

School of Arts and Sciences



PSYCHOLOGY

www.psychology.pitt.edu

Psychology is a natural science for those who seek to understand human behavior and mental processes. It encompasses areas such as perception, child development, learning, thinking and problem solving, social interaction and processes, organizational processes, behavior, personality, and the causes and treatment of emotional disturbances. Understanding psychology is key to understanding virtually everything we experience and observe around us.

As a program with its roots in basic and applied research, the University of Pittsburgh's undergraduate psychology program emphasizes the scientific method, foundations of theory, methods of investigation, and the results of scientific studies. Research is paramount in Pitt's Department of Psychology; it boasts one of the largest and most productive groups of psychologists in the country and was tied for first place in the "field" of psychology/psychiatry for relative impact of papers published, in ranking by the Institute for Scientific Information.

Our curriculum offers you a broad background in the major disciplines of psychology—developmental, social, cognitive, health, and clinical. As part of the required course work, you acquire related skills in advanced math and statistics; you also explore subjects that delve into how humans think and act.

Although the undergraduate psychology program does not train students to treat psychological problems, it does provide you with the skills to think critically and communicate effectively about human behavior and related topics. These skills can help you become successfully employed in an area such as human resources, community and social services, public relations, counseling and education, residential care, sales, consumer affairs, or advertising. An undergraduate psychology degree from Pitt also can prepare you to enter a graduate-level program in psychology, special education, business administration, medicine, information science, social work, public health, or law.

Required Courses

The required courses for the undergraduate psychology program fall into four categories:

I. Foundation Courses (three courses):

In most cases, these three courses are the first you will take toward completing a psychology degree. They serve as prerequisites for most of the other psychology courses and give you a necessary familiarity with statistics and research techniques.

PSY 0035 Research Methods

Students learn the fundamentals of psychological research in this writing intensive laboratory course, including how to select a research problem, design a research protocol, write research proposals and papers, and maintain ethical considerations.

PSY 0010 Introduction to Psychology

As an introduction to the topic, this course teaches you the methods, theories, and phenomena of different concentrations of psychology, including development, motivation, the biological basis of behavior, learning and memory, sensation and perception, personality, and abnormal behavior. Students participate in out-of-class research studies or produce short research papers.

One of the following three courses:

STAT 0200 Basic Applied Statistics

This course familiarizes students with descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, both of which help us predict outcomes about people or situations based on the factors we know. Students learn to conduct their own analysis of standard one- or two-sample data sets, follow statistical reasoning, and understand statistical reports. User-friendly software is employed.

STAT 1000 Applied Statistical Methods

As a more in-depth introduction to statistics, this course is for students who plan to perform data analysis and study areas of statistics in more advanced courses. Emphasis is placed on understanding the statistical reasoning that supports the methods. Topics covered include elementary probability, random sampling, controlled experiments, hypothesis testing, regression, and the analysis of variance.

STAT 1100 Statistics and Probability for Business Management

This is a one-term introduction to statistics and probability intended primarily for undergraduate business administration majors and for joint Arts and Sciences/business majors. Emphasis will be equally placed on statistical models, descriptive statistics, and the analysis of data. A statistical computer package will be introduced, and the students will be shown how to use this package to analyze management data.

II. Psychology Core Courses (four courses):

PSY 0310 Developmental Psychology

This area of psychology looks at the development of social, emotional, intellectual, perceptual, and language skills in the average child from birth through adolescence. Students in this course examine the skills we develop, how we develop them, and why.

One of the following two courses:

PSY 0105 Introduction to Social Psychology

This course gives you an overview of how people influence each other's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Topics covered include self-understanding, attitude-behavior relations, conformity, conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships, altruism, and aggression.

PSY 0160 Psychology of Personality

In the simplest of definitions, personality could be called what "makes us tick." In this course, students learn the different approaches to studying the complex topic of personality by analyzing theories, assessment techniques, and research findings.

One of the following two courses:

PSY 0405 Learning and Motivation

In looking at the basic principles of learning and motivation, this course focuses on the processes that motivate and teach behavior. Examples include the connection between "joy" and primary and conditioned reinforcement, "fear" and punishment, "relief" and avoidance, and "frustration" and nonreinforcement.

PSY 0420 Cognitive Psychology

This writing intensive course deals with the experimental psychology of human learning, memory, and thinking. It is helpful for students who would like to learn more about human thinking or plan on advanced study in problem solving, learning, memory, attention, psycholinguistics, or human performance.

One of the following two courses:

PSY 0505 Introduction to Biopsychology

This course explores the biological bases of behavior, such as feeding, sexual behavior, aggression, sleep and wakefulness, and learning and memory. Students examine data from experiments to try to determine how brain structures and neurotransmitters control behavior.

PSY 0510 Sensation and Perception

Through lectures and discussion, students learn how physiological mechanisms, in particular the firing of neurons, translate sensory input (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) into our perception of the world. Topics covered include the structure and function of sensory systems and the perception of color, objects, motion, and pitch.

III. Upper-Division Courses (three courses)

Students are required to take three upper-division psychology courses (1000 level or above). There is a wide selection of courses to choose from, and you are encouraged to select courses from several disciplines of psychology. Examples include:

PSY 1025 Tests and Measurements
PSY 1075 History and Systems of Psychology
PSY 1110 Psychological Aspects of Human Sexuality
PSY 1115 Social Psychology and Criminal Justice
PSY 1125 Attitudes and Attitude Change
PSY 1155 Psychology of Small Groups
PSY 1205 Abnormal Psychology
PSY 1210 Introduction to Clinical Psychology
PSY 1215 Health Psychology
PSY 1230 Psychology of Death and Dying
PSY 1270 Child Psychopathology
PSY 1305 Experimental Child Psychology
PSY 1315 Developmental Psychology: Infancy
PSY 1320 Developmental Psychology: Language
PSY 1360 Psychology of Black Children
PSY 1460 Human Learning and Memory
PSY 1480 Motivation of Behavior
PSY 1514 Evolutionary Psychology
PSY 1580 Language and the Mind
PSY 1635 Organizational Psychology

Note: Three credits of PSY 1900 Supervised Field Placement, PSY 1902 Directed Individual Reading, or PSY 1903 Directed Individual Research may be substituted for one of these upper-division courses.

IV. Co-requirements:

- (a) Choose one of the following **math** courses:
MATH 0120 Business Calculus
MATH 0220 Analytic Geometry and Calculus I
MATH 0400 Discrete Mathematical Structures
- (b) One social science course from the following departments:
Anthropology
Economics
Political Science
Sociology
- (c) Choose one of the following **biological sciences** courses:
ANTH 0620 Biocultural Anthropology
ANTH 0646 Evolutionary Theory
ANTH 0669 Sex and Evolution
ANTH 0680 Physical Anthropology

BIOSC 0150 Foundations of Biology 1
BIOSC 0160 Foundations of Biology 2
BIOSC 0800 Biology for Nonmajors 1

NROSCI 0080 Brain and Behavior
NROSCI 0081 Drugs and Behavior
NROSCI 1000 Introduction to Neuroscience

Honors in Psychology

The honors major in psychology offers a challenging and interesting research experience, through which students work with a faculty member, write a thesis, and earn the recognition that comes with superior performance. Completion of the honors major can offer valuable skills that will be helpful in applications to graduate school and for potential employers.

Students will enroll in three credits of PSY 1973 Honors Directed Research and three credits of PSY 1975 Honors Thesis. The courses are designed to give students academic credits for working on their research project, writing a thesis based on this research in an American Psychological Association-style manuscript, and presenting and defending this thesis before a faculty committee. (Committee members can be selected at a later date.)

Students also must fill all of the remaining requirements for the general major as well as their School of Arts and Sciences degree requirements. In addition, they must have a 3.25 overall quality point average (QPA) and a 3.5 psychology major QPA at the time of graduation to receive honors in psychology. Some students also complete degree requirements from the University Honors College, although admission to the honors college is not required to earn honors in psychology.

For psychology advising information, please contact:

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Psychology
Undergraduate Advising Office
3117 Sennott Square
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-4540
www.psychology.pitt.edu

For information on other majors, please contact:

University of Pittsburgh
Office of Admissions and Financial Aid
Alumni Hall, 4227 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-PITT
E-mail: oafa@pitt.edu
www.oafa.pitt.edu

Special Programs

Undergraduate Research

Undergraduate students can conduct individual experimental research under the supervision of a faculty member for credit toward their degree. Pitt's Department of Psychology is distinguished by the amount of basic research that is conducted on matters of practical importance, such as addictive behavior and relapse, the effects of day care on child development, infant socialization, and the effects of stress on cardiovascular health. Experiencing the techniques of scientific research firsthand can help you focus your career path and gain the necessary background for pursuing an advanced degree in psychology.

Internships/Volunteer Opportunities

Students may work as interns or volunteers at a variety of organizations in Pittsburgh for career-related experience. Examples of possibilities include the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, the world's leading center for the diagnosis and treatment of mood disorders; Allegheny County Medical Examiners Office; The Children's Institute; Family Resources; Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force; CONTACT Pittsburgh; and Pitt's Office of Human Resources.

Study Abroad

Studying abroad is an exciting way to add an international perspective to your undergraduate education and strengthen your credentials as a graduate. The University of Pittsburgh encourages you to take advantage of this opportunity (almost 5 percent of Pitt students study abroad compared with 1.3 percent, nationally). Study abroad will not only distinguish you when you enter the job market or pursue graduate study, but also help broaden your experience of the world beyond your own country's borders, giving you an appreciation of other cultures and peoples while allowing you to earn credits toward your degree. Scholarships are available, and financial aid is applicable.

Psi Chi National Honor Society

The University of Pittsburgh chapter of Psi Chi hosts informal faculty research seminars where undergraduates can learn about the latest research findings on human behavior and have a look at how psychological research is conducted. The organization also sponsors social activities and volunteer opportunities.

Panther Psychology Club

This organization is open to all University students who are interested in psychology and offers social, service, and lecture events.