Psychology, B.A.

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.

Overview

Psychology is one of the largest undergraduate majors, both nationally and at the University of Iowa, and 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 areas such as business, law, communication, medicine, and the allied health sciences. Students who intend to enter the job market immediately after completing an undergraduate degree should complement their psychology major with substantial preparation in another program more closely tied to the world of work (e.g., education, social work, business, journalism, nursing). Almost all vocational opportunities in psychology require advanced degrees.

The psychology major for the Bachelor of Arts has fewer specific requirements and puts less emphasis on methodology than the Bachelor of Science major. 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 B.S. program. They may wish to enrich the B.A. 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, followed by a behavioral neuroscience course, methodology and data analysis courses, and introductory courses in several broad areas: developmental science, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, and social psychology. These courses are followed by upper-level psychology course work selected by each student. For additional information regarding the undergraduate major and career information, visit Undergraduate Program 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, the Iowa Students Psychology Association, which is open to all interested students. The group sponsors speakers, films, career days, and student symposia.

Admission to the Major

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

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

Students in the B.A. program may switch to the B.S. program if they meet admission requirements at the time of the request. Students may switch from the B.S. to the B.A. program at any time.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in psychology requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including 46-47 s.h. of work for the major, with at least 34 s.h. in psychology courses. Students must maintain a g.p.a. of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They also must 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.

The major for the B.A. 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 “Teacher Licensure” below). It can be combined with a second major more easily than can the Bachelor of Science program.

Choice of a degree program should be dictated by a student’s personal career goals. B.A. 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.

B.A. and B.S. students complete the same psychology core and psychology electives. The major for the B.A. 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 may retake PSY:1001 for a second-grade-only option; however, this must be completed before taking any upper-level psychology courses (PSY:3000-3800). Students may not retake PSY:1001 after taking an upper-level psychology course; this is considered regression and no credit will be awarded.
The B.A. with a major in psychology requires the following courses or their equivalents.

**Code**  | **Title**                          | **Hours**
----------|------------------------------------|----------
Psychology Core                                  | 13       
Lower-Level Psychology Requirements              | 12       
Upper-Level Psychology Electives                 | 9        
Cognate Requirement                               | 3-4      
Second Concentration Area Courses                | 9        
Total Hours                                       | 46-47    

**Psychology Core**
All majors complete the following course work for the psychology core.

**Code**  | **Title**                          | **Hours**
----------|------------------------------------|----------
PSY:1001  | Elementary Psychology              | 3        
PSY:2701  | Introduction to Behavioral Neuroscience | 4    
PSY:2811  | Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology I | 3    
PSY:2812  | Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology II | 3    

**Lower-Level Psychology Requirements**
Students take all of the following courses after completing PSY:1001 Elementary Psychology.

**Code**  | **Title**                          | **Hours**
----------|------------------------------------|----------
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    

**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.

**Code**  | **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:4020  | Laboratory in Psychology           | 4        
PSY:4090  | Psychology Seminar                 | 3        
PSY:4990  | Honors Thesis Research              | 1-3      

**Additional Requirements**

**Cognate Requirement**
Students complete one of the following upper-level statistics or computer science courses.

**Code**  | **Title**                          | **Hours**
----------|------------------------------------|----------
BIOS:4120 | Introduction to Biostatistics     | 3        
STAT:1020 | Elementary Statistics and Inference | 3      
STAT:1030 | Statistics for Business           | 4        
STAT:3510 | Biostatistics                      | 3        
STAT:4143 | Introduction to Statistical Methods | 3      
CS:1020   | Principles of Computing           | 3        
CS:1110   | Introduction to Computer Science   | 3        
CS:1210   | Computer Science I: Fundamentals   | 4        

**Second Concentration Area**
Students complete 9 s.h. of graded course work 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**
Majors interested in earning licensure to teach in elementary and/or secondary schools must complete the College of Education’s Teacher Education Program (TEP) in addition to the requirements for the major and all requirements for graduation. The TEP requires several College of Education courses and student teaching. Contact the Office of Student Services for details.

Students must satisfy all degree requirements and complete TEP licensure before degree conferral.

**Combined Programs**

**B.A./M.P.H. (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 B.A./M.P.H. 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” under Requirements in the Master of Public Health section of the Catalog.
Honors

Honors in the Major

Students majoring in psychology have the opportunity to graduate with honors in the major. Departmental honors students must complete PSY:4090 Psychology Seminar and write an honors research project that a student has conducted under the guidance of a faculty member. Interested students should contact the department’s honors advisor.

Departmental honors students must maintain a cumulative University of Iowa g.p.a. of at least 3.33.

National Honor Society

The department sponsors a chapter of Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology and affiliate of the American Psychological Association. Students who have a g.p.a. of at least 3.00 overall and in psychology course work 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.

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 B.A. requires three graded courses in a second concentration area.

Before the third semester begins: PSY:1001 Elementary Psychology

Before the fifth semester begins: PSY:2701 Introduction to Behavioral Neuroscience and one or more lower-level psychology requirements

Before the seventh semester begins: four courses in the major (including PSY:2811 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology I 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 course work 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.

Psychology, B.A.

Course | Title | Hours
--- | --- | ---
Fall | PSY:1001 Elementary Psychology | 3
| ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030 The Interpretation of Literature or Rhetoric | 3 - 4
| GE CLAS Core: Diversity and Inclusion | 3
| GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course | 4 - 5
| CSI:1600 Success at Iowa | 2

Hours | 15-17

Spring | ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030 The Interpretation of Literature or Rhetoric | 3 - 4
| Major: lower-level psychology course | 3
| GE CLAS Core: International and Global Issues | 3
| GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course | 4 - 5
| Elective course | 3

Hours | 16-18

Second Year

Fall | PSY:2811 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology I | 3
| Major: lower-level psychology course | 3
| GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives | 3
| GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course | 4 - 5
| Elective course | 2 - 3

Hours | 15-17

Spring | PSY:2812 Research Methods and Data Analysis in Psychology II | 3
| Major: lower-level psychology course | 3
| GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab | 3
| GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course | 4 - 5
| Elective course | 3

Hours | 16-17

Third Year

Fall | PSY:2701 Introduction to Behavioral Neuroscience | 4
| Major: lower-level psychology course | 3
| Major: second area of concentration course | 3
| GE CLAS Core: Values and Culture | 3
| Elective course | 3

Hours | 16

Spring | Major: second area of concentration course | 3
| Major: upper-level psychology course | 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences with Lab **</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective course (^d)</td>
<td>2 - 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major: cognate course (^e)</td>
<td>3 - 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fourth Year</strong></td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major: upper-level psychology course</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE CLAS Core: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning (if not met by cognate course) **</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective course (^d)</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective course (^d)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major: second area of concentration course</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
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- \(^a\) Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.
- \(^b\) 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.
- \(^c\) Students who have completed four years of a single language in high school have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course.
- \(^d\) 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.
- \(^e\) Course fulfills a major requirement and the GE CLAS Core Quantitative or Formal Reasoning requirement.

## 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.