

Senior Requirement Orientation

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DUS Psychology

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Advising information

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<https://psychology.yale.edu/undergraduate/advising-information>

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Senior Requirements

- Psychology majors must earn two credits from courses numbered PSYC 400-499
 - These courses are "senior seminars" and independent/lab research courses (493, 495, and 499)
 - At least one of these courses must be taken during the senior year and involve the completion of the senior essay
 - PSYC 490-495 are graded pass/fail and cannot be used for the senior essay
 - PSYC 499 is only for the senior essay and is always letter grade

Senior Essay

- Psychology majors must complete a "substantial final paper" of > 5000 words during their senior year
- This can be an **empirical** (i.e., involving new data; required for BS students) or **non-empirical** (e.g. a theoretical or conceptual paper, a substantial literature review, etc.)
- The essay can be written in a senior seminar (for BA students) or in PSYC 499 (for BS and BA students)
- The goal is to have you do a deep dive in a topic of interest to you and experience long-form writing in the discipline

Option #	Course that can be taken any year	Course that must be taken during the senior year and produce a senior essay
1	Senior Seminar	Senior Seminar
2	493	Senior Seminar
3	495, 495	Senior Seminar
4	Senior Seminar	499
5	493	499
6	495, 495	499
7		499, 499

Can I take any of these courses multiple times?

- Psyc 493, 495, and 499 can be repeated as many times as you wish. Though, **only 3 credits from these courses can count towards psych credits.**

Option #	Course that can be taken any year	Course that must be taken during the senior year and produce a senior essay
1	Senior Seminar	Senior Seminar
2	493	Senior Seminar
3	495, 495	Senior Seminar
4	Senior Seminar	499
5	493	499
6	495, 495	499
7		499, 499

Can I take PSYC 499 twice?

- Yes, this option (option 7) is recommended for those who want to go to graduate school in Psychology, would like to publish their senior essay, exc.
- The student must write two substantial papers (at least 5000 words each), one from each term.
- Example: introduction and methods section in the fall semester (at least 5000 words) + results and discussion section in the spring semester (at least 5000 **new** words)

Option #	Course that can be taken any year	Course that must be taken during the senior year and produce a senior essay
1	Senior Seminar	Senior Seminar
2	493	Senior Seminar
3	495, 495	Senior Seminar
4	Senior Seminar	499
5	493	499
6	495, 495	499
7		499, 499

Are there different requirements for the BA and BS degree?

- Students seeking a **BA degree** can choose from options 1-7, but most choose from options 1-3.
- Students seeking a **BS degree** must conduct empirical research through PSYC 499. Thus, those students can only choose from options 4-7.

Option #	Course that can be taken any year	Course that must be taken during the senior year and produce a senior essay
1	Senior Seminar	Senior Seminar
2	493	Senior Seminar
3	495, 495	Senior Seminar
4	Senior Seminar	499
5	493	499
6	495, 495	499
7		499, 499

Do the requirements differ for students on the neuroscience track?

- Students in the **neuroscience track** have the same requirements, **however both 400-level courses must have neuroscience content.**
- Hopefully you already know that your research methods course (200-level) also needed to have neuroscience content!

Option #	Course that can be taken any year	Course that must be taken during the senior year and produce a senior essay
1	Senior Seminar	Senior Seminar
2	493	Senior Seminar
3	495, 495	Senior Seminar
4	Senior Seminar	499
5	493	499
6	495, 495	499
7		499, 499

How do I obtain distinction in the major?

- Students seeking **distinction** in the major have the same requirements except that their senior essays must be submitted 1 week before the last day of the class in the term they are taking the course for senior essay.
 - The senior essay will be graded by the student's advisor and a second reader
 - You must receive an A- or A to obtain distinction
- You will also need 75% A / A- grades in psychology courses to qualify
 - Cr/D/F classes **do** count in the denominator, excepting classes during the "Covid semester"

Senior requirement summary

- Psyc 493, 495, and 499 can be repeated as many times as you wish. However, only 3 credits from these courses can count towards psych credits.
- Students seeking a **BS degree** must conduct empirical research through PSYC 499.
- Students seeking a **BA degree** are not required to take PSYC 499, and may choose any combination of 2 credits at the 400-level
- For students in the **neuroscience track** both 400-level courses must have neuroscience content.
- Students seeking **distinction** must submit their essays 1 week before the last day of the class in the term they are taking the course for senior essay.

Tutorial forms

Currently revamping this process!

- **Previously** students filled out and submitted a “tutorial form” during registration or add/drop in order to enroll in Directed Research (PSYC 493), Research Topics (PSYC 495), or Senior Essay (PSYC 499)
- **Starting this term** (for Fall, 2023) there will instead be an online (Qualtrics) form to fill out instead
- Specific deadlines will be announced via email and the department webpage
 - You can do this as early as course registration (ideal) and as late as the **first** week of add/drop (usually doable but less time to address issues)

Pre-
registering
for senior
seminars
(as well as
Research
Methods)

- All seniors are guaranteed a spot in 1 senior seminar
- If you haven't taken one yet, you will also be guaranteed a spot in 1 research methods course
- An email from Prof. Dunham during Spring Break will have instructions for submitting your top choices via a Qualtrics survey
 - Failure to fill this survey out in time forfeits your guarantee of a spot in these courses! Don't do this if you plan to take a seminar!

Choosing a senior essay topic

- Choose a topic that...
 - you are interested in and enjoy—it's a lot of work!
 - may be useful for your career or graduate school applications
 - Fits with your advisors existing research topics and/or the topic of the senior seminar you are completing the senior essay in

Choosing a senior essay advisor

- Learn about potential advisors by...
 - Taking their courses (especially senior seminars)
 - Getting involved in their labs/research prior to senior year
 - Reading their publications on their website
 - Asking current seniors about their senior essay experience
- Important considerations
 - Contact your potential advisor substantially before the semester you plan to start your senior essay.
 - Be polite and courteous when asking a professor to advise your essay.
 - Be familiar with the relevant background needed to successfully carry out a project in their lab
 - If you are really interested in a particular lab you may need to get involved as an RA *before* starting a senior essay

Unsuccessful strategies look like...

The screenshot shows an email client interface. At the top is a navigation bar with icons and labels for 'Inbox', 'Empty Trash', 'Compose', 'Folders', 'Search', 'Accounts', 'Options', 'Problem', 'Help', and 'Log out'. Below this is a header for the email: 'Inbox: senior essay advisor (1 of 17)'. The email content area has a redacted sender and a redacted subject line. The body of the email is in plain text and reads: 'Hello Professors, I still need to find a senior essay advisor. Will one of you just agree to be my advisor because I can't find anybody else and the form is due tomorrow. Thanks,' followed by a redacted signature. The interface includes standard email actions like 'Delete', 'Reply', 'Forward', etc., and a 'Mark as:' dropdown menu.

Inbox: senior essay advisor (1 of 17)

Mark as: Move | Copy This message to

Delete | Reply | Reply to All | Forward | Redirect | View Thread | Message Source | Save as | Print

Subject: senior essay advisor

Headers: Show All Headers

Hello Professors,

I still need to find a senior essay advisor. Will one of you just agree to be my advisor because I can't find anybody else and the form is due tomorrow.

Thanks,

Delete | Reply | Reply to All | Forward | Redirect | View Thread | Message Source | Save as | Print

Mark as: Move | Copy This message to

Laurie R. Santos



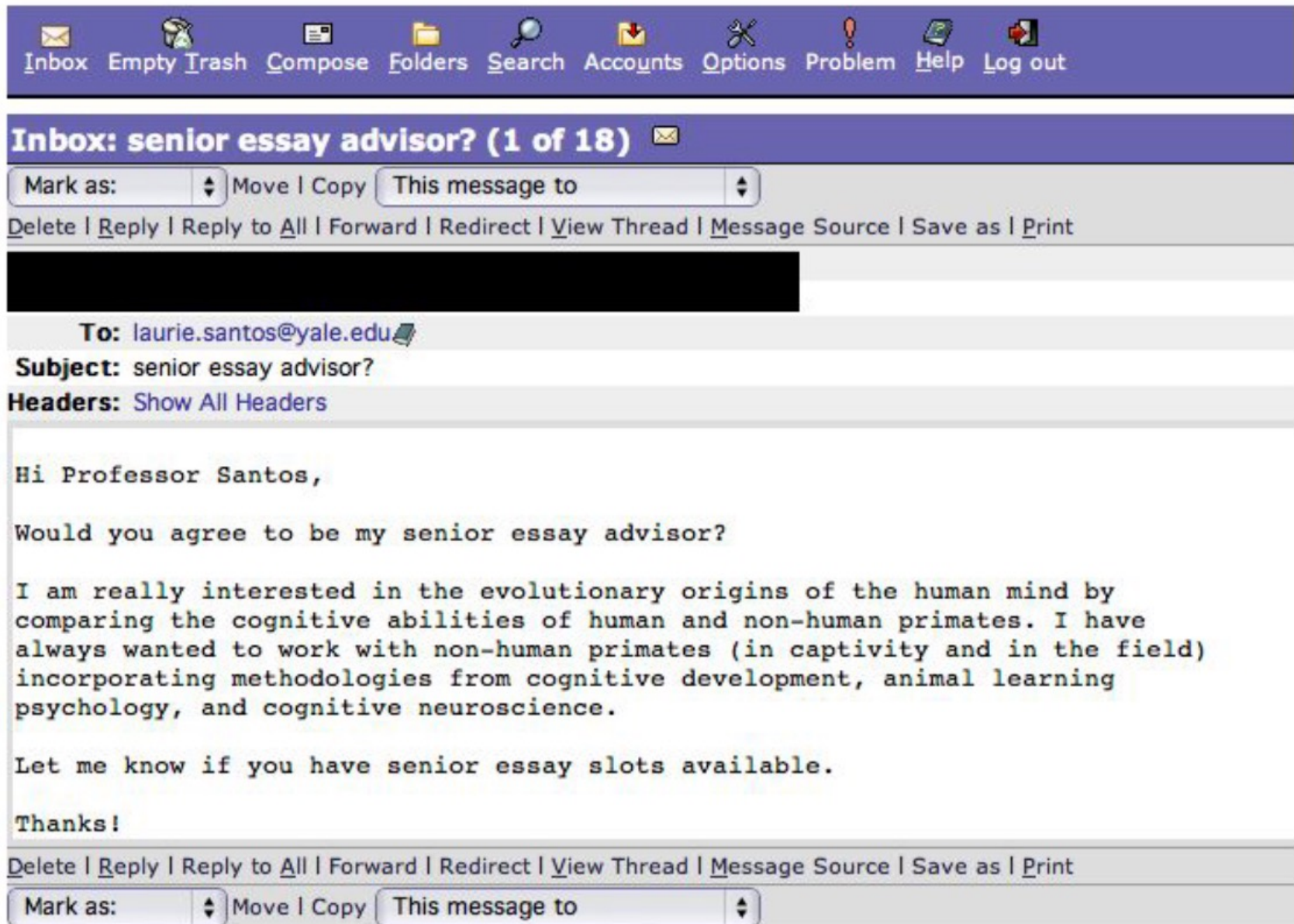
Assistant Professor (Ph.D. 2003, Harvard University)

[Lab Page](#), [Personal Home Page](#)

Research Interests

My research explores the evolutionary origins of the human mind by comparing the cognitive abilities of human and non-human primates. It provides an interface between evolutionary biology, developmental psychology and cognitive neuroscience. My experiments focus on non-human primates (in captivity and in the field) incorporating methodologies from cognitive development, animal learning psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. My research examines the following broad questions: what domains of knowledge are unique to the human mind? Given that human infants and non-human primates both lack language, what similarities and

Successful strategies look more like...



The screenshot shows an email client interface. At the top is a navigation bar with icons and labels for 'Inbox', 'Empty Trash', 'Compose', 'Folders', 'Search', 'Accounts', 'Options', 'Problem', 'Help', and 'Log out'. Below this is a header for the email: 'Inbox: senior essay advisor? (1 of 18)'. A toolbar contains 'Mark as:', 'Move | Copy', and 'This message to'. A secondary toolbar includes 'Delete | Reply | Reply to All | Forward | Redirect | View Thread | Message Source | Save as | Print'. The email header shows 'To: laurie.santos@yale.edu' and 'Subject: senior essay advisor?'. A link for 'Headers: Show All Headers' is present. The email body contains the following text:

Hi Professor Santos,

Would you agree to be my senior essay advisor?

I am really interested in the evolutionary origins of the human mind by comparing the cognitive abilities of human and non-human primates. I have always wanted to work with non-human primates (in captivity and in the field) incorporating methodologies from cognitive development, animal learning psychology, and cognitive neuroscience.

Let me know if you have senior essay slots available.

Thanks!

At the bottom, there is another toolbar with 'Delete | Reply | Reply to All | Forward | Redirect | View Thread | Message Source | Save as | Print' and another 'Mark as: | Move | Copy | This message to' section.

- But even that may not work if you wait until your senior year!
 - Lab may be full
 - Some professors are on leave each term
 - Many professors only supervise empirical senior essays for students who have previously done research in their lab
- What if I still don't have an advisor?
 - Be sure to enroll in a senior seminar so you have that option in which to complete your senior essay
 - Be in touch with labs/professors NOW!
 - Propose being a research assistant in the Fall in order to do a senior essay in the Spring

And you can always reach out to advising
staff for more help and information!

psychology.yale.edu/undergraduate/advising-information