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When knowledge meets passion: reflections on transgressing the boundaries of knowledge and courage in a course seminar competition

The course seminar is a mandatory subject for third-year psychology students and prepares them for the master's seminar. Its aim is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan, prepare, and conduct a research project in small teams, and then to present the results of their research in a synthetic manner.

From the beginning of the semester, the teams seek inspiration and carry out subsequent stages of research under the attentive eye of academic supervisors from the Institute of Psychology, so that at the end of the academic year they can prepare presentations summarising their work.

Each seminar group consists of several research teams, which involves the parallel implementation of many projects, often varied in terms of subject matter and reflecting the individual interests of the students. During one of the last classes, all teams present the results of their work, and one group is chosen to represent the seminar in the institute competition.

The imagination of students has no limits, and their projects are extremely interesting, covering current and important social issues. They are conducted with great commitment, and the teams demonstrate cooperation, communication, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility for the results of their work, the ability to cope with difficult situations, as well as concern for the methodological correctness of their research and ethical principles.

In the 2024/2025 academic year, the final presentation of the student research teams' work took place on 12 June for full-time students and on 14 June for part-time students. The following winning teams from the full-time programme were selected through internal eliminations for the Course Seminar Competition:

1. Anna Maria Świdorska, Kamil Petrykowski, Natalia Żdan, Wiktoria Prekop, Pola Nowak, Emilia Nawrocka under supervision of dr Dorota Dykalska „Correlational study of a multidimensional

educational approach based on Bloom's taxonomy, the development of metacognition and a sense of control over educational achievements and student competences”

2. Karolina Karpowicz, Roksana Foigt, Nina Jankowska, Amelia Łobejko, Emilia Walaszek, Maja Koenner, Natalia Witkowska, Ola Tatol, Nina Kulesza under supervision of dr hab. Dagmara Budnik – Przybylska „Virtual assistance. Ready? Go”
3. Agnieszka Meler, Hanna Ossowska, Zuzanna Wrońska, Aleksandra Szypryt, Jacek Arcyman, Aleksandra Piechówka under supervision of dr Dorota Godlewska–Werner „PSR as a tool for effective solutions at work”
4. Igor Bienias, Julia Janiszewska, Karolina Romanowska, Natalia Sochacka, Livia Treder under supervision of dr Blanka Kondratowicz „Perfectionism and perseverance in the pursuit of long-term goals”
5. Amelia Andrzejczak, Barbara Foryś, Oliwia Sokolik, Maria Urban, Julianna Widelska under supervision of dr Mateusz Lammek „Toxic masculinity among video game players”
6. Michał Skoczko, Wiktoria Targus, Nadia Zakrzewska under supervision of dr Rafał Lawendowski „Influence of music on the effectiveness of attention processes”
7. Jadwiga Cichoń, Lila Rudaś, Lidia Żelaskowska under supervision of dr Edyta Orłowska „How would you assess your memory? Subjective assessment of students' episodic memory in relation to its actual effectiveness”
8. Iwona Ulenberg, Jakub Lewandowski, Julia Kunkel, Marcin Tyl, Wiktoria Kurek under supervision of dr Aleksandra Peplińska „Does psychologists' burnout begin during studies? About the phenomenon of educational burnout among us”
9. Natalia Wichrowska, Karolina Reysowska, Klaudia Sakiewicz, Martyna Formela, Matylda Szerszeń under supervision of dr Marta Witkowska „Psychological mechanisms of proneness to political manipulation: the influence of identification with a candidate and cognitive–emotional correlates”
10. Nela Kusak, Izabela Majczyk, Julia Stawowska, Julia Żorańska under supervision of dr Piotr Połomski „Emotional intelligence, wellbeing and pet ownership”
11. Aleksandra Jachim, Zuzanna Łukaszewska, Julita Gontar under supervision of dr Agnieszka Fanslau „Women's gender identity and amusement and acceptance of sexist humour towards men. Traditionalism/progressiveness vs amusement/acceptance”

The following groups of part-time studies were among those representing individual course seminars:

1. Zofia Hinc, Monika Lipińska–Hüseynova, Monika Bębenek, Małgorzata Płaneta, Patrycja Wolska under supervision of dr Dorota Dykalska „The relationship between educational FOMO and motivation and burnout among students”
2. Marta Kalocińska, Bartosz Buczyłko, Konrad Stróżewski, Damian Cyman, Bartłomiej Tułodziecki under supervision of dr Blanka Kondratowicz „Following profiles on the Internet that match one's aspirations and level of life satisfaction”

3. Szymon Benet, Michał Fuksiński, Martyna Śliwowska, Kacper Traskowski under supervision of dr Edyta Orłowska „The ability to recognise AI”
4. Areta Nastaly, Aleksandra Pieczka, Tatiana Ilczyszyn, Klaudia Krysiak under supervision of dr Piotr Połomski „Having a garden and wellbeing”

All projects were impressive, and the speakers received applause and congratulations. The academic staff evaluated each presentation in terms of content, aesthetics and speech quality using a specially designed survey. The level was so high and even that the differences between the groups were only a few hundredths or thousandths of a point. Finally, the winning teams were selected. They were awarded academic books and certificates, which can be included in the supplement.

The finalists of the course seminar competition on 12 June 2025 were:

1. I–st place – Igor Bienias, Julia Janiszewska, Karolina Romanowska, Natalia Sochacka, Livia Treder under supervision of dr Blanka Kondratowicz
2. II–nd place – Iwona Ulenberg, Jakub Lewandowski, Julia Kunkel, Marcin Tyl, Wiktoria Kurek under supervision of dr Aleksandra Peplińska
3. III–rd place – Agnieszka Meler, Hanna Ossowska, Zuzanna Wrońska, Aleksandra Szypryt, Jacek Arcyman, Aleksandra Piechówka under supervision of dr Dorota Godlewska–Werner

Whereas on 14 June 2025:

1. I–st place – Areta Nastaly, Aleksandra Pieczka, Tatiana Ilczyszyn, Klaudia Krysiak under supervision of dr Piotr Połomski
2. II–nd place *ex aequo* – Szymon Benet, Michał Fuksiński, Martyna Śliwowska, Kacper Traskowski under supervision of dr Edyta Orłowska, and Zofia Hinca, Monika Lipińska–Hüseynova, Monika Bębenek, Małgorzata Płaneta, Patrycja Wolska under supervision of dr Dorota Dykalska
3. III–rd place – Marta Kalocińska, Bartosz Buczyłko, Konrad Stróżewski, Damian Cyman, Bartłomiej Tułodziecki under supervision of dr Blanka Kondratowicz.

The course seminar, which runs for the entire semester, turns out to be much more than just a set of academic tasks. It is a process in which students learn, step by step, to exceed their own boundaries – from the first sketches of ideas, through the hard work of collaboration, to the conscious and responsible conduct of scientific research. It is also a time when they improve key competences from the perspective of contemporary employers, including analytical thinking, mental resilience and flexibility.

The culmination is a competition, but the real value lies in the experience of carrying out a research project – developing research skills, building cooperation, learning intellectual courage, critical thinking and methodological reliability. Presenting research results in an academic forum also involves public speaking, self–presentation, effective communication, but also building resourcefulness, self–efficacy and independence. This effort establishes a foundation upon which students will base their future master's theses and professional identities. Importantly, the results obtained by a few groups during their course seminars have been described and submitted as scientific publications or conference abstracts.

One of this year's seminar groups decided to continue the research project and prepare and conduct workshops for high school students based on the results obtained. This project is being carried out on behalf of the Clinical and Health Psychology Section of KNP Anima. Thanks to this, the ideas developed during the seminar do not remain within the university walls but reach a wider community.