

PSYCHOLOGY

Department of Psychology

Psychology courses acquaint students with basic principles of learning, motivation, development, and interpersonal relationships, providing a foundation for effective living and a background for a variety of career opportunities. The major provides students with a wide range of marketable and graduate study skills that include interpersonal awareness, problem-solving, research, and computer literacy.

Baccalaureate degree holders are prepared for entry level positions in a broad range of areas including health and social services, mental health, organizational leadership and management, community relations, education, human resources, program development, public affairs, social science research, and programs for women. Psychology is recognized in Massachusetts as a certificate academic major for Early Childhood and Elementary Education students. Those with bachelor's degrees in psychology work in the same fields as do psychologists with graduate degrees. Some of the department's alumni:

- Counsel or teach people in group homes, nursing homes, and clinics
- Are case managers in insurance companies
- Plan and execute research
- Help young people in juvenile courts, schools and recreational programs
- Are behavior specialists
- Counsel drug addicts and victims of abuse

The department provides solid preparation for graduate work in psychology by helping students develop specializations and providing opportunities for the development of excellent research skills. The department offers an HONORS program and an internship program and operates a state-of-the-art computer laboratory. Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology, is available to outstanding students who major in the discipline.

The **minor** programs offer an opportunity for students wishing to develop a core understanding of psychology. A general minor in Psychology, as well as a specialized minor in Human Development, are available.

Admission Requirements

Admission is open to any student who is interested in psychology and who can maintain a 2.0 grade point average in the required and elective psychology courses.

Standards for Minimum Academic Performance in the Psychology Major

The Psychology major requires a minimum grade of C- in all courses applied to the major. Courses may be repeated. The C- minimum grade does not apply to psychology courses beyond those applied to the major (four specified, four from specified areas and four elective courses). Students must maintain a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 in the major, consistent with Worcester State University policy.

Concentrations

Students may choose to simply major in psychology **without** a particular specialization (by completing the Requirements for a Major in Psychology) or may choose to major in psychology **with** a specialization by completing the requirements for a concentration in Mental Health Services, or an Interdisciplinary Concentration in Women's Studies.

Evening Psychology

The required core courses for the Psychology Major may be completed with evening or summer courses. Many core courses are offered in the evening during each academic year as well as some elective courses. Internships and independent study courses, however, are only offered in Fall and spring day courses.

HONORS Program

The HONORS program is designed to increase opportunities for students of outstanding ability to engage in independent work and prepare for more challenging futures. It is especially recommended for students planning to pursue graduate education.

The HONORS project must be completed and presented to the faculty sponsor. Students are required to make an oral presentation on the project in a session open to all faculty and students in the department.

Admission to the HONORS program is by application. The admission requirements, closing date for application and instructions for completing the application process may be obtained from the Department Office.

- Human Development Minor
- Minor in Mental Health Services
- Psychobiology Minor
- Psychology Major
- Psychology Major, Concentration in Mental Health Services
- Psychology Major, Interdisciplinary Concentration in Women's Studies
- Psychology Minor

Faculty

Alexandra M. Burgess, Associate Professor (2017), B.A., Smith College; M.A., Ph.D., University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Amy Cota-McKinley, Department Chair, Professor (2002), B.A., University of Wisconsin; M.S., Jacksonville State University; Ph.D., Colorado State University

Lori J. Dawson, Professor (1995), B.A., Suffolk University; M.A., Ph.D., State University of New York, Albany

Sarah Eagan, Assistant Professor (2022), B.A., Sonoma State University; M.A., Ball State University; Ph.D., University of Nebraska

Charles R. Fox, Professor (2013), O.D., New England College of Optometry; B.A., M.A., St. John's University; Ph.D., Brandeis University

Kathryn Frazier, Associate Professor (2016), B.A., Scripps College; M.A., Ph.D., Clark University

Benjamin Jee, Associate Professor (2015), B.S., University of Toronto; Ph.D., University of Illinois, Chicago

Brittany Jeye, Assistant Professor (2019), B.S., M.A., Ph.D., Boston College

Bonnie G Kanner, Professor (1997), B.A., M.S., C.A.S., State University of New York, Albany; Ph.D., Clark University

Jacqueline N. Raftery-Helmer, Associate Professor (2017), B.S., Union College; M.A., Ph.D., Clark University

Nicole Rosa, Associate Professor (2014), B.A., Stonehill College; M.S.W., Boston College; M.A., Ph.D., Brandeis University

Brandi Silver, Professor (2003), B.S., M.S., Ph.D., Colorado State University

Emily Soltano, Professor (1999), B.A., Ph.D. State University of New York, Albany

Champika K. Soysa, Professor (2003), B.A., Mount Holyoke College; M.A., Ph.D., Clark University

Colleen Sullivan, Professor (2012), B.S., Frostburg State University; M.A., Ph.D., University of Maryland, Baltimore

Seth Surgan, Professor (2006), B.A., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; M.A., Ph.D., Clark University

Marc J. Wagoner, Associate Professor (2004), B.A., Morehouse College; Ph.D., University of Minnesota

Courses

PB-200 Introduction to Psychobiology

LASC Categories: HBS, NSP, LAB

Prerequisites: PS-101 and BI-116 or BI-140.

Introductory course in Psychobiology that covers topics including neurobiology, evolution, sensory/motor systems, learning and memory, and social behavior.

Fall only and every year. 4 Credits

PB-400 Capstone in Psychobiology

LASC Categories: CAP

Seminar covering selected topics in Psychobiology including primary source material readings, laboratory activities, discussion, oral presentation and written papers.

Spring only and every year. 2 Credits

PS-101 General Psychology

LASC Categories: HBS

Introduction to history of psychology, scientific method, brain/nervous system, development, learning, motivation, sensation/perception, personality, psychopathology, psychotherapy, cognitive processes, social behavior.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-193 Special Topics in Psychology for First Year Students

LASC Categories: FYS

Introductory level course covering topics of special interest to first year students. Offered only as a First Year Seminar.

Fall only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-201 Career Exploration in Psych

LASC Categories: HBS, ICW

Prerequisites: PS-101.

This course guides students in exploring the broad range of career opportunities in the field of psychology. The class is for any student who is considering the field of psychology and intended for those beginning their undergraduate careers. This class provides students with the information about the intersection between areas in psychology, related careers and graduate school options. It debunks the myth that you must go to graduate school if you major in psychology.

Alternating and every year. 3 Credits

PS-210 Developmental Psychology

LASC Categories: HBS, ICW

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C- or above.

Physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and moral development from conception to adolescence is examined within a framework of various theories.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-222 Introduction to Health Psychology

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C- or above.

Introduction to the areas and methods of Health Psychology. Topics include: epidemiology, behavior change, compliance, alternative medicine, healing, chronic illness.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-230 Brain and Behavior

LASC Categories: NSP

Prerequisites: PS-101 (Majors must pass with a C- or better). Credit will not be granted for both PS 230 and PS 380

An introduction to the biological basis of behavior.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-240 Introduction to Abnormal Psychology

LASC Categories: HBS

Prerequisites: PS-101. Psychology majors must pass with a C- or above. Credit will not be provided for both PS-240 and PS-335.

Etiology, dynamics and treatment of psychopathology and their relation to normal personality are considered from traditional and contemporary perspectives.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-250 Social Psychology

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C- or above.

The psychological dynamics of social interaction including verbal and non-verbal communication, group dynamics and attitude formation and change.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-252 Applied Social Psychology

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C- or above.

Survey of applied social psychology including psychology in educational, organizational, and legal settings; diversity, environmental, health, media, and consumer issues.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-254 Persuasion

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C-

Explores the areas of persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining in various situations by utilizing psychological theories/ approaches to explain behavior.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-255 Psychological Foundations of Diversity

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C- or above.

Explores the gender, racial/ethnic, multiple-group membership, cultural, social class, religious, disability and sexual orientation facets of diversity.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-260 Psychology of Human Sexuality

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C- or above.

Sexuality as a foundation of personality. The wide range of human sexuality is explored; sexual development, roles, attitudes and behaviors.

Other or on demand and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PS-263 Psychology of Women

Prerequisites: PS-101 with a C- or above.

Women's psychological development throughout the lifespan will be examined, including female development, achievement, stereotyping, stress, violence and psychological disorders.

Other or on demand and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PS-270 Psychopharmacology**LASC Categories:** NSP**Prerequisites:** PS-101 with a C- or above.

This course will explore the effects of psychotropic drugs on the brain and subsequent effects on behavior.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-275 Psychological Statistics**LASC Categories:** QR, QAC, NLL**Prerequisites:** PS 101 with a C- or above, and a passing grade in a college level math, or an Math Placement Test of 3 or higher

Data tabulation; graphing; measurement of central tendency, variability and correlation; hypothesis testing applied to psychological and sociological data. Hand and computer analysis.

Fall and Spring and every year. 4 Credits

PS-276 Research Methods**LASC Categories:** WAC**Prerequisites:** PS-101 with a grade of C- or above, EN-102 PS-275 with a grade of C_ or above, and 3 credits in another 200 level Psychology course C- or above..

Exploration of psychological research methodologies including: scientific method, design, conduction, analysis, and reporting of research, ethical principles and APA format.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-280 Sensation and Perception**LASC Categories:** NSP**Prerequisites:** PS-101. (Majors must pass with a C- or better)

Selected sensory and perceptual processes are studied in the context of current theory and research.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-295 Special Topics in Psychology**Prerequisites:** PS-101 with a C- or above.

Selected areas of mutual interest to instructor and students. Topics and prerequisites are announced in advance.

Other or on demand and other or on demand. 3 Credits

PS-297 Research in Psychology**Prerequisites:** PS-101, and PS-275 or PS-276.

Lab and/or field based research on a specific research topic under the supervision of a faculty member. May include assisting faculty with ongoing research. Written report required.

Fall and Spring and every year. 1-3 Credits

PS-307 Applied Research Methods**LASC Categories:** WAC**Prerequisites:** PS-101, PS-205 or PS-276, PS-275 EN-102 with a C- or above.

Extension of research design and methods introduced in PS-276:

Research Methods, including applied research design, statistical analysis, and scientific writing.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-310 Development of Exceptional Children/Youth**LASC Categories:** HBS**Prerequisites:** PS-101 and PS-210. (Majors must pass with a C- or better)

Characteristics and needs of children with exceptionalities including intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, physical and sensory disabilities, social-emotional difficulties, and giftedness.

Fall only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-312 Psychology of Adolescence**Prerequisites:** PS-101 and PS-210 with a C- or above.

The mental, emotional, social and physical changes of contemporary adolescence are examined with emphasis on family, peer and school influence.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-315 Physical and Sexual Abuse**Prerequisites:** PS-101-General Psychology with a C- or above. Either PS240 or PS335 with a C- or above or by permission of instructor for the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Minor.

Etiology, characteristics, consequence, treatment and prevention of various forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse in children, adolescents and adults.

Other or on demand and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PS-318 Behavior Management Techniques**LASC Categories:** HBS**Prerequisites:** PS-101 and either PS240 or PS335 with a grade of C- or above. Must be completed prior to taking this course.

Considers the basic concepts of behavior management, including behavior modification for exceptional and normal populations.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-320 Development of Thinking and Knowing**Prerequisites:** PS-101 and PS-210 with a C- or above.

This course will examine the development of human thinking and knowing from Piagetian, information processing and sociocultural perspectives, with an emphasis on infancy and childhood.

Spring only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-322 Psychology of Aging**Prerequisites:** PS-101, and PS-210 or IS 160 with a C- or above.

Adulthood and the aging process are studied with special emphasis on current developmental theories.

Every year. 3 Credits

PS-325 Psychology of Learning**Prerequisites:** PS-101 with a grade of C- or above.

Learning as a fundamental concept in understanding behavior; examines principles and theories of learning, emphasizing experimental findings.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-326 Psychological Distress and Well-Being**LASC Categories:** ICW, HBS**Prerequisites:** PS101, and either PS240 or PS335 with a grade of C- or above. Must be completed prior to taking this course.

A broad range of topics will be examined in relation to the knowledge base of psychological distress and well-being. This course will address cultural, systemic, and individual factors in risk and resilience in the manifestation and maintenance of psychological distress and well-being.

Spring only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-330 Theories of Personality**LASC Categories:** HBS**Prerequisites:** PS 101 and either PS 240 or PS 335 or PS 210. Psychology Majors require a C- or higher in each pre-requisite course. Must be completed prior to taking this course

A survey of major theories of personality. Why people think, feel, and behave as they do is explored through the different theories.

Fall only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-340 Psychological Testing and Measurement**LASC Categories:** ICW, QR**Prerequisites:** PS101 either PS 240 or PS335; and PS275. Psychology majors need a grade of C- or above.

How do psychologists evaluate individual characteristics like extroversion, depression, and inattention? How do mental health providers and researchers administer psychological assessments and interpret their results? This class will explore the theory and practice of psychological testing, including sections on ethics and controversies around standardized testing, measurement theory, and clinical assessment.

Spring only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-345 Cognitive Psychology**LASC Categories:** WAC**Prerequisites:** PS-101 PS-275 PS-276 with a grade of C- or above and EN-102

This course introduces students to areas of cognitive psychology including memory, language processing and decision making.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-355 Social and Personality Development**LASC Categories:** HBS**Prerequisites:** PS-210. (Majors must pass with a C- or better)

This course will examine social and personality development from various developmental psychology perspectives. Attention is given to the development of self, attachment, emotions, and others in the social context such as family and peers.

Fall only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-365 Cultural Psychology**LASC Categories:** TLC, HBS, WAC**Prerequisites:** PS-101, EN-102, PS-210 with a C- or above.

This course addresses the role culture plays in human psychological processes and approaches to researching cultural aspects of human action.

Other or on demand and every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

PS-385 Motivation**LASC Categories:** HBS**Prerequisites:** PS 101 either PS240 or PS335; with a grade of C- or above. Must be completed prior to taking this course.

A study of conditions that arouse, direct and sustain behavior. Topics include: goals, competence, control, arousal, self-esteem, achievement and stress.

Other or on demand and every year. 3 Credits

PS-391 Clinical Psychology**LASC Categories:** HBS**Prerequisites:** PS 101 and either PS240 or PS335; with a grade of C- or above. Must be completed prior to taking this course.

Topics include current controversies in clinical psychology, the ethics of mental health treatment, clinical research methods, cultural competency in practice, clinical diagnosis, and treatment approaches with an emphasis on humanistic, cognitive, and behavioral styles.

Fall only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-400 Internship in Psychology

Provides opportunity to advanced students to increase experience through internship with sponsoring community organization, institution, or business under appropriate supervision.

Fall and Spring and every year. 1-3 Credits

PS-405 Independent Study: Topics in Psychology**Prerequisites:** PS 101 and either PS-275, or PS-276, with a grade of C- or above.

Student will pursue an area of special interest in psychology under close supervision of a faculty member.

Fall and Spring and every year. 1-3 Credits

PS-407 Advanced Research in Psychology**Prerequisites:** PS-101 PS-275 and PS-307. Take PS-205 or PS-276.

Advanced lab and/or field based research on a specific research topic under the supervision of a faculty member. Written report required.

Fall and Spring and every year. 1-3 Credits

PS-408 Directed Study: Psychology

Directed study offers students, who because of unusual circumstances may be unable to register for a course when offered, the opportunity to complete an existing course with an established syllabus under the direction and with agreement from a faculty member.

3 Credits

PS-409 Honors Thesis Research**Prerequisites:** PS-275 and PS-276 and PS-307 with a C- or above.

As part of the Psychology Department Honors program, students design and carry out advanced, independent lab and/or field based research on a specific research topic under the supervision of a faculty member. Written report required.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-450 Capstone: Contemporary Issues in Psychology**LASC Categories:** CAP**Prerequisites:** PS-101 PS-275 PS-276 PS-307 with a C- or above. Take six additional courses in the major with a C- or above.

A Capstone course dealing with recent and emerging topics, issues, and methods in psychological science. Content and format varies with instructor.

Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

PS-492 Capstone Seminar in Mental Health Services: Transition to Practice**LASC Categories:** CAP**Prerequisites:** All core courses in the Psychology major: PS-101, PS-275, PS-276, PS-307, PS-240 (or PS-335), and any two courses from among PS-315, PS-318, PS-326, PS-330, PS-340, PS-385, and PS-391 (or PS-435), and three other psychology courses. Majors must earn a C- or above in all pre-requisite courses.

A capstone course addressing the transition from coursework to practice in mental health services.

Spring only and every year. 3 Credits

PS-495 Special Topics: Psychology**Prerequisites:** PS-101 with a C- or above.

Selected areas of mutual interest to instructor and students. Topics and prerequisites are announced in advance.

Other or on demand. 3 Credits

Program Learning Outcomes**Goal 1 (Knowledge base in Psychology)**

1.1. Use and evaluate theories to explain and predict behavior, including advantages and limitations in the selected framework

1.2. Explain complex psychological processes by integrating concepts developed from different content domains

Goal 2 (Scientific inquiry and critical thinking)

- 2.1. Use scientific reasoning to interpret psychological phenomena
- 2.2. Interpret, design, and/or conduct basic and/or applied psychological research
- 2.3. Understand and utilize appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative techniques to analyze and interpret research findings

Goal 3 (Ethical and social responsibility)

- 3.1. Describe, explain, and practice ethical standards and integrity within the context of psychology as a discipline and profession
- 3.2. Identify how issues of power, privilege, and discrimination shape psychological theories, psychological processes, behavior, and social interaction

Goal 4 (Communication)

- 4.1. Demonstrate effective writing through clear and concise written communication for various audiences
- 4.2. Demonstrate effective oral communication for various audiences

Goal 5 (Professional development)

- 5.1. Collaborate successfully on projects
- 5.2. Demonstrate self-regulation through self-reflection, the incorporation of feedback from educators and peers to improve performance, and social interaction
- 5.3. Apply psychological content and skills to career goals