 for the above substitute the following:

"Students majoring in Psychology may count no more than 8 credit hours of Directed Studies towards upper division required credits in Psychology. Students taking Honors in Psychology may count no more than 11 credit hours of Directed Studies towards upper division required credits in Psychology.")

In addition to the material considered at SCUS's first discussion of the Psychology Department's submission, the Committee had been provided with a memorandum from the Chairman of the Department's Undergraduate Studies Committee, included as SCUS 73-54. A majority of the Committee

felt that this paper, in addition to the comments made by Dr. Koopman at the meeting, answered their own and Senate's objections to the original submission.

Most discussion centered on two questions, that of the desirability of making the honors thesis mandatory, and that of the staffing of honors readings courses. In indicating that the honors thesis was intended to be a piece of work which would be both more extensive and more rigorous than one emerging from a directed studies course, Dr. Koopman noted that the Department had felt that, while such work was usually desirable, it was not inevitably so, and that this had persuaded the Department not to make it compulsory. On the second question, concern was expressed about the availability of faculty to supervise honors theses, but the Committee was assured that the Department would not allow honors students to begin work on their theses unless supervision was available and that such undergraduate teaching would take precedence over work with graduate students.

  
I. Mugridge

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

SCUS.73-

## MEMORANDUM

|  |  |
|--|--|
| H. M. Evans                            | From Dr. R. F. Koopman                 |
| Registrar and Secretary of Senate      | Chairman, Psych. Undergrad Studies Com |
| Subject Psychology Calendar Submission | Date 14 Dec 73                         |

The Psychology Department wishes to maintain its original submission, and has requested that I provide SCUS with a more detailed rationale for our proposals. The attached material is therefore provided to assist that committee in its deliberations.

There has been consistent pressure from students over the past several years for the department to offer an honours thesis. The number of students making this request has not been large, perhaps only two or three a semester, but they have been what we feel are our better students. What they have asked for is the opportunity to do, and receive official recognition for, a paper which is not "just another course paper", but something which is, and is expected to be, qualitatively better; something which could justifiably be called a "thesis", which would differ from a graduate thesis not so much in quality as in extensiveness.

To this end we have structured our Honours Thesis proposal by using the graduate thesis as a model. Departures from standard procedures for graduate theses have been made only where, in our estimation, the need for procedural efficiency outweighed any probable loss in ~~rigour~~ rigour. In particular, the retention of the thesis defense represents a conscious, deliberate attempt both to assure the quality of the product and to introduce the student to the standard academic practice of presenting one's ideas publicly for critical appraisal by those in the field.

The question of the amount of credit which such a thesis deserves and the number of semesters over which the credit should be distributed is recognized as not having a unique "best" answer, in the sense that no solution is perfect; every different amount and distribution of credit has its drawbacks. Were it not for the thorniness of this problem, a recommendation for an Honours Thesis would have come forward at least a year sooner, and possibly even earlier still. This is a judgment call. We think 10 hours is a reasonable amount of credit, and we think that this credit is most appropriately received in one semester under one course number. This is not to say that we expect the entire production, from initial conception to oral defense, to be accomplished within a single semester. It will be noted that we have specified that the student must find himself a committee and get the topic approved in the semester prior to that in which registration for the thesis is contemplated. It is expected that in most cases the thesis topic will be an outgrowth of work done in and for one of the 400-level seminars. (Many of our current requests for Directed Studies come about in just this way.) The important point is that the student will not be going in cold, and that he will have the guidance of at least two faculty members

who are specifically charged with, among other things, making sure that he does not get in over his head. It is acknowledged that this will require the exercise of a certain amount of judgment on the part of the committee, since any question can be made manageable by reducing it to triviality, and that errors in such judgments are bound to occur sooner or later. However, it is our present judgment that no reasonable procedure exists which is proof against such errors, and that the proposed system is the best of an imperfect lot.

The question of the number of credit hours assigned to the thesis is subject to such the same type of criticism: it is the responsibility of the committee to ensure that the amount and nature of the work done is commensurate with the credit received. Our answer is, again, that this is a matter of judgment, and that the need to make the same judgments would be present no matter how many credit hours were given for the thesis.

In proposing a 10-credit thesis, we are really saying two things: 1) that we would like to see 10 credits worth of thesis in our honours program; and 2) that the product of 10 credits worth of work can merit the title "thesis". With regard to the second statement, it is clear that, other things being equal, the more credit which is assignable, the less reluctance there should be to call the finished product a thesis. It is our judgment that a thesis worthy of the name can be produced for 10 credits, and that anything representing less than 3 credits worth of work would be highly suspect. The question then reduces to "Why a 10-credit thesis? Why not a 12- or 15- or even 18-credit thesis?" The answer to this question will become apparent in the discussion of our proposal to limit the number of hours of Directed Studies credit which may be applied toward the number of upper-division credit hours in Psychology which are required for the degree.

One aspect of the field of psychology which very few undergraduates fully appreciate is that it is extremely broad, containing areas and sub-areas that range from philosophy to molecular biochemistry. We take the position that a student who graduates with a major in psychology should be acquainted with advanced work in a number of areas within psychology, and this holds a fortiori for the student with an honours degree. In particular, it is deemed essential that undergraduates not overspecialize at the expense of broad exposure to the field.

Our current program is minimally structured at the upper levels. For majors and honours students alike, there is only one explicitly-required course (401-5 History & Systems). In addition, honours students are required to obtain credit in at least 2 of the 11 available upper-level seminars, each of which carries 5 credits. The choice of which 2 is up to the student.

There are also in the calendar 6 Directed Studies courses, 3 at 3 credits each and 3 at 5 credits each, totalling 24 credits. If a major student took all the available Directed Studies courses, plus the required 401, he then would technically be able to satisfy the current degree requirements by taking only a single upper-division course. (Actually he would need only 1 credit, but we have no 1-credit courses.) The implementation of the proposed restriction of 8 hours of Directed Studies credit would assure that the student obtain at least 17 credits of regular upper-division coursework. The minimum number of such courses which could generate these credits is 4: 410, 411, and any 3xy/4xy sequence. Since most students do not elect 410 and 411, 5 courses would ordinarily be required: two 3xy/4xy sequences, plus any 300-level course, or one 3xy/4xy sequence plus any three 300-level courses. We do not consider the requirement that the student take 5 unspecified courses, which could be in as few as 3 areas, as unduly restricting his freedom of choice. Instead, we see it as constituting a guarantee that he is exposed to a minimal sampling of the broad field that psychology is.

Implicit in this discussion is the assumption that the content of Directed Studies courses is a specialized investigation of sub-areas within areas which are covered in more general terms by our regular courses, as opposed to the investigation of major areas which are not covered by any of the regular courses. An examination of the descriptions of Directed Studies courses given over the past several semesters supports this assumption.

It must be remembered that the department now has the authority to waive, in special cases, requirements such as the proposed restriction. Without making any commitment which can not be made at this point, it can be said that we would be favourably biased towards granting a waiver of this regulation in those cases where the student could demonstrate that any Directed Studies course taken in excess of the normal maximum was a reasonably broad investigation of an area not covered by one of our regular courses.

It is important to note here that we are not removing any Directed Studies courses from the calendar. It will still be possible for a student to take 24 credits of Directed Studies if he so desires. All we are saying is that only 8 of those credits will be countable toward the required number of upper-division credits.

The situation with respect to honours students is much the same, but is complicated somewhat by the presence of the Honours Thesis, which is certainly directed study but which is not included in the term Directed Studies. Assuming that the Honours Thesis proposal is accepted, and under the present laissez faire policy regarding Directed Studies, it is possible for a student to obtain an honours degree with only 11 credits of regular upper-division coursework in addition to the 1 required course. Since two 400-level seminars are required, and since all the 400-level seminars have corresponding 300-level prerequisites, this means that 4 courses would be sufficient to satisfy the requirements. This is clearly unsatisfactory. Implementation of the proposed restriction would raise the 11 hours to 27 hours. There are several unlikely configurations of 6 courses which could satisfy this requirement; for most students, 7 courses would be necessary. These 7 courses would imply exposure to a minimum of 3 to 4 areas. This we see as being an absolute lower bound for someone who claims to be an honours student.

In comparing the extent to which majors and honours students are being restricted, it is not proper to look at the figure of 8 credits which applies to both groups and to conclude that, since honours students require 50 credits whereas majors require only 30 credits, the honours students are being disproportionately restricted. The proper index to use is the ratio of the minimum number of regular-course-offering credits over the total required credits. For majors this is  $17/30 = .57$ ; for honours students it is  $27/50 = .54$ . The difference is trivial, and parity is achieved.

The answer to the earlier question "Why a 10-credit thesis?" should now be obvious. Increasing the number of thesis credits could only be done at the expense of either Directed Studies or regular course credits. Since it would be hard to justify disallowing credits toward an honours degree which are countable for a major, the number of allowable Directed Studies credits for honours students

can not be reduced below the number which would be acceptable for a major. On the other hand, less than 27 credits of regular course work in an honours degree is unacceptable for reasons outlined above.

One more point remains to be cleared up. We have made the thesis optional. However, we have not increased the number of allowable Directed Studies credits for those honours students who elect not to do a thesis. Aside from the obvious problem of possibly having to disallow credit simply because a student decides at some point that he wants to do a thesis, we want to encourage, without forcing, honours students to do the thesis. Although the work involved in two 5-credit Directed Studies courses is equal to the work involved in a 10-credit thesis, we feel that the additional rigour required by the thesis will be of far more value, both momentary and lasting, than would the experience in two ordinary Directed Studies. We would rather see the honours student who chooses not to delve deeply and rigorously into some area broaden his knowledge of the field.

S.73-142

# SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

## MEMORANDUM

|   |   |
|---|---|
| To <u>SENATE</u>  | From <u>SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES</u> |
| Subject <u>FACULTY OF ARTS - DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY - CHANGES IN REQUIREMENTS AND NEW COURSE PROPOSAL - PSYC 499-10 - HONORS THESIS</u> | Date <u>NOVEMBER 15, 1973</u>                         |

MOTION 1: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-142, the new course proposal for PSYC 499-10 - Honors Thesis."

*Referred to ACU.S.*

MOTION 2: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-142, changes in requirements for a major

*Approved*

From: '....For a major at least 30 credits in upper division Psychology courses must be taken during the last 4 levels.'

To: '....For a major at least 30 credits in upper division Psychology courses, including no more than 8 credits in directed studies, must be taken during the upper levels.'

*hours*

MOTION 3: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-142, change in requirements for Honors in Psychology

*Referred to ACU.S.*

From: '....To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the last four levels.'

To: '....To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the upper levels. No more than eight of these courses may be directed studies courses in Psychology.'

*Credit hours*

MOTION 4: "That Senate approve as set forth in S.73-142, the addition of *Referred to the*  
a section in Directed Studies as follows:

'Students taking the Major or Honors in Psychology may count no more than 8 <sup>credit</sup> hours of Directed Studies towards the required number of upper division Psychology credits.'

(Note: If Senate does not approve Psychology 499-10 for the above, substitute the following:

'Students majoring in Psychology may count no more than 8 <sup>credit</sup> hours of Directed Studies towards upper division required credits in Psychology. Students taking Honors in Psychology may count no more than 11 <sup>credit</sup> hours of Directed Studies towards upper division required credits in Psychology.'

MOTION 5: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-142, a correction in *Approved*  
course requirements for honors in Psychology

From: 'Specific courses in Psychology must include 101-3, 201-3, 401-5  
....'

To: 'Specific courses in Psychology must include 101-3, 201-3, 210-3,  
401-5 ...'

MOTION 6: "That Senate approve, as set forth in S.73-142, for PSYC 106-3 *Approved*  
the change in description

From: 'Relates contemporary knowledge from psychology to current social problems. The course provides relevant information from studies pertaining to problems of attitude development, prejudice, race relations, and cultural differences.'

To: 'Relates contemporary knowledge from psychology to current social problems. The course provides relevant information from studies pertaining to problems such as attitude development, prejudice, race relations, cultural differences, behavior technology, and family pathology.'

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.73-142

MEMORANDUM

To SENATE

From SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

Subject FACULTY OF ARTS - DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY - CHANGES IN REQUIREMENTS, NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Date NOVEMBER 14, 1973.

On the recommendation of the Faculty of Arts, the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies has approved changes, - as set forth in SCUS 73-37VIII - for the Department of Psychology in specifying the use of directed studies courses in fulfilling requirements for a major or honors, in a course description, and a new course proposal, and recommends approval to Senate.

*I. Mugridge*

I. Mugridge

HME:jb

as approved Nov. 6, 1973

PSYCHOLOGY

- p. 169 Course Requirements for a Major
- Change in Requirements: From "For a major at least 30 credits in upper division Psychology courses must be taken during the last 4 levels."
- to "For a major at least 30 credits in upper division Psychology courses, including no more than 8 credits in directed studies, must be taken during the upper levels".
- p. 169 Course Requirements for Honors in Psychology
- Change in Requirements: From "To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the last four levels".
- to "To qualify for the Honors degree in Psychology the student must have completed 50 credits in upper division Psychology or approved related courses during the upper levels. No more than eight ~~hours~~ of these may be directed studies courses in Psychology".
- p. 176 New Section
- Add Directed Studies
- "Students majoring in Psychology may count no more than eight hours of Directed Studies toward upper division required credits in Psychology. Students taking Honors in Psychology may count no more than eleven hours of Directed Studies toward upper division required credits in Psychology".
- Note: In the above form if Senate does not approve addition of Psychology 499-10.
- "Students taking Majors or Honors in Psychology may count no more than eight hours of Directed Studies towards the required number of upper division Psychology credits."
- Note: In the above form if Senate approves Psychology 499-10.
- Rationale:
- Because Psychology is an increasingly diversified discipline, it is essential that undergraduates not overspecialize at the expense of a broad exposure to the field. Eight hours of directed studies allow the student a reasonable amount of specialized reading and research, while avoiding the danger of overspecialization. In the case of honors students, where the number of hours taken is greater and more specialization is appropriate, the department wishes to introduce the student to the more

PSYCHOLOGY (cont.)

disciplined approach of a formal thesis project.

Note: Eight hours if senate approves the addition of Psychology 499-10. If not, eleven.

- p. 169 Course Requirements for Honors in Psychology      Calendar Omission.  
"Specific courses in Psychology must include 101-3, 201-3, 401-5 . . . "  
should read "Specific courses in Psychology must include 101-3, 201-3, 210-3, 401-5 . . . "
- p. 171 Psychology 106-3      Change in Description: From "Relates contemporary knowledge from psychology to current social problems. The course provides relevant information from studies pertaining to problems of attitude development, prejudice, race relations, and cultural differences."  
to "Relates contemporary knowledge from psychology to current social problems. The course provides relevant information from studies pertaining to problems such as attitude development, prejudice, race relations, cultural differences, behavior technology, and family pathology."
- p. 177 New Course      Add: Psychology 499-10. Honors Thesis.  
The student will plan and conduct an original research project. A written thesis will be submitted and orally defended.  
Prerequisite: Open by special arrangement only to Psychology Honors students who have completed at least 90 credits of university work, with at least 20 credits in upper-division Psychology courses. For detailed information, contact the Chairman of the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

See Appendix A.

FACULTY OF ARTS

September 1973

NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

1. CALENDAR INFORMATION

Department: PSYCHOLOGY Course Number: 499-10 Title: Honors Thesis  
Sub-title or Description: The student will plan and conduct an original research project. A written thesis will be submitted and orally defended.

Credit Hours: 10 Vector Description: NONE

Pre-requisite(s):

Open by special arrangement only to Psychology Honors students who have completed at least 90 credits of university work, with at least 20 credits in upper-division Psychology courses. For detailed information, contact the

2. ENROLMENT AND SCHEDULING chairman of the Undergraduate Studies Committee

Estimated Enrolment: 3/semester *Psychology*

Semester Offered (e.g. yearly, every Spring; twice yearly, Fall and Spring):

every semester

When will course first be offered?

74-3

3. JUSTIFICATION

A. What is the detailed description of the course including differentiation from lower level courses, from similar courses in the same department, and from courses in other departments in the University?

Course will provide intensive research training to a few honors students. Students will be expected to complete and write up a project of real scientific value.

There is no similar course in the Psychology Dept. at S.F.U. Undergraduate thesis programmes do exist at other universities.

B. What is the range of topics that may be dealt with in the course?

Any psychological topic is suitable which can be investigated in a relatively short period and which is consonant with the ethical code of the Canadian Psychological Association.

- C. How does this course fit the goals of the department?

This course provides an opportunity for honors students to receive genuine research experience with supervision by a committee of critical scholars.

- D. How does this course affect degree requirements?

Addition of the course will not affect degree requirements.

- E. What are the calendar changes necessary to reflect the addition of this course?

Course description

- F. What course, if any, is being dropped from the calendar if this course is approved?

None

- G. What is the nature of student demand for this course?

There has been constant pressure, over the years, from a small number of students, for this kind of addition to the honours programme.

- H. Other reasons for introducing the course.

3.

4. BUDGETARY AND SPACE FACTORS

A. Which faculty will be available to teach this course?

The entire faculty may be involved.

B. What are the special space and/or equipment requirements for this course?

There will be small equipment expenditures and space allocations necessary for some projects.

C. Any other budgetary implications of mounting this course:

No

Approval:

Curriculum Committee:

Dean of Faculty:

Senate Undergraduate  
Studies Committee:

Senate:

Psych 499-10 Honours Thesis  
Information Sheet

General Eligibility

In exceptional circumstances only, the Undergraduate Studies Committee may waive the prerequisite of 90 credits with at least 20 upper-division Psychology credits.

Thesis Committee

Prior to the semester in which the student intends to register in 499, he must obtain the consent of a member of the department who will act as the thesis supervisor and chairman of the thesis committee. Together, they will select and obtain the consent of at least one other member of the department to act as members of the thesis committee. (Committee members may be from other than the Psychology Department. However, at least one member, in addition to the supervisor, must be from the Psychology Department.) The student, in consultation with his committee, will select a thesis topic. (It is the responsibility of the committee, inter alia, to ensure the propriety of the topic, its commensurability with both the student's background and available resources, and that its scope is such that the thesis may reasonably be expected to be completed in one semester.) When a topic has been agreed upon, the supervisor will submit the student's name, the composition of the committee, and the topic to the Undergraduate Studies Committee for approval. Such approval must be obtained before the student may register in 499. Any subsequent changes in the composition of the thesis committee must be approved by the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Grading Procedure

The thesis will be assigned a grade according to current University regulations regarding undergraduate grading. The written thesis will be submitted to the supervisor on or before the final day of classes for the semester. On or before the final day of the examination period, the student will orally defend the thesis before the committee. The thesis defense will be open for observation and questioning by faculty, and for observation by all members of the University community. The supervisor, in consultation with the committee, will assign a grade based on the written thesis and its defense.