

PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior, mind, and brain. We seek to understand how people think and act, both as individuals and in groups. The department has 18 faculty providing expertise in six subareas of study: cognitive, cultural, developmental, social, psychopathology, and neuroscience. Features of the major include foundational courses, training in statistics and research methods, small advanced seminars, and opportunities to conduct original research.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Students wishing to declare a major in psychology should prepare as early as possible because declaration must be done in the second semester during sophomore year. Thus, by the end of the first semester in the sophomore year, students should have completed all requirements for entry into the major.

At the time of application, a student must demonstrate that he or she (1) has taken two full-credit courses in the field of psychology at Wesleyan and received a B or higher in each course; (2) has completed the introductory psychology (or a replacement breadth course that allows an AP or IB credit in place of introductory psychology), research methods, and statistics requirements for the major (these same courses may be used to fulfill the first requirement as well); and (3) has fulfilled the University's stage I General Education Expectations. Students with outstanding requirements to complete are required by the Dean's Office to either declare a second major or submit a major deferral form to their class dean in the event they are unable to successfully complete the admission requirements for psychology. Transfer students must receive a B or higher in each of two psychology courses from their previous institution. Junior transfer students have until the end of the first week of the junior year and must meet all admission requirements at their previous institution.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Ten full-credit psychology courses and General Education Expectations stages I and II are required for completion of the major. Nine of the 10 credits required for the major must be taken for a grade. (This has been temporarily waived for Spring 2020 and AY2021.) Courses in introductory psychology and introductory statistics must be taken for a grade. Required elements of the major are introductory psychology (one credit), an introductory statistics course (one credit), research methods (one credit), one breadth course from each of three areas of psychology (three credits), a specialized course (one credit), and three additional elective credits that can come from any courses and tutorials associated with the major. All courses must be completed by the end of the senior year.

INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY

PSYC105, a lecture class that provides a broad overview of the field, is required for the major and should typically be the first course taken in the major. The course must be taken graded if used for the major. (This had been temporarily waived for Spring 2020 and AY2021.) The course should be taken in the first or second year. One can alternatively transfer a psychology AP or IB credit in place

of this course (see the Advanced Placement section). Only one can be counted toward the major.

INTRODUCTORY STATISTICS

A psychological statistics course provides an introduction to data analysis in psychology. PSYC200, PSYC201, or PSYC280 is typically used to fulfill this requirement, but ECON300 and MATH132 are acceptable as well. The course must be taken graded if used for the major. (This had been temporarily waived for Spring 2020 and AY2021.) A course in introductory statistics should be taken in the first or second year (some research methods courses require statistics as a prerequisite). Only one can be counted towards the major.

RESEARCH METHODS

A research methods course trains specific skills for evaluating and performing research. Research methods courses are numbered **PSYC202-219**. Some of these courses are more general, while others are focused on particular applications as indicated by their titles. A 200-level course in research methods should be taken in the first or second year (some research methods require statistics as a prerequisite).

BREADTH REQUIREMENT

Students are expected to develop knowledge across the entire field of psychology. Toward this goal, students must choose a minimum of one course from each of the three columns below. These breadth courses (numbered **PSYC220-279**) can be taken throughout one's four years. When possible, a student should start with breadth courses of particular interest so that he or she can later do more advanced work in these areas.

Code	Title	Hours
Column 1		
Select a minimum of one of the following:		1
PSYC220	Cognitive Psychology	
PSYC222	Sensation and Perception	
PSYC225	Cognitive Neuroscience	1
PSYC226	Psychological Theories of Learning and Motivation	
PSYC227	Motivation and Reward	
PSYC228	Clinical Neuropsychology	
PSYC239	Functional Anatomy of the Human Brain	
PSYC240	Behavioral Neurobiology	
Column 2		
Select a minimum of one of the following:		1
PSYC230	Developmental Psychology	
PSYC245	Psychological Measurement	
PSYC246	Behavior Change, Clinical Interventions and Health Promotion	
PSYC248	Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood	
PSYC251	Psychopathology	
PSYC253	Educational Psychology	
PSYC259	Discovering the Person	
PSYC271	Life-Span Development	
Column 3		
Select a minimum of one of the following:		1
PSYC260	Social Psychology	
PSYC262	Cultural Perspectives on Mental Health	

PSYC265	Culture in Psychology: An Introduction to Theory and Research
PSYC277	Psychology and the Law

SPECIALIZED

These courses (**PSYC311-399**) aim to ensure that students study at least one subfield of psychology in depth. These courses have a variety of formats, including seminars (**PSYC311-369**) and advanced research labs (**PSYC370-399**), and admission is typically by permission of instructor. A student must take at least one specialized course that deepens the knowledge she or he gained in a breadth course.

ELECTIVES

To reach the 10 course credits necessary for the major, one may count any three other courses, tutorials, or teaching apprenticeships offered by the department or creditable to the major. Exceptions include: (A) only one introductory psychology course; (B) one introductory statistics course (PSYC200, PSYC201, QAC201/PSYC280, ECON300, or MATH132); (C) no more than two teaching apprenticeship tutorials; and (D) four tutorials (or six including senior thesis tutorials). The teaching apprenticeship can be repeated with the same course number. For electives, two half-credit courses may be used in place of one full-credit course. Some courses (cross-listed with psychology or hosted in other departments) can be used as electives for the major but fulfill no other requirements and cannot be used for admission to the major. See Department Majors Manual (http://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/major_guides.html) for details.

COURSES FOR NON-MAJORS

PSYC105 is appropriate for non-majors.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Stage I General Education Expectations must be satisfied at the time of admission to the major (six different departments, please refer to WesMaps for Gen Ed Area Dept.). Fulfilling stage II General Education Expectations is required for completion of the major.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The psychology department learning goals are organized by four objectives:

Objective 1: Knowledge Base in Psychology

- To understand and interpret basic theoretical perspectives, scientific principles, and empirical findings in three major content areas of psychology: (1) neuroscience and/or cognition, (2) psychopathology and/or developmental psychology, and (3) social and/or cultural psychology.
- To learn how to formulate research questions and conduct psychological studies.
- To obtain skills in statistical and data analysis techniques, quantitative and qualitative, and apply these techniques to psychological studies.

Objective 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking

- To critically assess scientific methodologies in psychology, including:
 - understanding hypothesis formation;
 - applying standardized, reliable, and valid outcome measures;
 - applying sound data-analytic techniques; and
 - appreciating the importance of conducting research with samples that reflect the diversity of human experience, behavior, culture, and populations, including participants of color, women, LGBTQ+ people, individuals with disabilities, and other groups that have historically been underrepresented or marginalized in psychological research.
- Integrate knowledge and methodologies across different kinds of observation in the study of human behavior and mental processes, including social, cognitive, perceptual, and biological processes, as well as influences of culture and gender.
- Identify, understand, and address the ways that psychological research has been and often continues to be rooted in white sociocultural norms.

Objective 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility

- Recognize the necessity for ethical behavior in all aspects of the science and practice of psychology.
- Critically evaluate relations of psychological and behavioral knowledge with social policy, public health, and clinical practice.
- Use psychological knowledge to clarify social disparities, and to promote human well-being and change in a multicultural and global context.
- Endeavor to make psychology more inclusive, including practices that help dismantle systemic and structural forms of racism in psychological science, training, and applied settings.

Objective 4: Communication

- Acquire effective communication skills by disseminating research findings through skill-building in oral expression and expository writing.

STUDY ABROAD

Any courses taken abroad must be pre-approved by the department advising coordinator. Study abroad courses for review towards the major are submitted through WesPortal – Academics – Study Abroad Information and Application – Course Approval System. The advising coordinator will need the course description from the university's catalog, and a syllabus if available, as well as to know the purpose of the course, the credit amount transferable to Wesleyan, and the student's class year and major. Starting with the class of 2028, study abroad courses will only count towards University credit and will no longer count towards the psychology major. For students in graduating classes 2027 and earlier, no more than two credits may be transferred from abroad programs.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Students who receive a Psychology AP score of 4 or 5 or an IB (International Baccalaureate) score of 6 or 7 and complete a full-credit breadth requirement course (**PSYC220-279**) with a grade of B or better, can receive one credit for the AP/IB score. This credit will replace the introductory course requirement *only* if it appears on the Wesleyan transcript after completing the necessary breadth required course.

AP scores are posted in students' Placement Score and Recommendation link in WesPortal. To have the prerequisite for PSYC105 based on the AP score, students need to have their AP score on file with the University before preregistration begins for the upcoming semester. Once the breadth requirement course is

completed, students go through their WesPortal to submit a request to post it on their transcripts. (If the AP is not in the folder, students should contact the Registrar's office.) This will also allow the preregistration system to automatically grant a prerequisite override for courses in which PSYC105 is required. All requests and actions regarding AP score and credit should be done through the Placement Scores and Recommendations link in WesPortal. For IB credit, contact the Dean's Office to have it transferred.

AP/IB credits count as transfer credits. AP/IB credits apply towards oversubscription. The AP/IB credit counts as the one non-graded course allowed towards the major. AP/IB credits may not be used towards major admission.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

No language requirement.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Even though a transfer credit may have been approved toward a university credit, it must also be specifically pre-approved toward the psychology major. Some transfer courses do not give a full (1.00) transfer credit and therefore the 10-credit requirement towards the major needs to be completed with additional psychology courses. Transfer credits cannot be counted toward admission to the program except for transfer students. AP or IB credits count as a transfer credit.

- Transfer students should request the Registrar's Office or their class dean to send a copy of their transcript from their previous institution to the advising coordinator so that all their psychology courses can be reviewed toward the major. Transfer credits can be counted towards the major. Up to three transfer credits can be counted towards the major.
- Students taking courses at domestic institutions can only transfer up to two credits towards the major.
- Both transfer students and students requesting transfer courses from domestic institutions must submit to the department's advising coordinator an email that includes: A) a course description from the university's catalog; B) a syllabus; C) the purpose of the course; D) the credit amount transferable to Wesleyan; E) the class year; and F) the Permission to Transfer Credit form from the Office of Student Affairs.
- Study abroad courses for review towards the major are submitted through WesPortal – Academics – Study Abroad Information and Application – Course Approval System. Starting with the class of 2028, study abroad courses will only count towards University credit and will no longer count towards the psychology major. For students in graduating classes 2027 and earlier, no more than 2 credits may be transferred from abroad programs.

RELATED PROGRAMS OR CERTIFICATES

Concentrations: Students are not obligated to do a concentration within psychology, and the vast majority of students do not specialize in a particular area. However, we do have two concentrations within the major—in cognitive science and in cultural psychology. These are essentially ways of traversing the major (with a few additional courses) for students who would like to organize their coursework around either of those two themes. Concentrations are not declared at major declaration. Rather, a requirements worksheet for each concentration is to be turned in by early February in the second semester of the senior year. Students who successfully complete the requirements will receive a departmental certificate indicating completion.

- **Cognitive Science Concentration.** Cognitive science is the interdisciplinary study of mental processes. Many areas of psychology contribute to the study of cognitive science, including cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and cognitive neuroscience, fields that most typically use scientific research methods to study human mental processes. Beyond psychology, scholars use diverse methods to study mental processes in humans and nonhumans, including fields such as philosophy of mind, neuroscience and behavior, artificial intelligence, linguistics, education, and others. The focus of coursework within our department involves understanding the mental and underlying neural processes involved in areas such as human perception, attention, memory, language, and reasoning; as well as the development of these processes over the life span. Participation in laboratory research is expected. See the Cognitive Science Concentration Form (https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/major_guides.html) on the department website for requirement details.
- **Cultural Psychology Concentration.** Cultural psychology considers how the vast domain of culture and society is studied by psychologists, how cultural dynamics influence individuals, and how cultural practices define the various psychologies we practice. Many areas within psychology contribute to the study of cultures, including psychological measurement; social psychology, both experimental and qualitative; clinical psychology; developmental psychology; historical psychology; and cultural psychology. Beyond psychology, scholars in allied human sciences contribute to better understanding the dynamic relation of culture and psychology. Methods and theories abound in culture and psychology. Some focus on comparative research, others on ways of bringing the presence of underrepresented populations into scholarly projects, and some examine socio-political differences both between and within societies. While investigating social structures such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, and class is often central to works in this area, also of importance is understanding how such forces come to manifest themselves within the field of psychology and in our collective psychologies. See the Cultural Psychology Concentration Form (https://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/about/major_guides.html) on the department website for requirement details.

BA/MA PROGRAM

The psychology department offers the BA/MA degree program. Wesleyan non-psychology students can apply to the program to work under the mentorship of a psychology faculty. For more information, please visit the Office of Graduate Student Service (https://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/graduate-programs/bama_program.html) or (<http://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/>).

HONORS

By the beginning of their spring semester junior year, psychology majors who have earned at least a B+ average in all psychology courses and at least a B average in all non-psychology courses are eligible to pursue honors in psychology by writing a thesis. A student must have a faculty advisor to write a thesis. An advisor should be secured by spring of the junior year through discussion with appropriate faculty. Honors will be awarded only if both the advisor and a second faculty reader evaluate the thesis worthy of honors.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Students interested in research opportunities are encouraged to develop statistics and research methods skills as early as possible, to develop broad

knowledge in the research area of interest, and to then apply for permission of the instructor to enroll in an advanced research seminar. Speaking with individual faculty members about research opportunities that might be available in their labs is also appropriate.