

**Faculty/Student Handbook for Graduate
Academic and Thesis Advising
Department of Psychological Science**



2022-2023 Academic Year

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Academic and Thesis Advising**

Introduction

The Department of Psychological Science offers the Master of Arts in Psychology, with specializations in Community Psychology, Health Psychology, and General Psychology. To be accepted into any specialization, students' applications are first evaluated and approved for admission through the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee. The applications are then sent to the Graduate School who sends letters to the students of acceptance or rejection.

Every student who is accepted into our M.A. program is enrolled in one of these three specializations. All students have both an Academic Graduate Advisor and a Thesis Advisor. The duties of an academic graduate advisor differ from those of a thesis /capstone advisor.

What Does the Department Graduate Committee Do?

The Department Graduate Committee consists of faculty who are elected from the Department of Psychological Science. The committee meets monthly (or when needed) to discuss all aspects of the graduate program that need to be dealt with (e.g. programmatic changes, new courses, certificate programs, admissions, etc.)

In relation to graduate admissions, the committee performs routine tasks

- 1) review applications from applicants, accept or reject the applicants in each specialization, and send decisions to graduate school
- 2) assign academic advisors based on interest, availability and willingness of advisors

Academic advisors and students receive a notice from the graduate school as to which academic advisor is assigned to which student.

Academic Advisors and Thesis/Capstone Advisors

Students need to understand that an academic advisor differs from a thesis /capstone advisor. They are not necessarily one and the same person but could be the same person if the student asks the academic advisor to also be a thesis advisor and the academic advisor agrees. The graduate academic advisor and the thesis/capstone advisor play different roles and perform different duties.

Academic Graduate Advisor

What do Academic Graduate Advisors Do? In general, a **graduate advisor** acts as the newly enrolled student's first source of academic information. The academic advisor and the advisee work together to create the students *planned program of study*. The advisor helps the advisee to choose the courses they will take to complete their degree over next 4 semesters. A set of core courses is required of all M.A. students and specific core courses for each specialization. After the required courses are placed on the degree plan, students have a choice of electives appropriate to their specialization.

How Are Graduate Advisees Assigned to Advisors? Members of the Departmental Graduate Committee assign a graduate student to an advisor. Faculty from the department of psychological science volunteer to serve as graduate advisors. If faculty want to volunteer to work with graduate students, they should contact and inform the Chair of the Graduate Committee. The members of the Graduate Committee try to match the interests of the faculty and the student if possible. The form stating which advisor has been assigned to a student is sent to the graduate school and both the student and the faculty advisor receive a notice from the Graduate School identifying which faculty member has been assigned as an academic advisor to the student.

Once the advisor and advisee know who each other are, the first step is to make contact. Often the student contacts the advisor to set up an initial appointment. But the advisor can reach out to the advisee.

In the initial meeting between advisor and student, the advisor and student decide upon the courses in which the new student will enroll and begin to prepare a planned program of study. The planned program is a blueprint of what courses the student will take to complete their degree. Some students have a good idea of what courses they want to take. Others want more guidance. The plan of study does not have to be filed immediately, but it should be filed by the end of the first semester of each student's graduate program.

Faculty advisors can find forms for the degree plan on our departmental Microsoft Teams files under *Graduate Program*. (Sample forms are attached.)

The core courses which all students take in all three specializations or tracks programs are listed. (501, 596, 597, and thesis or capstone (599). The remainder of the required courses depend upon the student's specialization. There are **required courses** unique to each specialization, with general (36 credits), health (39 credits), community (36 credits). For each specialization, there are **elective courses** from which the student is free to choose.

Once the student and advisor agree on the planned program of study, the signed plan should be sent to the Graduate Dean for approval and signature. Once the plan of study is accepted, the student no longer needs a PIN to register for classes. If there is no plan filed, the student must obtain a PIN from the advisor in order to register for classes.

The plan can be revised at any time if a student and advisor agree to changes. Sometimes students may change specializations (e.g. move from general to health) Students might also decide to change an elective.

What Do Thesis/Capstone Advisors Do?

All M.A. students are required to engage in a culminating experience which is a research-based data driven project OR a capstone project. Faculty from the department serve as advisors to the student enrolled in one of the two forms of the culminating experience. There are two options for the culminating experience.

Option A is a research based empirical thesis which is a work that is similar to an article published in a refereed psychological journal. The study will have a literature review, method, results, and discussion sections.

Option B is a capstone project that consists of an extensive and integrative analysis of some topic in the psychological literature. And will critically evaluate existing literature in a way that advances knowledge in a particular area of psychology. See the psychological science website for more detailed information on these projects.

<https://www.ccsu.edu/psychology/graduate/thesis.html>

What is the Process for Initiating Capstones and Theses?

Students formulate ideas about a project of interest—their potential thesis or capstone. Students might have worked on a similar or pilot project in the research course segment (596-597) and want to develop their ideas in greater depth. Students may approach a faculty member who is interested in the chosen topic area and who wishes to supervise theses and ask if the faculty member is willing to supervise a research project or a capstone. Usually the choice is based upon compatibility of research interests between the student and faculty member. Students can look at descriptions of faculty research interests provided in this manual to see if the interests are compatible.

Getting a head-start on a thesis or capstone is highly recommended so students can complete their work and graduate in a timely fashion. Selection of an advisor and a topic should be worked out as soon as practically possible.

Thesis Advisor. Once the advisor and student decide to work together, the student usually enrolls in PSY 591 (Independent Study) under the chosen advisor so that the student can begin a review of the literature under the supervision of the thesis advisor. Usually the student takes PSY 591 in their third semester and the Thesis/capstone course (PSY 599) in their fourth semester.

To sign up for the actual thesis, PSY 599, the student completes the following form and has it signed by the thesis/capstone advisor, the department chair, the Dean of their academic department, and the Dean of Graduate Studies:

https://docs.ccsu.edu/Independent_Study_Course_Registration.pdf

More detailed information about the thesis process can be reviewed in the School of Graduate Studies Master Thesis Handbook at:

<https://www.ccsu.edu/grad/resources/files/thesis/MasterThesisHandbookNov2019.pdf>

Thesis Committee. The student, in consultation with the thesis advisor, will select two additional thesis committee members, typically from the Department of Psychological Science. Committee members may be selected from outside the Department if they have particular expertise in the project area in consultation with the advisor. Members of the thesis committee act as project evaluators for the thesis proposal and final thesis project.

Once the thesis advisor deems student's thesis work is sufficient, the advisor will give permission for the student to send out the thesis proposal to committee members. They will send feedback to the student and the thesis advisor.

All theses defenses are public. The thesis advisor sends out a notice announcing the presentation times and date for proposals and defenses. All members of the department and the campus can attend. (If the thesis advisor deems it appropriate, a proposal meetings can also be public.)

To sign up for PSY 599, both thesis and capstone students fill out the following form that is signed by their advisor, The department chair, the Dean of their academic school, and the Dean of the Graduate School:

<https://www.ccsu.edu/grad/resources/files/capstone/CapstoneCourseRegistration.pdf>.

The thesis advisor oversees the entire thesis process. The student and thesis advisor work together and the advisor guides the student through the process. It begins with selecting the topic, designing the study or capstone review, submission of IRB proposals, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and any processes that must be covered to complete the thesis.

The student's choice of thesis should fit the interest and expertise of the thesis advisor to make this a valuable learning experience.

The Following Are Typical Commitments of Students and Faculty for Thesis/Capstone Projects

Thesis Student Commitment.

The student's obligations for a thesis/capstone are as follows:

- Openly communicate throughout the thesis process
- Work with my faculty/thesis advisor to develop a thesis project
- Be respectful, motivated, responsive, and open to intellectual critique
- Establish and follow an agreed upon timeline for each phase of work
- Meet regularly with my thesis advisor and provide my advisor with updates on the progress
- Work with my thesis advisor to select a thesis committee and be responsive to their constructive criticism
- Maintain a detailed, organized, and accurate record of my research
- Discuss policies on work schedules and any absences
- Discuss policies on authorship and publication
- Discuss attendance at professional meetings
- Work with my thesis advisor to submit all relevant research results that are ready for publication (if any) in a timely manner

Thesis Advisor Commitment

The faculty advisor's obligations are as follows:

- Encourage critical thinking, skepticism and creativity
- Set reasonable and attainable goals
- Foster open communication throughout the relationship.
- Be accessible and respectful
- Establish a timeline for completion and point out if timelines are being met
- Be committed to meet with the student on a regular basis
- Be knowledgeable about, and guide the student through the requirements and deadlines of the thesis
- Help the graduate student select a thesis committee
- Ensure that this committee meets when needed and to reviews the thesis student's progress
- Mentor thesis student in complementary skills needed to complete the thesis (oral and written communication, ethical conduct of research, and scientific professionalism)
- Discuss authorship policies regarding papers and work with the graduate student to publish his/her work in a timely manner if agreed upon
- Encourage the graduate student to attend professional meetings
- Provide honest letters of recommendation for his/her next phase of professional development
- Provide a written contract if deemed necessary. See example contract below.

Example Written Contract between faculty Thesis Advisor and Student

AGREEMENT BETWEEN RESEARCH ADVISOR AND DBHI GRADUATE STUDENT (Tillburg, Belgium)

We are entering into a mentoring relationship from which we both expect to benefit.

We will mutually agree upon the terms and conditions of this relationship as outlined below.

Confidentiality: Any sensitive issues that we discuss will be held in confidence, within the policies of the University. The mentor will take care not to discuss student performance or behavior with other students.

Duration of the relationship: The mentoring relationship will continue as long as both of us are comfortable, or until _____.

Expected end and start date of thesis:

Equivalent time expected to complete project components and write up thesis).

Comments: Learning Objectives of the Thesis: The goal(s) of the student engaging in this project is (are) to develop skills as follows:

Frequency of Meetings: We will attempt to meet at least ____ time(s) each month for a period of ____ minutes. If either cannot attend a scheduled meeting, we agree to notify one another in advance. If more meetings are necessary, each party will attempt to accommodate reasonable requests for meetings in a timely fashion.

Comments: Research Integrity and Regulations: We agree to comply with CCSUs policies around research integrity (CITI training, IRB or IACUC approval, HIPAA standards, Data Integrity Standards –collection, security and data entry, if relevant).

Time Off/Sickness Leave: We agree to discuss time off requests in advance, and compromise if needed. In the event that illness, emergency or other situation prevents the mentor from fulfilling his/her duties as Research Thesis Advisor, he/she agrees to work with the Department Chair to ensure continuity and oversight of the research project.

Collaboratively, we will discuss and determine which data/database is going to be used and specifies who owns the data. We also agree to the following policies for use of data, storage of data, confidentiality, data transport (if relevant) and data security.

Authorship: We agree to discuss in advance issues of authorship and intellectual property related to the thesis or capstone project, including any presentations, manuscripts, chapters or other project-related products associated with the thesis/capstone process. This includes order of authorship according the relative contributions of all team members to the manuscript, etc.

Comments: Communication: We both agree to foster open communication throughout the relationship. The student agrees to plan, develop and comply with a timeline/critical benchmarks for completion of the thesis/capstone project.

Both student and research advisor agree that any modifications to this timeline will be made in joint consultation. The research advisor agrees to communicate expectations with respect to punctuality, hour worked, procedures for requesting time off, and overall expectations at the outset of the relationship.

No Fault Termination: We are committed to open and honest communication in our relationship. We will discuss and attempt to resolve any conflicts as they arise. If however, one of us needs to terminate the relationship for any reason, we agree to abide by the other's decision. In the event that the relationship is terminated, the Chair of the Department will work with the student to identify another Thesis Advisor.

Reference:

Thank you to Tilburg University for providing models contracts and helpful ideas.
https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/sites/default/files/download/Model%20Research%20contract%20with%20explanation_3.pdf

List of Faculty in the Department of Psychological Science who are willing to serve as thesis advisors and/or committee members.

Potential Faculty Advisors and Committee Members:

Faculty Name: Dr. Carrie Andreoletti

Area of Research Interest: Attitudes and stereotypes about aging and older adults, benefits of intergenerational connections, health and well-being across the lifespan

Ongoing Projects: Currently supervising master's thesis related to social isolation in older adults

Potential Projects: Open to student ideas in my areas of interest and expertise – aging/gerontology, lifespan development, stereotypes, positive psychology

How to contact: E-mail andreolettic@ccsu.edu with your ideas and we can go from there.

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes (academic and/or thesis)

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Name: Dr. Carol Shaw Austad

Areas of Research Interest: Biofeedback, Stress Management, Health Care and Psychotherapy; Hawaiian Psychotherapy (ecotherapy) and cultural contrasts/oppression

Ongoing Projects: Hawaiian Psychology, Biofeedback, Health Care and Psychotherapy

Potential Projects: Open to creative endeavors.

Looking for Students who are interested in working on projects pertaining to Biofeedback/ or ecotherapy/Hawaiian psychology

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

How to contact: (e-mail Austad@CCSU.edu with proposal, ideas, questions, etc)

Faculty Name: Dr. Marcie Berman

Area of Research Interest: Health inequities among LGBTQ+ adults, community-based methods of addressing HIV, telehealth and HIV prevention and engagement in care.

Potential Projects: Telehealth and PrEP uptake and adherence

How to contact: E-mail

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Name : Dr. Julia Blau

Area of Research Interest: Ecological Psychology broadly, but Cognition more specifically; Memory; Perception, Action; Arts and Aesthetics

Ongoing Projects: Currently working on several projects involving the perception of events in Films, as indexed by the mathematical structure of the editing.

Future projects: work on the emotional impact of event perception, using fractal structure to relieve anxiety, the learning of editors over time, event perception changes between cultures, and a scientific exploration of aesthetics.

Looking for students interested in any of these topics and would be willing to serve as a project supervisor for anything that is related to these. How to contact: email Blau@ccsu.edu and request a meeting

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes, so long as her skills are relevant (in addition to her areas of interest, she can help with statistics and methodology).

Faculty Name: Dr. Caleb Bragg

Areas of Research Interest: Self-control; Careless Responding; Counterproductive Work Behavior; Job Performance; Selection; Early Career Success, School to Work Transitions; Occupational Health; Job Stress

Ongoing Projects: Developing and validating self-control measures in student and early career populations; Validating Multi Student Performance Scale in US and minority sample

Looking for Students who are interested in working on projects that have to do with any aspect of application of psychological science to the workplace. Especially interested in working with students with community ties.

How to contact: (email bragg.cb@ccsu or send Microsoft Teams chat (same email address with proposal and ideas, etc.):

Willing to serve as advisor: yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: yes

Faculty Name: Dr. Jim Conway

Area of Research Interest: Open to studies on positive youth development; children with incarcerated parents

Potential Projects: Interested in supervising theses focusing on positive youth development in general. I am particularly interested in supervising projects focusing on children with incarcerated parents, which is my main area of research.

How to contact: (e.g. send proposal and ideas, etc.) Conwayj@ccsu.edu

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Name: Silvia Corbera-Lopez

Area of Research Interest: Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience; and research interest that has a clinical component and/or developmental component.

Ongoing Projects: online project aimed at examining social cognitive and affective skills in healthy individuals and individuals with schizotypy and autism traits (active before COVID). Validating a measure of emotion recognition in children; . Collaboration in which we are examining social and affective information in schizophrenia and autism.

Potential Projects: Besides area of research described above, interests in social cognitive and affective constructs, from a cognitive neuroscience perspective such as empathy, emotion processing, Theory of Mind, rejection/ostracism

Looking for Students who would like to: Be interested in doing a study in the areas above.

How to contact: Arrange for a virtual office hour meeting me if interested.

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes.

Faculty Name: Dr. Joanne DiPlacido

Area of Research Interest: health, relationship between physical and mental health, LGBTQ+ mental and physical health, minority stress, women's health, stress and coping, health behaviors and health risk behaviors, intimate partner violence

Ongoing Projects: COVID-19 mental and physical health studies

Potential Projects: Open to student ideas, prefer projects somewhat related to health.

How to contact: Contact me via e-mail for an appointment to meet to discuss interests and expectations: diplacido@ccsu.edu.

Willing to serve as advisor yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: yes.

Faculty Name: Dr. Carolyn Fallahi

Area of Research Interest: mental health, classification of psychiatric disorders, LGBTQ+ mental health, the scholarship of teaching.

Ongoing Projects: COVID-19 mental and physical health studies; sexual minorities and minority stress.

Potential Projects: Open to student ideas, but would prefer to have theses or capstones that at least are somewhat related.

How to contact: (e.g. send proposal and ideas, etc.) Contact me via e-mail for an appointment – fallahic@ccsu.edu. We can discuss the ideas and go from there.

Willing to serve as advisor Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member Yes

Faculty Name : Dr. Andrea June

Area of Research Interest: Age-friendly environments (universities, cities, health systems), Mental Health and Aging, Gerontology in Higher Education

Ongoing Projects: Advancing age-friendly university initiatives, Increasing age literacy and decreasing ageism

Future projects: See above

Looking for Students who would like to: Contribute to age-inclusivity research

How to contact: ajune@ccsu.edu

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes, with senior faculty mentorship

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Member: Dr. Amanda M. Marín-Chollom

Area of Research Interest: Stress and coping within a sociocultural context, chronic illness prevention, health behavior change, health disparities, cancer survivorship

Ongoing Projects: Chronic illness prevention in college students, Stress and Coping during the Covid Pandemic, Latina Cancer Survivorship

Potential Projects: Impact of cultural beliefs/values on stress, coping, health behaviors, and health seeking behaviors.

Looking for Students who would like to: analyze data, start new projects in areas of health and community psychology

How to contact: amarin-chollom@ccsu.edu (e.g., send proposal and ideas, etc.)

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Name: Dr. Marisa Mealy

Area of Research Interest: cross-cultural psychology, intergroup relations, and other social psychology topics⁴

Ongoing projects: Resistance and Black Lives Matter, National identity and test performance, Academic attitudes and retention among Latinos, The effect of exposure to news headlines on Black Americans, and National identity and test performance

Potential Projects: Will follow student interests, but would prefer to supervise theses or capstones that are related to national/global culture, ethnicity/ethnic identity, intergroup relations (stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, etc.), academic achievement/retention, and/or related social psychology topics.

Looking for Students who have similar interests, are motivated, willing to design their own studies, and willing to work toward creating the best possible final project.

How to contact: (e.g. send proposal and ideas, etc.) – Email mealymar@ccsu.edu to set up a time to meet with me to discuss interests and expectations.

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

May also be willing to serve as a committee member

Faculty Name : Dr. John Protzko

Area of Research Interest: Metascience, Social Cognition, Cognitive Development, and investigating underlying assumptions.

Ongoing Projects: Currently working on why people believe young people today are in decline; understanding the role of focal cortical lesions on cognitive development; understanding why we believe in free will; looking at how practicing scientists change their beliefs in light of evidence; cross-cultural work across dozens of countries.

Future projects: understanding why for millennia people have believed the ideal world was in the past; what predicts High School dropout; and continuing the above lines of research, among others.

Looking for students who would be willing to serve as a project supervisor for conducting research. Primarily interested in Sophmores, Juniors, and graduate students who can commit to multiple semesters of being trained.

How to contact: email protzko@ccsu.edu to request a meeting

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes.

Faculty Member: Dr. Jason Sikorski

Area of Research Interest: Clinical Psychology, Gender Role Development, Toxic Masculinity, Suicide Prevention

Projects: I have supervised theses pertaining to pornography use, toxic masculinity and various topics pertaining to psychological problems in people.

Looking for Students who would like to: Write very well, pursue an extensive literature review and be responsive to feedback. I would be consider serving as a thesis chair for students I know and as a committee member for students I do not know.

How to contact: Email Dr. Sikorski to schedule an appointment virtually to discuss your ideas and requests (sikorskijaf@ccsu.edu)

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Member: Dr. Nghi D. Thai

Area of Research Interest: School engagement, intergroup relations, program evaluation

Ongoing Projects: Program evaluation of the Moving Towards Mastery cohort program, school engagement and barriers during Covid-19

Potential Projects: Program evaluation of the Success Central mentoring program, trauma informed community development

Looking for Students who would like to: conduct research using mixed methods and community-based participatory approaches in community psychology

How to contact: thaingd@ccsu.edu

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Name: Dr. Candice Wallace

Areas of Research Interest: The impact of culturally specific experiences on psychosocial outcomes. I am focused on these outcomes for racial minorities and/or marginalized populations.

Ongoing Projects: My current projects focus:

1. The impact of culturally specific protective factors on reductions in violence among African American men.
2. The impact of race-based gender socialization on several outcomes (i.e. self-esteem, coping mechanisms, academic/career outcomes, gender identity and gendered behaviors).

Potential Projects: I am open to working with students on research related to my projects/interests as stated above. I am especially interested in examining race and culture and am willing to work on a wide range of projects that explore these phenomena.

Looking for Students whose interests are aligned with mine. I am also willing to work with students who are generally interested in social psychology. I am looking for students who are motivated to engage the research process from beginning to end. Students who work with me are expected to generate their own ideas and design their own studies.

How to contact: (e.g., send proposal and ideas, etc.): email candice.wallace@ccsu.edu to arrange an appointment.

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes, both academic and thesis

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Faculty Name: Dr. Rebecca Wood

Areas of Research Interest: Adults' responses to infant cries; communication development; attachment

Ongoing Projects: COVID-19 and parenting stress; physiological and perceptual responses to infant crying

Potential Projects: Acoustic characteristics of cries and listeners' physiological responses; empathy and responses to crying; too many to list here

Looking for Students who would like to: Run a study in an area related to infant communication/emotional development or caregiving behavior for a thesis, or do a capstone in a related area

How to contact: (e.g., send proposal and ideas, etc.): just send me an email expressing interest

Willing to serve as advisor: Yes

Willing to serve as a committee member: Yes

Sources/References

- *Source of Commitment: adapted from Brown University; and “Mentoring Compact” published by the Graduate Research, Education and Training (GREAT) group of the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), on the ID*
- <https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/graduate-advising-and-mentoring/advising-and-mentoring-resources-faculty>

<https://www.uidaho.edu/cogs/resources/student-resources/thesis-dissertation>