

Psychology, BA

An undergraduate degree in psychology provides students with skills that are relevant to many career paths. The major in psychology is designed to contribute to students' general liberal arts and sciences education and to provide a foundation for postbaccalaureate training in psychology and closely related disciplines as well as in areas such as business, law, communication, medicine, and the allied health sciences. Students who intend to enter the job market immediately after graduation should complement their psychology major with substantial preparation in another program that is more closely tied to their area of interest (e.g., education, social work, business, journalism, nursing). Almost all vocational opportunities in psychology require advanced degrees.

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree has fewer specific requirements than the Bachelor of Science (BS) degree and places less emphasis on methodology. The program leaves time for students to supplement the psychology major with another program of study.

Students who change to a psychology major after two years of undergraduate work may find they do not have sufficient background for the BS program. They may wish to enrich the BA program with courses in experimental psychology and other advanced electives if they intend to pursue graduate work in psychology or a related field.

Students begin with a general introductory course and an orientation course, followed by methodology and data analysis courses, and introductory courses in several broad areas: behavioral neuroscience, developmental science, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, and social psychology. These courses are followed by upper-level psychology courses selected by each student. For additional information regarding the undergraduate major and career information, visit Undergraduate Programs on the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences website.

The department maintains excellent facilities to support teaching and research on human and animal behavior. All faculty members are directly engaged in research, and they bring to their undergraduate teaching the excitement that such activity generates. Many opportunities exist for interested and capable students to participate in current research projects in the department.

The department has an active undergraduate organization, Psi Chi + Psych Iowa. The group sponsors speakers, films, career days, and student symposia. The Psi Chi portion is an honors society, whereas the Psych Iowa portion is open to any interested UI undergraduate student.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for students in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences align with several of the learning goals from the American Psychological Association's guidelines for undergraduate psychology education. These learning outcomes expand and deepen students' foundational knowledge obtained through the GE CLAS Core program.

Psychology majors will:

- understand psychology as an empirical science;
- graduate with a knowledge base in psychology, including an understanding of the major principles and theories in the field's main content areas;

- have learned how to use scientific reasoning to understand psychological phenomena and how to interpret and conduct psychological research; and
- be able to apply their knowledge of psychology to real-world situations and recognize the importance of ethical standards and diversity in psychology.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in psychology requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including 47–48 s.h. of work for the major, with at least 35 s.h. in psychology courses. Students must maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They must also complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core. Transfer credits must be approved by the department, and transfer students must complete at least 18 s.h. of psychology courses at the University of Iowa.

In planning coursework, students should be guided by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences maximum hours rule: students earning a BA may apply a maximum of 56 s.h. earned in one department to the minimum 120 s.h. required for graduation, whether or not the coursework is accepted toward requirements for the major; students who earn more than 56 s.h. from one department may use the additional semester hours to satisfy requirements for the major (if the department accepts them), and the grades they earn become part of their grade-point average, but they cannot apply the additional semester hours to the minimum 120 s.h. required for graduation.

The major for the BA is designed for students who wish to gain considerable knowledge in psychology but do not necessarily plan a professional career in the discipline. It is appropriate for students preparing for careers in law, business, counseling, social work, or secondary school teaching (see the section titled "Teacher Licensure"). It can be combined with a second major more easily than the Bachelor of Science program.

The choice of a degree program should be dictated by a student's personal career goals. BA students interested in pursuing graduate study in psychology or other social sciences may enrich their program by taking courses in mathematics, statistics, research methods, and the natural sciences.

BA and BS students complete the same psychology core and psychology electives. The BA also requires an additional statistics or computer science course plus a second concentration area.

Students are advised to take PSY:1001 Elementary Psychology as the first course in the major; however, if a student must take PSY:1001 for the first time after completing another psychology course with a higher number, the student may do so.

Students must take PSY:1005 Orientation to the Psychology Major: Foundations for Academic and Career Success within one of the next two semesters after they declare the psychology major.

The BA with a major in psychology requires the following courses or their equivalents.

Requirements	Hours
Psychology Core	7
Lower-Level Psychology Requirements	19
Upper-Level Psychology Electives	9

Cognate Requirement	3-4
Second Concentration Area Courses	9

Psychology Core

All students complete the following coursework for the psychology core.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
PSY:1001	Elementary Psychology	3
PSY:1005	Orientation to the Psychology Major: Foundations for Academic and Career Success	1
PSY:2811	Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology I	3

Lower-Level Psychology Requirements

Students take these courses after completing PSY:1001 Elementary Psychology.

Course #	Title	Hours
All of these:		
PSY:2301	Introduction to Clinical Psychology	3
PSY:2401	Introduction to Developmental Science	3
PSY:2501	Introduction to Social Psychology	3
PSY:2601	Introduction to Cognitive Psychology	3
PSY:2701	Introduction to Behavioral Neuroscience	4
PSY:2812	Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology II	3

Upper-Level Psychology Electives

Students take three advanced psychology courses (total of 9 s.h.) after satisfactorily completing the psychology core and other specified prerequisites. Psychology courses (prefix PSY) numbered 3000 or above may be used to fulfill this requirement, except those in the following list.

Course #	Title	Hours
PSY:3994	Research Practicum in Psychology	arr.
PSY:3995	Advanced Research Practicum	1-3
PSY:3996	External Practicum in Psychology	1-3
PSY:3997	Teaching/Advising Practicum in Psychology	1-3
PSY:3998	Individual Readings and Projects	1-3
PSY:3999/ BIOL:3999	Independent Research in Neuroscience	2-3
PSY:4020	Laboratory in Psychology	4
PSY:4025	Laboratory in Cognitive Neuroscience	4
PSY:4035	Laboratory in Computational Neuroscience	4

PSY:4090	Psychology Seminar	3
PSY:4990	Honors Thesis Research	1-3
PSY:4995/ BIOL:4995	Honors Research in Neuroscience	arr.

Additional Requirements

Cognate Requirement

Students complete one of the following math, statistics, or computer science courses.

Course #	Title	Hours
Statistics		
BIOS:4120	Introduction to Biostatistics	3
STAT:1020/ PSQF:1020	Elementary Statistics and Inference	3
STAT:1030	Statistics for Business	4
STAT:3510/ IGPI:3510	Biostatistics	3
STAT:4143/ PSQF:4143	Introduction to Statistical Methods	3
Computer Science		
CS:1020	Principles of Computing	3
CS:1110	Introduction to Computer Science	3
CS:1210	Computer Science I: Fundamentals	4
Mathematics		
MATH:1860	Calculus II	4
MATH:2700	Introduction to Linear Algebra	4

Second Concentration Area

Students complete 9 s.h. of graded coursework in a single department other than the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. Courses used to fulfill this requirement must be taken at the University of Iowa and may not be used to fulfill GE CLAS Core requirements. A second major or a minor may be used to fulfill the requirement.

Teacher Licensure

Students interested in teaching in elementary and/or secondary schools should seek admission to the Teacher Education Program (TEP) in the College of Education.

To qualify for licensure in secondary teaching, students in the TEP complete a degree in education as well as a related College of Liberal Arts and Sciences degree. See Apply on the College of Education website for details on requirements and deadlines for applying to the College of Education and about TEP choices of majors leading to licensure.

Honors

Honors in the Major

Students majoring in psychology have the opportunity to graduate with honors in the major. They must maintain a cumulative University of Iowa grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.33 and a minimum GPA of 3.50 in the major.

There are two routes for honors in the major, one of which involves a thesis project as a capstone. For students who pursue honors without a thesis, other experiences constitute the capstone. Both routes include extra coursework.

Interested students are encouraged to read Honors in Psychology on the department's website.

National Honor Society

The department sponsors a chapter of Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology and an affiliate of the American Psychological Association. Students who have a GPA of at least 3.00 overall and in psychology coursework and who have completed 9 s.h. of psychology courses may request a membership application form. Consult the department's academic coordinator for more information.

University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students have opportunities for honors study and activities through membership in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the University's honors program.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the psychology major.

Combined Programs

BA/MPH (Community and Behavioral Health Subprogram)

Bachelor of Arts students majoring in psychology who are interested in earning a Master of Public Health degree with a community and behavioral health subprogram may apply to the combined BA/MPH program offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Public Health. The program permits students to count 12 s.h. of credit toward the requirements for both degrees, enabling them to begin the study of public health before they complete the bachelor's degree. For information about the public health program, see Community and Behavioral Health Subprogram in the Master of Public Health, MPH section of the catalog.

Admission

Admission to the psychology major is open; any University of Iowa undergraduate student may enter the BA program.

Entering first-year and transfer students who have completed less than 30 s.h. of coursework and are interested in entering the BS program are admitted to the BA program until they satisfy the admission requirements for the BS program. New transfer students who meet the admission requirements for the BS program may choose to enter the BS or the BA program.

Students in the BA program may switch to the BS program if they meet admission requirements at the time of the request. Students may switch from the BS to the BA program at any time.

Career Advancement

The major in psychology is designed to contribute to students' general liberal arts and sciences education and to provide a foundation for postbaccalaureate training in psychology and closely related disciplines as well as in areas such as business, law, communication, medicine, and the allied health sciences.

Undergraduate psychology students who do not intend to enroll in graduate school immediately after earning their

bachelor's degree frequently earn a second major in a discipline that has broad opportunities for employment, such as education, social work, business, journalism, or nursing.

Learn more about careers in psychology at the American Psychological Association website.

The Pomerantz Career Center offers multiple resources to help students find internships and jobs.

Academic Plans

Four-Year Graduation Plan

The following checkpoints list the minimum requirements students must complete by certain semesters in order to stay on the University's Four-Year Graduation Plan. Courses in the major are those required to complete the major; they may be offered by departments other than the major department.

In addition to courses in psychology, the BA requires three graded courses in a second concentration area.

Before the third semester begins: PSY:1001 Elementary Psychology and PSY:1005 Orientation to the Psychology Major: Foundations for Academic and Career Success.

Before the fifth semester begins: PSY:2811 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology I and one or more lower-level psychology requirements.

Before the seventh semester begins: four courses in the major (including PSY:2701 Introduction to Behavioral Neuroscience and PSY:2812 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology II), one course in the second concentration area, and at least 90 s.h. earned toward the degree.

Before the eighth semester begins: two additional courses in the major and an additional course in the second concentration area.

During the eighth semester: enrollment in all remaining coursework in the major, all remaining GE CLAS Core courses, and a sufficient number of semester hours to graduate.

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		

Students are strongly encouraged to complete internships, practicums, and other experiential learning; PSY:3994 Research Practicum in Psychology is required if planning to complete a PhD in psychology.

GE CLAS Core: Sustainability ^a

	Hours	0
First Year		
Fall		
PSY:1001	Elementary Psychology ^b	3
PSY:1005	Orientation to the Psychology Major: Foundations for Academic and Career Success	1

ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030	Interpreting Literature or Rhetoric: Writing and Communication	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Understanding Cultural Perspectives ^c		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course ^d		4 - 5
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	1
Hours		15-17
Spring		
PSY:2401 or PSY:2501	Introduction to Developmental Science ^e or Introduction to Social Psychology	3
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric: Writing and Communication or Interpreting Literature	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues ^c		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^d		4 - 5
Elective course (or exploratory course for major second concentration area) ^f		3
Hours		16-18
Second Year		
Fall		
PSY:2401 or PSY:2501	Introduction to Developmental Science ^e or Introduction to Social Psychology	3
PSY:2811	Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology I	3
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives ^c		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course ^d		4 - 5
Elective course ^f		2 - 3
Hours		15-17
Spring		
PSY:2301	Introduction to Clinical Psychology ^e	3
PSY:2812	Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology II	3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab (BIOL:1140 Human Biology: Nonmajors recommended but not required) ^c		4
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course ^d		4 - 5
Elective course ^f		3
Hours		17-18
Third Year		
Fall		
PSY:2601	Introduction to Cognitive Psychology ^e	3
PSY:2701	Introduction to Behavioral Neuroscience	4
Major: second concentration area course ^g		3
GE CLAS Core: Values and Society ^c		3
Elective course ^f		3
Hours		16
Spring		
Major: cognate requirement course ^h		3 - 4

Major: second concentration area course ^g	3
Major: upper-level psychology course (prefix PSY, numbered 3000 or above) ⁱ	3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts ^c	3
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab ^c	3

Hours 15-16

Fourth Year

Fall

Major: upper-level psychology course (prefix PSY, numbered 3000 or above) ⁱ	3
Elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^f	3

Hours 15

Spring

Major: second concentration area course ^g	3
Major: upper-level psychology course (prefix PSY, numbered 3000 or above) ⁱ	3
Elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^f	3
Elective course ^f	3

Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall)^j

Hours 15

Total Hours 124-132

a Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative or Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Society.

b Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.

c GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.

d Students who have completed four levels of a single language or two levels of two different languages in high school or college have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Students who have completed three levels of a single language may complete a fourth-level course in the same language or may choose an approved World Language and Cultural Exploration course. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course. Contact your academic advisor or CLAS Undergraduate Programs Office with questions concerning the World Languages requirement.

e PSY:2301, PSY:2401, PSY:2501, and PSY:2601 may be completed in any order.

f Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.

g Students complete 9 s.h. of graded coursework in a single department other than the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences. Courses used to fulfill this requirement must be taken at the University of Iowa and may not be used to fulfill GE CLAS Core requirements. A second major or a minor may be used to fulfill the requirement.

h See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.

- i Students take three advanced psychology courses (total of 9 s.h.) after satisfactorily completing the psychology core and other specified prerequisites. See the General Catalog for list of courses that do not count toward this requirement.
- j Please see Academic Calendar, on Office of the Registrar website, for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Degree Services.