

Social Health Lab Directed Studies Information (2021-2022)

Pre-requisites and Learning Objectives

Directed Studies students in the SHL are expected to be able to generate hypotheses, collect and analyze data, and write a scientific report, with minimal supervision. Therefore, priority will be given to students who have volunteered in our lab for at least nine months (i.e., two winter terms, or one winter term plus two summer terms) who have shown outstanding analytical, writing, and leadership potential.

Our lab's Directed Studies course is primarily designed for students with a serious interest in research careers. If you are not sure whether the course is a good fit for you, please consult the graduate student/postdoc supervising you and/or Dr. Chen.

A six-credit Directed Studies spanning both Winter terms is the norm in the SHL. If you are interested in Directed Studies, please let the graduate student/postdoc supervising you know at least one month prior to the beginning of Winter Term 1 (i.e., by early August). Please also submit two writing samples—the final report from your PSYC 217 group project, and one other independent piece of academic writing—so that we can assess your scientific writing skills and determine your suitability for the course.

Although we do our best to accommodate lab members who are interested and well-suited for our Directed Studies course, we almost always have more students in the lab who are interested in Directed Studies than we are able to take on. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee the availability of positions.

If you are accepted into the Directed Studies course, **you are expected to meet with Dr. Chen and send her a draft of your Directed Studies form at least 1 week prior to the course registration deadline**—this is necessary to ensure sufficient time to revise and finalize the form.

Grading

50% lab performance

50% final paper

Note that you are *not* in direct competition with the other directed studies students in the lab! It is possible for all directed studies students to get an “A” in the course.

Lab Performance Component (50%)

Directed Studies students are expected to commit to 8-10 hours/week of **lab work**.

Lab work **includes** activities such as: postering/flyering; emailing, recruiting, scheduling, running participants; creating and piloting experiment materials; data coding; data entry and cleaning; troubleshooting equipment issues; lab meetings, meetings with your grad student/postdoc supervisor, and meetings with Dr. Chen. Lab work also includes background research and/or analyses that Dr. Chen and/or your grad student/postdoc supervisor specifically asks you to complete (even if you might eventually use this research/analyses for your Directed Studies project).

Lab work **does not include** tasks you're completing primarily for your course credit requirements (e.g., writing up of Directed Studies papers; background research or reading for your directed studies papers that Dr. Chen/your grad student/postdoc supervisor has *not* specifically asked you to complete) or optional/voluntary out-of-lab activities (e.g., PURC, MURC). Please **DO** keep a record of these activities on your own -- we very much value and encourage you to spend adequate time on these activities (and a record of this can be very helpful for us when writing letters of recommendation). If

you are unsure whether a task counts as “lab work,” please ask Dr. Chen or the grad student/postdoc supervising your project.

Dr. Chen will assess your lab performance with the detailed input of your grad student/postdoc supervisor, with whom you will work closely. Key components of *solid* lab performance are reliability, efficiency and promptness, professionalism, teamwork, and good communication. *Outstanding* lab performance includes demonstrating leadership, initiative, and critical thinking.

Final Paper Component (50%)

Your final paper will be a write-up of your directed studies project. It should consist of 8-10 pages double-spaced of text. The page count does *not* include your abstract, references, tables, appendices, figures, etc. Please use APA style, including standard font and margins, and do not go over the page limit. Please follow the guidelines below for the sections of your final paper:

- Abstract (200 words max)
- Introduction (approx. 2-3 pages)
- Methods (approx. 2-3 pages)
- Results (approx. 2 pages)
- Discussion (approx. 2 pages)

Course Timeline

dates are approximate—exact dates will be confirmed by early September

- late Aug/
early Sept: Make sure you have met with Dr. Chen and your grad student/postdoc supervisor and have agreed upon a project idea and rough analysis plan
- Dec 10: Introduction and methods draft due (email to your grad student/postdoc supervisor by 11:59 PM)
- Feb 18: Internal deadline to complete data collection to be included in your analyses (you will most likely continue collecting data in the lab after this date, but you are not required to include the later data in your analyses)
- Mar 18: Results draft due (email to your grad student/postdoc supervisor by 11:59 PM)
- Apr 11: Final paper due (email to both Dr. Chen and your grad student/postdoc supervisor by 11:59 PM)

Your grade for the paper will officially be based on the final version you turn in, in April. However, you will have two opportunities (in Nov/Dec and March, as noted above) to receive feedback from your grad student/postdoc supervisor when you turn in your drafts of the intro+methods, and results, sections. To maximize your learning experience—as well as to help make sure you turn in the most polished product possible in April—we strongly urge you to spend sufficient time on the two earlier drafts that you turn in.

Conference Presentations

If you are interested in presenting your project at a conference (such as MURC or PURC), please inform Dr. Chen and the grad student/postdoc supervising you. We will be happy to advise you regarding suitable topics for you to present and/or discuss in your applications. *You should consult with us at least 2 weeks, and preferably 1 month, in advance of the submission deadlines.* Remember that you will be representing the lab. If you are planning to present data collected in the lab, you must get approval from Dr. Chen and the grad student/postdoc supervising on your abstract and any data analyses, before you submit them. If annual budgets allow, the lab will pay for up to \$50 of your poster printing costs. 36x48 is a standard size poster and costs between \$65-70 (including tax) here: <https://it.ubc.ca/services/desktop-print-services/printing-services/details-and-pricing#q1>. PSA members receive a 10% discount at CopieSmart.

SHL Directed Studies Final Paper Grading Rubric

	Needs work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
Abstract				
Statement of research question and rationale				
Hypotheses				
Sample				
Study design				
Main findings				
Length (200 words max)				
Introduction				
Review of theoretically-relevant literature				
Introduction and definition of central terms				
Statement of research question and rationale				
Research question(s) derived from theory/previous research				
Clear statement of a falsifiable hypothesis/hypotheses				
Methods				
Sample (size, demographic characteristics)				
Measures (description of tasks and questionnaires, with internal consistency metrics)				
Procedure				
Ethical considerations				
Study can be replicated based on description				
Results				
Data aggregation/cleaning (description of missing data, exclusions, etc.)				
Hypothesis-based analyses				
Selection and execution of statistical tests				
Relevant statistics reported (in APA style)				
Figures and tables (necessary, informative labels/captions)				
Discussion				
Brief (1-2 sentences) summary of study and main findings				
Data-based evaluation/re-interpretation of hypotheses				
Comparison with relevant prior literature/findings				
Limitations/suggestions for future research				
Broader implications/conclusion				
Overall				
Language (grammar, proofreading, etc.)				
Flow/clarity/comprehensibility				
Conciseness and relative balance in section length				
Appropriate credit to others (citations)				
Main text: APA style and formatting				
Reference list: completeness, APA style and formatting				

SHL Directed Studies Lab Work Grading Rubric

	Needs work	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	N/A
Reliability and conscientiousness. We expect you to follow lab protocols, fulfil responsibilities on schedule, double-check your own work (e.g., data entry), fix your own errors, and avoid making the same mistakes twice.					
Respect for research ethics. We expect you to be familiar with, and adhere to, standards of privacy and confidentiality for data collection, entry, and analysis.					
Honesty and transparency. It is essential that you report incidents and/or mistakes in data collection/entry to your supervisor truthfully and promptly, and that you ask clarification questions if confused. We prefer if you err on the side of not overpromising but rather overdelivering.					
Communication. We expect you to be prompt and clear in your communication and coordination with supervisors, labmates, and study participants. Please reach out to your supervisor and labmates promptly when exceptional circumstances arise (e.g., health issue).					
Leadership. Experienced RAs should help to mentor and train newer labmates.					
Problem solving. You should be ready and able to solve unexpected problems that may arise when you are on your own (e.g., issues with a participant during a study session), as well as issues that affect the larger study team (e.g., difficulties with participant recruitment or study design).					
Initiative. We want our RAs to go beyond simply following instructions. We would like you to be proactive and inquisitive, contribute your own ideas to research projects, take the initiative to learn new skills or conduct background research independently, seek feedback, and raise potential issues that you foresee with new study protocols or lab procedures.					
Teamwork and flexibility. We appreciate when RAs provide flexible availability, are willing to put in extra hours during critical weeks for the project, offer to cover timeslots when labmates are sick, are willing to help with mundane/tedious tasks as well as the exciting ones, and have a positive attitude.					