Honors Program in Psychology

Goal
The Honors Program in Psychology is designed to give outstanding B.A. students who plan a career in Psychology a unique opportunity to learn about and engage in original research. The program involves participation in a seminar and requires the completion of an original, independent research project, resulting in an Honors Thesis.

Students’ Enrollment and Selection

- All first-year students in B.A. Psychology can apply to the program. Students enrolled in the Psychology-Law program can apply in their second year as well.
- The application process will begin June 15, 2014 and end July 17, 2014.
- Application includes (a) first-year grades (there is no need to hand this in – grades will be provided directly from IDC) (b) a Personal Statement written in English, and (c) a Research Vision (written in English as well) based on the reading of one of the empirical articles that will be assigned to candidates.
  - **Personal Statement**: Why are you interested in the honors program, and how will it help you achieve your life goals? Please prepare a 1-page personal statement, in which you explain your aims in studying psychology, and describe your academic, professional, and personal ambitions. Don’t try to guess what we want to read; strive for personal authenticity!
  - **Research Vision**: Choose one of the target articles, and prepare a 2-page descriptive proposal of a feasible research project (i.e., one that could be done using the resources available at or through IDC) that could be the next step in advancing psychological knowledge beyond the findings of the article. Your stress should be on theoretical developmental of the themes and findings of the article, and on creative planning of an experimental manipulation that could teach us a significant lesson about the topic. Please use APA writing style and add 1 cover page and 1 page for references.

The three papers assigned are (2014 application):


A departmental committee will select candidates based on their first-year grades, the personal essay, and the research proposal. We will select the top 5% students in each track (approximately, 8-10 in the Israeli track; 4-6 in International track). If necessary, personal interviews will be conducted with candidates.

Decisions about acceptance to the program will be given on August 2014 (after getting the grades of all the first-year courses).

The Program

- The Honors Program consists of a 2-hours weekly seminar (“Honors Seminar”) during the 2nd and 3rd years and an Independent Research Project (“Honors Thesis”) during the 3rd year.

- The Honors Seminar provides a level of discussion and participation not possible in traditional B.A. courses. The primary function of the Honors Seminar is to develop the scientific and professional skills of students in conjunction with their independent research project. Thus, a primary focus of the seminar is the development of skills in critical reading, writing, and public speaking. Other functions of the Honors Seminar include education/career planning, and training in ethical practices, research methods, and statistics.

- During the Honors Seminar (second year), there will be 7 meetings per semester with researchers from the IDC and other universities. Instead of the usual frontal manner, their research will be discussed by the students themselves with the presence of the researcher. For this purpose, each researcher provides a reading list of 2 of his or her articles and chapters and Honors students are requested to read this material and prepare comments relating to future research, debating the study itself, relating it to other studies, questions on the study and so forth. Each meeting begins with a 10-minute presentation of the papers by two students, this is followed by a discussion and a debate initiated by the students. In this way, the seminar consists of an exchange of ideas between the researcher and students based on students’ comments. At the end of each seminar, each student is requested to write a brief essay in English describing his or her thoughts and reflections about the specific seminar as well as his or her ideas about unanswered questions and further research in the topic discussed. Students receive feedback about their essay from the Seminar Supervisor.

- During the Honors Seminar, several meetings each semester will be dedicated to discussions in class on the previous papers presented, on the essays submitted by the students, on general topics such as literature search, summer internships, how to locate a mentor, how to read a paper and so forth. In these meetings two students will be asked to review the essays submitted by their peers and present in class an overview of them. This way, students in Year 2 will be asked to present twice a semester to write 4-6 short essays.

- At the end of the second year, students choose a topic for the Honors Thesis under the supervision of a faculty member from the School of Psychology.

- During the third year, Honors students are exempt from the 3rd year research seminar. In other words, the thesis is part of their research seminar.
At the end of the process they are requested to write an empirical paper and submit this paper to a scientific peer-reviewed journal together with their supervisor (submission is mandatory). Students are encouraged to submit a proposal for poster presentation in scientific conferences.

During the third year, Honors Thesis, the 2-hours weekly meetings consist of discussions about the students’ Honors theses.

During the program, students are encouraged to participate in the Faculty Seminar of the school and to meet scholars from abroad that are visiting the IDC or participating in conferences at the IDC.

Privileges
- Honors students are given faculty library privileges
- Honors students are given the opportunity to enroll in graduate courses and seminars as part of their B.A. program (third-year elective courses and seminars).
- Honors students will present their Honor Thesis in a special event that will be open to students, faculty, and family members.
- The school will cover partial conference registration for Honors students who will present their Honors thesis in a scientific conference.
- In the graduation ceremony, Honors students will receive a special diploma as students in the “Honors Program in Psychology.”
- During the third year, students will receive assistance in applying to US or European Graduate Programs and in creating contacts with relevant scholars in relevant programs.

For more information, please contact Dr. Boaz Ben-David, the head of the Psychology Honors Program, boaz.ben.david@idc.ac.il