

This document specifies the types of reports considered acceptable for fulfilling the requirements of 5000-level Independent Research or Fieldwork courses (PSYC 5001 through PSYC 5004; PSYC 5011 through PSYC 5014). **Note that for students planning to graduate in Spring 2016 and thereafter, the application to graduate with Departmental Honors in Psychology will require the completion of at least TWO 5000 or 5010 series courses plus a written thesis.** Students are therefore strongly recommended to complete a literature review or research proposal (options 1 or 2 below) during their first 5000 or 5010 level course, and to then subsequently incorporate that material (i.e., the background literature and/or proposed methodology) into the final thesis report (option 3 below), which must be submitted upon completion of their second 5000 or 5010 level course the following semester.

- 1) A paper consisting of a thorough review and discussion of the research on a particular topic. The paper should NOT simply present a “catalog-like” summary of one study after another. Rather, the paper should consist of a systematic integrative synthesis of the literature with one or more of the following features: a) provides new and interesting connections or insights, b) evaluates a controversy in the field by considering the evidence for or against a particular theory or claim(s) that result in an informed conclusion, or c) makes a theoretical argument and/or presents a new theoretical model to account for a particular set of research findings.
- 2) A proposal to conduct a potential research study. This type of paper must include: a) a literature review to provide sufficient background and justification for conducting the study, b) specific hypothesis(es), c) a thorough explanation of the design and methodology, including a plan for analyzing the data, d) a description of the potential hypothetical results, and d) a conclusion about what these results would imply or mean, why they would be important, and how they could be followed up with future research, as well as anticipated study limitations.
- 3) An APA-style report of a completed (or partially completed) research project consisting of the following sections: an Introduction providing sufficient background and rationale for the study and hypothesis(es); Methods that thoroughly describe the design, participants, equipment, materials, tasks and procedure of the study; Results that justify and explain the statistical analyses that were conducted and their outcomes; and a Discussion that interprets the results, addresses implications of the results, identifies study limitations, relates the findings to the broader theoretical framework and issues raised in the Introduction, and poses directions for future research. Please note that acceptable projects do not necessarily need to involve human or animal participants; rather, **studies consisting of meta-analytic, computer simulation or other computational methods are also acceptable.**