

College of Arts and Sciences

Psychology

B.A. in Psychology

Admission to the Program

Formal admission to the major requires departmental approval.

University Requirements

- A total of 120 credit hours
- 6 credit hours of college writing
- 3 credit hours of college mathematics or the equivalent by examination

General Education Requirements

- A total of ten courses, consisting of one foundation course and one second-level course in an approved sequence from each of the five curricular areas
- No more than 6 credit hours may be taken in the same discipline

Major Requirements

- 41 credit hours with grades of C or better and at least 15 credit hours at the 300 level or above

Course Requirements

- 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 (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 Bio-Psychology 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 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. Students will be advised concerning 300–500-level courses available as electives.

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.

University Honors Program

All University Honors students must complete at least 12 credit hours of advanced-level (300-level and above) Honors courses including a 3 to 6 credit hour Honors Senior Capstone Project. Students may graduate with University Honors in the major if they complete at least 12 advanced-level Honors courses including the Senior Capstone Project in the department. Each department has three levels of University Honors requirements: Level I Options (100-200-level Honors classes); Level II Options (300-level and above Honors classes); and Level III Options (Honors Senior Capstone). The department Honors coordinator advises students in the University Honors Program regarding departmental options. For more information, go to www.american.edu/academic.depts/honors/.

Minor in Psychology

- 22 credit hours with grades of C or better with at least 12 credit hours unique to the minor, and at least 9 credit hours at the 300 level or above

Course Requirements

- PSYC-105 Psychology: Understanding Human Behavior 4:1 (3)
- PSYC-115 Psychology as a Natural Science 5:1 (4)
- 3 credit hours from Bio-Psychology or Learning and Cognition courses (see major requirements above)
- 3 credit hours from the Individual, the Situation, and Psychological Health courses (see major requirements above)
- 9 additional credit hours in psychology courses

Combined B.A. and M.A. in Psychology

Admission to the Program

Students should apply for the program no later than the first semester of the senior year and no earlier than the first semester of the junior year. Students must have a minimum 3.00 grade point average in psychology and statistics courses and must have completed at least half of the credit hours required for the B.A. in Psychology, including STAT-202 Basic Statistics, before applying to the program. Students must submit a completed graduate application form, Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores for the General examination (Verbal, Quantitative, and Analytic), two letters of recommendation, and copies of all college transcripts.

Degree Requirements

- All requirements for the B.A. in Psychology
Undergraduate students may apply 6 credit hours of approved 500-level course work to satisfy the requirements of both degrees.
- All requirements for the M.A. in Psychology, including a minimum of 24 credit hours completed in residence in graduate status after the undergraduate degree has been awarded.

M.A. in Psychology

Admission to the Program

In addition to meeting the minimum university requirements for graduate study, applicants must earn a satisfactory score on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General examination. Admission is based on academic record, test scores, and two letters of recommendation.

Completion of the degree does not necessarily lead to admission to the Ph.D. program; students who wish to be considered for the Ph.D. program must apply. Applicants with a B.A. who wish to obtain a Ph.D. in Psychology from American University should apply directly to the Ph.D. program. If they do not have an M.A., students will earn one as part of the Ph.D. program. See the description of the Ph.D. program for more information.

Up to 6 credit hours of graduate course work in psychology from another university or up to 12 credit hours of graduate course credit taken at American University may be transferred, provided that these credits were not counted toward another degree. These transfers of credit are subject to approval by the director of the M.A. program.

Tracks

General, Personality/Social, or Experimental/Biological

Degree Requirements

- 33 credit hours of approved graduate work
- Written general comprehensive examination
- Thesis option: The master's thesis involves an original research project. Students must prepare a thesis proposal, collect and analyze data, submit a written thesis, and give an oral defense. The thesis must be accepted by the thesis committee, the department chair, and the university.

Nonthesis option: available only in the General Psychology track (see course requirements below).

All course work for the thesis or nonthesis option must be completed with grades of B or better.

Course Requirements

General Psychology

- Two courses from the following:
PSYC-505 Advanced Personality Psychology (3)
PSYC-514 Industrial/Organizational Psychology (3)
PSYC-533 Cognitive Behavior Therapy (3)
PSYC-540 Advanced Social Psychology (3)
PSYC-545 Psychology of Sex Similarities and Differences (3)
PSYC-551 Psychopathology: Theory and Research (3)
PSYC-560 Advanced Child Psychology (3)
PSYC-570 Behavioral Medicine (3)
PSYC-597 Topics in Psychology (3) (personality/social psychology)
PSYC-633 Psychological Assessment I (3)

- Two courses from the following:
PSYC-501 Physiological Psychology (3)
PSYC-513 Neuropharmacology: The Biochemistry of Behavior (3)
PSYC-518 Advanced Human Neuropsychology (3)
PSYC-530 Conditioning and Learning (3)
PSYC-575 Advanced Memory and Cognition (3)
PSYC-597 Topics in Psychology (3)
(experimental/biological psychology)
PSYC-618 Principles of Neuropsychological Assessment (3)
graduate seminar in experimental psychology or neuroscience (3)

- Graduate statistics course (3)

Nonthesis Option (General Psychology track only):

- 6 credit hours from the following:
PSYC-550 Psychological Research (3)
PSYC-698 Directed Research (3–6)
- 12 credit hours of graduate elective courses with at least 6 credit hours from the Department of Psychology

Thesis Option:

- PSYC-550 Psychological Research (3)
- 6 credit hours from the following:
PSYC-796 Master's Thesis Seminar (3)
PSYC-797 Master's Thesis Research (1–3)
- 9 credit hours of graduate elective courses with at least 6 credit hours from the Department of Psychology

Personality/Social Psychology

- Four courses from the following:
PSYC-505 Advanced Personality Psychology (3)
PSYC-514 Industrial/Organizational Psychology (3)
PSYC-533 Cognitive Behavior Therapy (3)
PSYC-540 Advanced Social Psychology (3)
PSYC-545 Psychology of Sex Similarities and Differences (3)
PSYC-551 Psychopathology: Theory and Research (3)
PSYC-560 Advanced Child Psychology (3)
PSYC-570 Behavioral Medicine (3)
PSYC-597 Topics in Psychology (3) (personality/social psychology)
PSYC-633 Psychological Assessment I (3)
graduate seminar in clinical, personality, or social psychology (3)
- Two courses from the following:
PSYC-501 Physiological Psychology (3)
PSYC-513 Neuropharmacology: The Biochemistry of Behavior (3)
PSYC-518 Advanced Human Neuropsychology (3)
PSYC-530 Conditioning and Learning (3)
PSYC-575 Advanced Memory and Cognition (3)
PSYC-597 Topics in Psychology (3)
(experimental/biological psychology)

- PSYC-618 Principles of Neuropsychological Assessment (3)
graduate seminar in experimental psychology or neuroscience (3)
- PSYC-550 Psychological Research (3)
- 6 credit hours from the following:
PSYC-796 Master's Thesis Seminar (3)
PSYC-797 Master's Thesis Research (1–3)
- Graduate statistics course (3)
- Graduate elective course (3)
- Experimental/Biological Psychology**
- Four courses from the following:
PSYC-501 Physiological Psychology (3)
PSYC-513 Neuropharmacology: The Biochemistry of Behavior (3)
PSYC-518 Advanced Human Neuropsychology (3)
PSYC-530 Conditioning and Learning (3)
PSYC-575 Advanced Memory and Cognition (3)
PSYC-597 Topics in Psychology (3)
(experimental/biological psychology)
PSYC-618 Principles of Neuropsychological Assessment (3)
PSYC-690 Independent Study Project (3) in a recognized area of experimental/biological psychology
graduate seminar in experimental psychology or neuroscience
- Two courses from the following:
PSYC-505 Advanced Personality Psychology (3)
PSYC-514 Industrial/Organizational Psychology (3)
PSYC-533 Cognitive Behavior Therapy (3)
PSYC-540 Advanced Social Psychology (3)
PSYC-545 Psychology of Sex Similarities and Differences (3)
PSYC-551 Psychopathology: Theory and Research (3)
PSYC-560 Advanced Child Psychology (3)
PSYC-570 Behavioral Medicine (3)
PSYC-597 Topics in Psychology (3) (personality/social psychology)
- PSYC-633 Psychological Assessment I (3)
graduate seminar in clinical, personality, or social psychology (3)
- PSYC-550 Psychological Research (3)
- 6 credit hours from the following:
PSYC-796 Master's Thesis Seminar (3)
PSYC-797 Master's Thesis Research (1–3)
- Graduate statistics course (3)
- Graduate elective course (3)

Ph.D. in Psychology

There are two tracks within the doctoral program, clinical psychology (APA accredited), and behavior, cognition and neuroscience. Students who have been admitted to the doctoral program in psychology but do not have an M.A. in psychology that has been accepted by the department must complete the degree requirements for the M.A. in Psychology (thesis option) before they can be awarded the doctorate.

The Clinical program is fully accredited by the American Psychological Association Committee on Accreditation (COA) and has been accredited since 1972. COA is part of the Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA). OPCA contact information is as follows:

Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation
750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 2002-4242
Phone: 202-336-5979
TDD/TTY: 202-336-6123
Fax: 202-336-5978
Email: apaaccred@apa.org
<http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation>

Admission to the Program

In addition to meeting the minimum university requirements for graduate study, applicants must earn a satisfactory score on the Graduate Record Examination (General and Advanced Psychology tests). Admission is based on test scores, previous academic performance, and letters of recommendation. Those applicants to the clinical psychology track judged to be among the top 30 or 35 are invited for an interview, and the final selection is based on all information, including the interview. Students are admitted for full-time study only.

Tracks

Clinical Psychology or Behavior, Cognition and Neuroscience (BCAN)

Degree Requirements

- 72 credit hours of approved graduate work
- Two tools of research are required but do not result in course credit toward the degree. The tool requirement is flexible and can be met in a variety of ways:
 - 1) demonstration of knowledge of a language relevant to the student's career;
 - 2) demonstration of mastery in a computer program language;
 - 3) satisfactory completion of one skill-oriented graduate course offered by another department at American University or by nonpsychology departments of the Consortium universities;
 - 4) participation in one clinical institute which is approximately equal in time and difficulty to a full course; and
 - 5) supervised tool training in other settings when approved by the student's advisor and the department chair.

- Four comprehensive examinations outlined by advisors or other faculty members. These are tasks which involve students in the kinds of activities they will later engage in as professional psychologists. At least one of the four comprehensives must be oral and at least two must be written.
- Dissertation: A written proposal for the dissertation is to be submitted to the dissertation committee by the middle of the second semester of the third year. The original proposal, or a revision thereof, should meet the requirements of the committee by the end of the second semester of the third year. This allows adequate time for completion of a quality dissertation even if initial experimentation turns out to be exploratory in nature. The dissertation must be accepted by the dissertation committee, the department chair, and the university.
- Clinical Psychology track: As part of the doctoral clinical track requirements, clinical students serve a one-year internship in an appropriate setting outside the university.

Course Requirements

Clinical Psychology

- PSYC-502 History and Systems of Psychology (3)
- PSYC-550 Psychological Research (3)
- PSYC-551 Psychopathology: Theory and Research (3)
- PSYC-618 Principles of Neuropsychological Assessment (3) or assessment course approved by the department
- PSYC-630 Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice (3)
- PSYC-633 Psychological Assessment I (3)
- PSYC-652 Assessment of Intellectual Function and Personality (3)
- PSYC-680 Experiential Psychotherapy Practicum I (3)
- PSYC-681 Experiential Psychotherapy Practicum II (3)
- PSYC-710 Behavior Therapy Practicum (3)
- PSYC-791 Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Practicum I (3)
- PSYC-792 Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Practicum II (3)
- One course in Biological Bases of Behavior from the following:
 - PSYC-501 Physiological Psychology (3)
 - PSYC-513 Neuropharmacology: The Biochemistry of Behavior (3)
 - PSYC-518 Advanced Human Neuropsychology
- One course in Cognitive-Affective Bases of Behavior from the following:
 - PSYC-530 Conditioning and Learning (3)
 - PSYC-575 Advanced Memory and Cognition (3)
- One course in Individual Bases of Behavior from the following:
 - PSYC-505 Advanced Personality Psychology (3)
 - PSYC-560 Advanced Child Psychology (3)

- One course in Social Bases of Behavior from the following:
 PSYC-521 Ethnic and Minority Issues (3)
 PSYC-540 Advanced Social Psychology (3)
 PSYC-545 Psychology of Sex Differences (3)
- 6 credit hours from the following:
 PSYC-798 Doctoral Dissertation Seminar (3)
 PSYC-799 Doctoral Dissertation Research (1–9)
- 6 credit hours of statistics
Behavior, Cognition and Neuroscience
- 6 credit hours of PSYC-598 Neuroscience Seminar (3)
- 18 credit hours from the following:
 PSYC-501 Physiological Psychology (3)
 PSYC-513 Neuropharmacology (3)
 PSYC-518 Advanced Human Neuropsychology (3)
 PSYC-530 Conditioning and Learning (3)

- PSYC-551 Psychopathology: Theory and Research (3)
- PSYC-560 Advanced Child Psychology (3)
- PSYC-575 Advanced Memory and Cognition (3)
- PSYC-618 Principles of Neuropsychological Assessment (3)
- Other courses focusing in the neurosciences may be taken with approval of the student's advisor and the Graduate Curriculum Committee.
- 6 credit hours from the following:
 PSYC-798 Doctoral Dissertation Seminar (3)
 PSYC-799 Doctoral Dissertation Research (1–9)
- 6 credit hours of statistics
- 12 credit hours of electives
- 24 credit hours of lab research