

A
GUIDE TO
UNDERGRADUATE STUDY
IN
PSYCHOLOGY
AT
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
2011-2012
EDITION
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 Department of Psychology

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Psychology Department -- American University
321 Asbury Building - South Wing

Phone: (202) 885-1710; Fax: (202) 885-1023

E-Mail: psychology@american.edu

Website: <http://www.american.edu/cas/psychology/>

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A Message From The Department of Psychology

Psychology combines the social and natural sciences. Psychologists conduct both basic and applied research to better understand behavior, thoughts, and emotions. The Psychology Department has active research programs in animal learning, human memory and cognition, perception, , anxiety disorders, human neuropsychology, behavioral, affective, and cognitive neuroscience, choice behavior, drugs and behavior, social psychology, eating disorders, memory, motivation, program evaluation, and psychotherapy processes. A complete list of the faculty and their interests is on page 10, and on the Psychology Department's website at: <http://www.american.edu/cas/psychology/> Psychology majors are also encouraged to consult the Psychology Majors Blackboard site. Please e-mail the psychology department staff at psychology@american.edu in order to be added as a user to the Psychology Majors blackboard page.

Psychologists often work in research, academic, educational, clinical and other applied settings. The Department has courses, as well as internships, and independent studies, which enable students to learn about and participate in the applications of psychology in mental health facilities, schools, shelters, laboratories, and policy-making settings. Psychology students may be found interning at the National Institutes of Mental Health, St. Elizabeth's Hospital, the American Psychological Association, the DC Public Defender's Office, DC Public Schools, Children's Hospital, Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children, Psychiatric Institute of Washington, St. Luke's House, etc.

Psychology majors often use their B.A. as a foundation for graduate work or professional school as well as for employment in mental health programs, social services, development agencies, research laboratories, the courts, public administration, and other organizations throughout the private sector. Graduate study beyond the B.A. is necessary for the independent practice of psychology.

A psychology minor combined with majors in the fields of business, government, history, biology, chemistry, justice, communication, economics, languages, or the arts has proved useful for many students.

This guide describes requirements of the Psychology Department.

Requirements for Graduating with a B.A. in Psychology

How to Become a Major

To become a Psychology major simply come to the Psychology Department (Asbury 321) and fill out a major declaration form and the Questionnaire for Undergraduate Majors. You will be assigned an advisor or you can request a specific professor

Course Requirements for the Major

A total of forty-one (41) credit hours, at least 15 of which must be at the 300 level or higher at American University. All courses counting toward the major must be taken for a grade and passed with a C or better.

- PSYC-105 Psychology: Understanding Human Behavior 4: 1 (3)
- PSYC- 115 Psychology as a Natural Science 5: 1 (3)
- PSYC-116 Psychology as a Natural Science Lab (1)

- STAT-202 Basic Statistics (4)

One course in Research Methods from the following:

- PSYC-301 Research Methods in Psychology (3)
- PSYC-433 Research Design and Methods: Social Science Psychology Research (4)
- PSYC-480 Research Design and Methods: Experimental Psychology (4)

One course in Biopsychology from the following:

- PSYC-240 Drugs and Behavior 5:2 (3)
- PSYC-318 Fundamentals of Human Neuropsychology (3)
- PSYC-325 Neurobiological Bases of Behavior (3)
- PSYC-360 The Evolution of Behavior (3)

One course in Learning and Cognition Courses from the following:

- PSYC-200 Behavior Principles (5:2) (3)
- PSYC-220 The Senses 5:2 (3)
- PSYC-300 Memory and Cognition (3)
- PSYC-370 Learning and Behavior (3)

Two courses in the Individual, the Situation, and Psychological Health from the following:

- PSYC-205 Social Psychology 4:2 (3)
- PSYC-215 Abnormal Psychology and Society 4:2 (3)
- PSYC-235 Theories of Personality 4:2 (3)
- PSYC-333 Health Psychology (3)
- PSYC-350 Child Psychology (3)

Psychology Electives to complete the required credit hours.

Note: No more than a combined total of 6 credit hours of PSYC-390 Independent Reading Course in Psychology, PSYC-392 Cooperative Education Field Experience, PSYC-490 Independent Study Project in Psychology and PSYC-491 Internship will apply toward fulfilling major requirements, although such additional courses will count toward graduation credits.

Students may include among these electives one of the following non-Psychology courses for credit toward their psychology major:

EDU 320 Psychology of Education
JLS 352 Psychiatry and the Law
HFIT 280 Sports Psychology

Recommendations (not required) for Majors Intending Post-Graduate Study

For majors interested in post-graduate work, particularly in Psychology and related disciplines, the Department recommends (1) adding breadth and depth to the major, (2) our 400 level, more intensive undergraduate psychological research course (s), and (3) field experience with research and/or practical applications of psychology. Majors should consult with their Psychology Department faculty advisor in planning their programs. They are also advised to look at the admission requirements of the graduate programs they are interested in applying to.

1. Breadth and depth can be achieved by taking at least 6 hours of psychology electives courses at the 500 level. These courses need to be taken after the student has fulfilled the prerequisite for that 500 level course or been excused from that prerequisite by permission of the instructor. Consult course catalog for prerequisites. It is suggested that one of these 500-level courses is from the Advanced Biopsychology/Learning cluster and one from Advanced Individual, Situation and Psychological Health cluster offerings listed below. However, with the approval of the student's Psychology Department faculty advisor, other 500 level psychology courses may be taken.

Advanced Biopsychology/Learning Courses:

PSYC 501 Physiological Psychology (3)
PSYC 513 Neuropharmacology (3)
PSYC 518 Advanced Human Neuropsychology (3)
PSYC 530 Conditioning and Learning (3)
PSYC 575 Advanced Memory and Cognition (3)

Advanced Individual, Situation and Psychological Health Courses:

PSYC 505 Advanced Theories of Personality (3)
PSYC 533 Cognitive Behavior Therapy (3)
PSYC 540 Advanced Social Psychology (3)
PSYC 560 Advanced Child Psychology (3)
PSYC 551 Psychopathology (3)

2. The more intensive psychological research courses are PSYC-433 (Research Design & Methods: Social Science Psychology) and PSYC-480 (Research Design & Methods: Experimental Psychology).
3. A student can gain field experience with research and practical applications of psychology via the following courses:

PSYC 392 Cooperative Education Field Experience
PSYC 490 Independent Study Project in Psychology
PSYC 491 Internship
PSYC 498 Honors Thesis and Seminar (Currently, Senior Thesis Seminar)

Psychology Electives -- take 14 or 15 (depending on the research courses taken) Psychology credits

Take 14 or 15 (depending on the research courses taken) additional Psychology credits to complete the major. Additional psychology courses are listed in the University Catalog and may be used as electives.

The Minor in Psychology

To become a Psychology Minor, come to the Psychology Department (Asbury 321) and fill out a minor declaration form.

A total of **22** psychology credits, at least nine of which must be at the 300-level or higher, is required to graduate with a minor in Psychology (These courses can be through the Consortium with the approval of the Psychology Department Chair). All courses counting toward the minor in Psychology must be taken for a grade and passed with a grade of C or better. The 22 credits must include:

Required Foundation Courses

1. **PSYC-105 -- Psychology: Understanding Human Behavior**
2. **PSYC-115 --Psychology as a Natural Science**
(Must be taken concurrently with PSYC-116)
PSYC-116 --Psychology as a Natural Science Lab
(Must be taken concurrently with PSYC-115)

3. **Natural Sciences Courses (take at least one course)**

PSYC-200 -- Behavior Principles
PSYC-220 -- The Senses
PSYC-240 -- Drugs and Behavior
PSYC-300 -- Memory and Cognition
PSYC-318 -- Fundamentals of Neuropsychology
PSYC-325 -- Neurobiological Bases of Behavior
PSYC-360 -- The Evolution of Behavior
PSYC-370 -- Learning and Behavior

4. **Social Sciences Courses (take at least one course)**

PSYC-205 -- Social Psychology
PSYC-215 -- Abnormal Psychology and Society
PSYC-235 -- Theories of Personality
PSYC-333 -- Health Psychology
PSYC-350 -- Child Psychology

5. **Psychology Electives**

You are required to take 9 additional credits in the psychology department.

Also note that a maximum of 3 credits can be used from the following courses to fulfill the minor requirements: Independent study, Independent reading and Internship. Additional credits from these courses may contribute to your graduation requirements, but will not count towards the minor requirements.

Note: Basic Statistics (STAT-202) is not required for the minor in Psychology.

Note: Transfer students can apply no more than nine credits from other universities to the minor in Psychology.

Combined B.A./M.A. Program in General Psychology

This program gives full-time students the opportunity to complete both the B.A. and M.A. in Psychology in as little as five years.

The BA/MA Program is designed for students who want a terminal master's degree or want experience at the graduate level before applying to a doctoral (Ph.D.) program. These experiences permit students to test their interest in pursuing a career in psychology while strengthening their applications to doctoral programs. Students in the BA/MA program can earn graduate credits while gaining experience in research and applied areas of psychology through Directed Research courses, Internships and volunteer opportunities. Up to nine of these graduate credits can count toward the students' BA as well as their MA.

Admission to the Program

Students should apply for this program no later than the first semester of their senior year and no earlier than the first semester of their junior year. Before applying to the BA/M.A. program in General Psychology a student must have (1) completed at least half the credit hours required for the B.A. in Psychology (2) a 3.00 grade point average (on a 4.00 scale) in Psychology, and (3) the required Statistics course. To apply to the BA/MA program, a student should submit a completed application for Graduate Admission (through the Office of Admissions) that includes scores from General (Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytic sections) of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), two letters of recommendation, and copies of all college transcripts.

Degree and Major Requirements

- All requirements for the B.A. degree with a major in psychology
- All requirements for the M.A. degree in any of the Department's three Master's Degree tracks, General Psychology, Personality/Social Psychology or Experimental/Biobehavioral Psychology. These requirements can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook.
- Students may apply two 500-level Psychology courses toward meeting the requirements of both degrees.

Psychology Credits at Other Universities

Some students choose to take courses during the summer at another university and/ or become involved in exchange programs for a semester. **The only way you can ensure that such courses will apply to your major in Psychology at American University is to receive approval to do this before beginning your classes. There is a limit of 6 credits in the major that can be taken at another four year college or university.** The procedure is reasonably simple. Pick up the University form (Undergraduate Permit to Study at Another Institution) requesting permission to study at another institution and take it to your advisor with the catalog copy of the course description. Once your advisor has signed off on your request, you will then need to get final approval from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Study Abroad

AU Abroad Program

There are courses at Universities in foreign countries which are approved by the American University Study Abroad Program. These courses are as if taken at American University. They can count for major or minor requirements. You must get approval prior to taking the course. Get a copy of the course description and a syllabus if possible. (See Dr. Riley, the Chair of the Department of Psychology for details).

Partnered Universities

Other foreign universities are only partnered with American University and courses taken at partnered institutions are not automatically accepted by American University. These courses have to be approved individually. There is no limit to the number of courses taken in a foreign university for AU credit but a maximum of six such credits can count toward the major. Fill out the Partner Course Approval Form, have your advisor sign it. Make a copy for yourself and submit the original to American University, AU Abroad (See Dr. Riley for details). Note that unless the course is taken at an institution that is part of the AU Study Abroad Program, only credits (and not grades) will be transferred. If the foreign university is not part of AU Abroad and is not a partnered institution, courses taken at foreign universities will not count.

AU Abroad 202-885-1320
Rockwood Building -8039
AUAbroad@american.edu

The Psychology Transfer Student

Some special rules apply to the transfer of courses into the Psychology Department by a student who transfers to AU in fulfilling the requirements for the major and the minor. These rules are:

- 1) Psychology Major: The major in Psychology requires the completion of a total of 41 credits (37 in Psychology and 4 in Statistics). No more than 18 of these credits can be transferred from another university by the transfer student.
- 2) Psychology Minor: The minor in Psychology requires the completion of a total of 22 credits in Psychology. No more than 9 of these credits can be transferred from another university by the transfer student.

It is important to note that although only 18 transfer credits can apply to the major and 9 transfer credits can apply to the minor, this does not mean that you lose credit if you transfer more than this number of Psychology credits. If American University accepts your courses, they will apply to your overall University credits as electives for graduation even if they can't be applied towards your major. Only courses from another university with a grade of "C" or better can be applied to your Psychology Major or Minor.

If you are a transfer student and have any questions about the transfer of your credits, contact the Department Administrative Assistant, Sara Holland (202-885-1717, holland@american.edu) who will refer you to the transfer student advisor.

Research and Clinical Training Opportunities within the Department

The Psychology Department offers a variety of research and clinical training opportunities. Because of the experience that you can gain from participation in these projects, we encourage you to become actively involved. Your participation can take many forms, ranging from research in independent Study projects, scholarly analysis through independent readings and direct clinical experience through internships. These projects and experiences are coordinated by individual faculty in the department. Each requires special permission. Consult your advisor for details. Academic credit for these activities may be obtained by registering in any of the following courses.

1. Independent Study Project in Psychology (PSYC-490)
2. Independent Reading Course in Psychology (PSYC-390)
3. Internship (PSYC-491).
4. Work in Faculty Laboratories or on Other Research Projects under faculty member supervision (PSYC-390 or PSYC-490)

The Psychology Department is committed to supporting undergraduates in animal and human research and in clinical training and evaluation. On the following page, the Psychology Department faculty are listed with their areas of interest and expertise. Feel free to contact them to discuss their work, inquire whether they would be available to supervise you or simply to talk about shared interest.

Internships

Students interested in taking part in an internship should do the following:

- Find an internship that is clearly in Psychology. You may consult with faculty for ideas or talk to the faculty member who teaches the internship course (PSYC-491 001). A current list of placements is available from Dr. Gray (x1716) as well as a list of parents of autistic children who need college students to work for pay with their children. Also, on the landing as you come up the stairs from the second to the third floor in the Asbury building (South Wing), you will see an undergraduate bulletin board with lists of internship placements and families looking for students to work with their autistic children as well as research oriented placements.
- You should spend at least fifteen hours per week at the placement if your internship is for three credits. 10 hours per week for 2 credits and 5 hours per week for 1 credit. You should be supervised by a licensed mental health worker.
- You should plan to meet regularly once a week in a group with the faculty member in charge of the Internship course. You will be asked to keep a journal and read books and articles that relate to your placement.

Forms to Be Completed

- American University internship agreement.
- Internship/cooperative education consent and release form.
- Internship Registration Form.

Full-Time Faculty Research Interests

Anthony H. Ahrens, Ph.D.	Gratitude, mindfulness and fear of emotion.
Michele M. Carter, Ph.D.	Anxiety disorders, African-American issues, cognitive therapy, depression.
Noemí Enchautegui-de-Jesús, Ph.D.	Job stressors, work-family balance, and coping resources in low-income families and communities; African-American and Latino issues; women and children/youth well-being
Bryan D. Fantie, Ph.D.	Human neuropsychology, behavioral & cognitive neuroscience, brain dysfunction, cognition, emotion, head injury, bipolar disorder, depression, behavioral genetics.
Maria Gomez-Serrano, Ph.D.	Neuroscience, basic physiology, immunoreactivity, epigenetic factors in drug abuse, maternal behavior in drug use and abuse.
James J. Gray, Ph.D.	Eating disorders, OCD, trichotillomania, cognitive behavior therapy, psychology of religion.
Kathleen C. Gunthert, Ph.D.	Stress and coping, depression, cognitive therapy, body image, anxiety.
David A.F. Haaga, Ph.D.	Cognitive assessment, depression, cigarette smoking.
Laura M. Juliano, Ph.D.	Smoking, caffeine, drug expectancies, placebo effects, anxiety
David N. Kearns, Ph.D.	Animal models of drug abuse and addiction, conditioning and learning, extinction.
GiShawn Mance, Ph.D.	Prevention; community interventions; depression; African American youth; mental health disparities; stress and coping; impact of culture and context on treatment.
Scott Parker	Psychophysics and related areas.
Zehra Peynircioğlu, Ph.D.	Human memory and metamemory and cognition in general
Anthony L. Riley, Ph.D.	Psychopharmacology, prenatal drug effects, drug addiction and abuse, drug interactions, taste aversions.
Arthur Shapiro, Ph.D.	Visual perception and cognitive neuroscience, color, motion, visual camouflage, and low-light-level vision. Created a series of visual phenomena ("illusions") that elucidate the connections between perception, the brain, and the physical world and can be seen at www.shapirolab.net , and www.illusionsciences.com .

Catherine Stoodley, Ph.D.

Neurophysiological underpinnings of development and developmental disorders such as developmental dyslexia; regional specification in the human cerebellum for cognitive and motor functions.

Alan M. Silberberg, Ph.D.

Learning theory and choice behavior, behavioral economics

Stanley J. Weiss, Ph.D.

Classical and operant conditioning, motivation, stimulus control, behavior and pharmacology.

Carol S. Weissbrod, Ph.D.

Developmental-social, emotional behavior, child clinical issues, sports psychology.

Brian T. Yates, Ph.D.

Program evaluation (cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses) applied to almost any human service system (e.g., substance abuse treatment, supported housing, paraprofessional and consumer operated services).

University Honors In Psychology

Students in the Honors Program must choose between University Honors or Honors in Psychology, but not both. Dr. James Gray is currently the Honors coordinator for the Psychology Department. Psychology majors are encouraged to do honors in psychology. If you are not in the Honors program, you can self nominate. You can present your research at the Honors conference in the Spring of your senior year.

Requirements

Fill out the application for the Honors program available at the University Honors program at Hurst Hall 206. Students must complete 30 credits of honors classes across three levels (This can be reduced in special circumstances, e.g. transfer students)

Level I – 100-200 level Honors Classes – no minimum, maximum of 18 credits

At least 12 of the 30 credits must be at Level II and Level III.

Level II – Six credits of classes fulfilled from the following:

- a) Honors Colloquia courses approved for Psychology major credit.
- b) Psychology classes at the 300 level or above with an additional *honors supplement* added by the professor (e.g. an additional paper).
- c) Courses at the 500 level (with Honors Graduate Supplement Form)
- d) Independent studies approved for honors credit.

Level III Capstone (thesis)

The student must find a Psychology Department faculty member to supervise her/his capstone (thesis) experience. The student must register for PSYC-498 Senior Thesis Seminar in Psychology (3 credits) for two successive semesters. Download and fill out the capstone application form (from <http://www.american.edu/provost/honors/upload/Capstone-Form-Updated-5-24-10.pdf> and get the appropriate signatures. Honors should appear in the second line title on the course registration. During the semester the student meets individually with the Honors advisor. Any faculty member can supervise an Honors Thesis. Undergraduate research grants are available (Please call 202-885-6198).

The Honors thesis is synonymous with the capstone. A psychology research course (PSYC-480, PSYC-433 or PSYC-301) is a prerequisite for the Senior Thesis Seminar (PSYC-498) and should be taken during the junior year. The Honors project can be an addition or extension of a project done in one of these courses. Students should start their research as early as possible, for example during the summer before the senior year.

Psi Chi: National Honor Society in Psychology

Psi Chi is the National Honor Society in Psychology. Students in the second semester of their sophomore year with a 3.3 cumulative average (GPA) and a 3.3 (GPA) in Psychology courses are eligible

to join. Contact Dr. James Gray for details jgray@american.edu.

Psychology Club

All psychology majors are encouraged to join the Psychology Club. Each year a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer and a representative to the undergraduate curriculum committee are elected. The club helps run “Career Night” and “Graduate School Night” as well as inviting speakers on such topics as Sports Psychology and Forensic Psychology. Members of the Psychology club are available as mentors to new psychology majors.

American Psychological Association (APA)

You can become an American Psychological Association Student Affiliate as an undergraduate Psychology major. The 2011 Affiliate dues are \$27.00. You get reduced rates on APA journals and books. You will receive the *APA Monitor*, a monthly magazine, which contains news about the discipline of Psychology. You will also receive the *American Psychologist*, a monthly journal with scholarly articles pertaining to important issues in Psychology. You will get a discounted reservation at the APA convention and discounts on a variety of consumer services.

Visit the APA website at www.apa.org

Books

Getting In: A Step-by-Step Plan for Gaining Admission to Graduate School in Psychology (Second Edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2007. -\$19.95

Graduate Study in Psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychology Association, 2011. -\$28.95

Kracen, A.C. & Wallace, I. J. (2008). Applying to Graduate School in Psychology. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Norcross, John C. Michael A. Sayette, Tracy J. Mayne. Insider’s Guide to Graduate Programs in Clinical and Counseling Psychology (2010/2011 Edition). New York: The Guilford Press, 2011.

Landrum, Eric R., Stephen F. Davis. The Psychology Major: Career Options and Strategies for Success (Fourth Edition). New Jersey: Pearson, 2009.

Psychology: Careers for the Twenty-First Century. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003. <http://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/careers.pdf>

Sternberg, Robert J. Career Paths in Psychology: Where Your Degree Can Take You (Second Edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009.

Charles B. Ferster Award for Excellence in Psychology

Each year, early in the Spring semester, the Chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will ask the registrar to supply the GPA's for all psychology majors graduating in January, May or August of that year. Then, all Psychology Department faculty will be given the names of graduating seniors with a GPA over 3.5 in the major and a list of all other graduating Psychology majors as well. The faculty will be asked to nominate any senior for the Ferster award and to give whatever supporting materials they have (research experience, conference presentations, publications, etc.). Students may present supporting materials as well. The faculty members of the UCC will then nominate one senior to receive the award.

Psychology Department Events

All psychology related events are posted on the Blackboard site for majors. You can speak to the administrative assistant in the Psychology Department (Asbury 321) or email psychology@american.edu to have your name added to the Blackboard site so you can receive updates and information about the department and events.

- a) A welcoming party for majors early in the Fall semester.
- b) A "career" night in the mid-fall to prepare students for applying to Ph.D., Psy.D., M.S.W., and other graduate programs.
- c) A "graduate school" night in the mid-spring to prepare students for jobs with the BA in Psychology
- d) A Psychology Department gathering and award ceremony at the end of the Spring semester.
- e) A luncheon and award ceremony for Psi Chi inductees at the end of the spring semester.
- f) Colloquium speakers throughout the semester.