

Psychology

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The general objective of the psychology major is to enhance understanding of behavior and mental processes and to examine their connections to the fields of biology and the social sciences.

This general objective is translated into specific objectives that concern the understanding of (a) scientific methodology, (b) the current state of psychological knowledge, and (c) the application of both methodology and knowledge to real-world problems and events.

The psychology major consists of five components. First, a required core of courses introduces students to the field and to communication skills within the field. This core includes required methodology courses in writing, library research, statistics, and experimental design. Second, students take a required core of content breadth courses providing students with exposure to the key sub-disciplines of psychology. Third is a set of upper-level laboratory courses that represent psychology's close alliance with both social science and natural-science approaches to the study of behavior. Fourth, psychology majors select upper-level credit hours from a group of elective offerings. Fifth, every psychology major must complete a St. Mary's Project.

Learning Outcomes

- Use appropriate statistical and methodological approaches to analyze data
- Interpret the results of empirical investigations of behavioral processes, including placing them in the context of current literature
- Integrate, critique or interpret theoretical perspectives of psychology
- Explain key concepts within at least four diverse content areas of psychology
- Develop evidence-based arguments related to behavior and mental processes
- Critically analyze problems related to behavior and mental processes
- Demonstrate effective written articulation and oral communication of ideas in psychology
- Use appropriate and varied sources to construct an argument in psychology

Degree Requirements for the Major

General College Requirements

General College Requirements (see “Curriculum” section), including the following requirements to satisfy the major:

At least 48 credit hours as specified in Required Core Courses, Content Breadth, Laboratory, Upper-Level Electives and Capstone below. A grade of C- or better must be received in each of the courses and a cumulative grade point average of 2.00 in courses used to satisfy the major. Courses taken for credit/no credit may not be used to satisfy requirements for the major.

Required Core Courses: 12 credit hours

- PSYC 101: Introduction to Psychology
- PSYC 301: Psychological Statistics
- PSYC 303: Writing and Research Methods in Psychology

Content Breadth Requirement (16 credit hours)

- PSYC 205: Learning and Cognition
- PSYC 230: Lifespan Development
- PSYC 235: Physiological and Sensory Psychology
- PSYC 250: Social Psychology OR PSYC280: Counseling Theories and Methods

Laboratory Requirement (eight credit hours)

Two of the following courses:

- PSYC 320: Psychology of Learning with Laboratory
- PSYC 322: Biological Psychology with Laboratory
- PSYC 324: Cognitive Psychology with Laboratory
- PSYC 326: Perception with Laboratory
- PSYC 330: Developmental Psychology with Laboratory
- PSYC 340: Social Psychology with Laboratory
- PSYC 370: Counseling and Psychotherapy with Laboratory

Upper-level Electives (four credit hours)

One additional four credit course at the 300- or 400-level not used to fulfill any other PSYC major requirement.

Capstone Courses (eight credit hours)

Every psychology major must complete a St. Mary's Project. This project may be in psychology or in another major discipline or study area. The guidelines established in the selected area apply. The project must be proposed to the chair of the Department of Psychology by the end of the seventh week of classes in the second semester of the student's junior year (the semester prior to beginning the project), and it must be approved by the department chair and the assigned faculty mentor.

Sequence of Study

The following sequence of courses is a typical model for fulfilling the requirements of the psychology major:

- First Year:
PSYC 101, two content breadth courses (PSYC 205, 230, 235, 250 or 280)
- Second Year:
PSYC 301, PSYC 303, one content breadth course (PSYC 205, 230, 235, 250 or 280)
- Third Year:
One content breadth course (PSYC 250, 230, 235, 250 or 280), two lab courses
- Fourth Year:
St. Mary's Project, upper-level elective

Faculty

FACULTY Aileen M. Bailey, Torry Dennis, Trevor Dunn, Gina Fernandez, Gili Freedman, Nathaniel Foster, Cynthia Koenig, Scott P. Mirabile, Richard D. Platt, Jennifer J. Tickle, James Mantell, Ayse Ikizler, Elizabeth Nutt Williams (department chair)