Master of Arts in Psychology
Graduate Arts and Sciences
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Program Description
The Saint Joseph's University graduate program in psychology offers students a general curriculum of study emphasizing experimental psychology. The program is designed to complement the strengths and interests of the present psychology faculty and facilities and reflects the current state of the discipline of psychology. It consists of a traditional and academically oriented forty-eight credit curriculum and requires the successful completion of a qualifying comprehensive examination and an empirical thesis project. The program is designed for successful completion over two academic years. Additionally, a five-year combined Bachelor/Master of Science degree is offered.

Learning Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Students will gain fundamental knowledge and comprehension of experimental psychology.

Learning Objective 1.1: Demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of experimental psychology, with an emphasis on experimental methods and statistical applications.

Goal 2: Students will engage in scientific inquiry and develop critical thinking.

Learning Objective 2.1: Develop scientific reasoning and problem solving skills, including understanding of effective research methods and the ability to interpret, design, and conduct psychological research.

Goal 3: Students will develop communication skills.

Learning Objective 3.1: Demonstrate competence in writing and in oral and interpersonal communication skills. Students should be able to write a cogent scientific argument, present information using a scientific approach, engage in discussion of psychological concepts, and express their own ideas with clarity.

Learning Objective 3.2: Produce research and explain scientific results.

Admission Requirements and Procedures
Students are required to have completed a bachelor’s degree with either a major or minor in psychology. For those students without a psychology major/minor, a minimum of twelve undergraduate credits in psychology (including courses in Introductory Psychology, Research Methods, and Statistics) must be completed.

Applicants should submit or have sent to the Office of Graduate Operations the following:

- a completed Saint Joseph’s University graduate application.
- Official sealed transcript(s) of undergraduate and graduate coursework. If you are an SJU graduate the Office of Graduate Operations will obtain your SJU transcripts for you.
- a current résumé or curriculum vitae
- two letters of recommendation from at least two faculty appraising the candidate’s promise and capacity for graduate study, reflecting, from a professional’s point of view, the candidate’s ability to pursue a rigorous, independent course of study at the graduate level.
- a personal statement outlining the candidate’s professional goals and educational objectives for the program, including the applicant’s rationale for program choice and professional study.
- General GRE scores.
- $35 application fee – waived if attended an Open House or are a SJU graduate.

All application materials are due by March 1st. Students with an undergraduate GPA below 3.25 may be admitted on a probationary basis. A non-refundable deposit equivalent to one graduate credit, which is applied to tuition, is required upon the student’s acceptance of admission.

Undergraduate psychology majors at Saint Joseph’s apply for the five-year combined BS/MS program by March 1st of their junior year. These undergraduate applicants will be asked to submit:

- a completed Saint Joseph’s University online graduate application, www.sju.edu/gradapplynow.
- a current resume or curriculum vitae.
- two letters of recommendation from at least two faculty appraising the candidate’s promise and capacity for graduate study, reflecting, from a
professional’s point of view, the candidate’s ability to pursue a rigorous, independent course of study at the graduate level.

- Acceptance into the five-year program will not affect the Core Component or the University Distribution Requirement of the General Educational Requirement.

**Financial Aid**
Financial aid in the form of a graduate research assistantship stipend is awarded on the basis of merit for students in their second year of graduate study. Other forms of financial assistance are also available through the Office of Hawk Central.

**Academic Dismissal**
Students enrolled in the graduate psychology program who receive 2 grades of C or below will be dismissed from the degree program. Students who receive a grade of C or below in any of the Common Core Courses (i.e., PSY 551, 552) must repeat the course and receive a grade of B or higher.

It is anticipated that students will complete the graduate psychology program in two academic years. Students who do not complete the program by the end of their second year of enrollment may at their request have their enrollment in the program extended by one academic year. In order to obtain an extension, a student must request one in writing in a letter to the director of the graduate psychology program before the end of the student’s second year of study. Failure to complete the requirements of the program by the end of this additional year will result in dismissal from the program.

If due to unforeseen circumstances a student anticipates that he/she will not complete the requirements of the program before the end of the additional year, the student may apply for a one-time extension of the deadline. The student must request the extension in writing before the end of the additional year in a letter to the director of the graduate psychology program. The letter must be co-signed by the faculty member supervising the Master's thesis research of the student. The letter must include a date by which the student will have completed the requirements of the program. This completion date must be within 180 days of the last day of the additional year. Failure to complete the requirements of the program by the date specified in the letter requesting the extension will result in the student’s dismissal from the program.

A continuing enrollment fee will be charged for each semester or portion thereof that a student remains enrolled in the graduate psychology program beyond two academic years from the time of initial enrollment.

**Program Structure and Curriculum**
The curriculum is composed of three major components: an eight-credit Common Core required of all students; twenty-four credits of content courses, and a sixteen-credit Research Component in which students complete the comprehensive examination and research thesis.

The graduate psychology program is a full-time course of study. Classes are primarily scheduled on weekday afternoons. Students are expected to attend these classes regularly. Attendance is also required at colloquia, lab meetings, and other functions of the Department of Psychology. In addition, students are expected to have time available during weekdays to conduct scientific research.

The comprehensive examination is taken by students during the second year. Students are eligible to sit for the exam if they have submitted an acceptable draft of their thesis proposal. The examination is scored as a 3 (superior), 2 (acceptable), or 1 (failure). A student must achieve a total score of 2 or higher to pass the comprehensive examination. If the student fails, remediation must be completed by May 15th of that year. No student is permitted to fail the examination more than once. Failure to pass or complete the comprehensive examination terminates further graduate study. Completion of the thesis must occur within two years following the completion of the comprehensive examination.

**M.S. Degree in Psychology—Curriculum**

**I. Common Core: Two courses (8 credits)**
- PSY 551 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics I (4 credits)
- PSY 552 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics II (4 credits)

**II. Content Courses: Six courses (24 credits)**
- PSY 610 Learning and Behavior
- PSY 611 Advanced Physiological Psychology
- PSY 612 Advanced Sensory Processes
- PSY 613 Psychopharmacology
- PSY 614 Cognitive Science
III. Research Component: Four courses (16 credits)

PSY 591 Directed Studies I
PSY 592 Directed Studies II
PSY 691 Master’s Thesis I
PSY 692 Master’s Thesis II

Two-Year Course Sequence

First Year—Fall Semester
PSY 551 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics I
PSY 6xx Content Course 1
PSY 591 Directed Studies I

First Year—Spring Semester
PSY 552 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics II
PSY 6xx Content Course 2
PSY 592 Directed Studies II

Second Year—Fall Semester
PSY 6xx Content Course 3
PSY 6xx Content Course 4
PSY 691 Master’s Thesis I

Second Year—Spring Semester
PSY 6xx Content Course 5
PSY 6xx Content Course 6
PSY 692 Master’s Thesis II

Five-Year B.S./M.S. Sequence

Senior Year—Fall Semester
Undergraduate course
Undergraduate course
PSY 551 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics I
PSY 6xx Content Course 1
PSY 591 Directed Studies I

Senior Year—Spring Semester
Undergraduate course
Undergraduate course
PSY 552 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics II
PSY 6xx Content Course 2
PSY 592 Directed Studies II

Fifth Year—Fall Semester
PSY 6xx Content Course 3
PSY 6xx Content Course 4
PSY 691 Master’s Thesis I

Fifth Year—Spring Semester
PSY 6xx Content Course 5
PSY 6xx Content Course 6
PSY 692 Master’s Thesis II

Psychology Core Courses

PSY 551 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics I (4 credits)
This course will provide both a conceptual and practical understanding of advanced research methods and statistical methods for psychological data. Topics on research method will include: within- and between-subject experimental research, scale development, and validity/reliability. Topics on descriptive and inferential statistical procedures will include: analysis of variance (ANOVA), correlations, multiple regressions, power, and effect size. Students will learn to apply these statistical methods to the test of mediation and moderation models. Practical understanding of these techniques will be achieved through hands-on analysis of research questions using computerized statistical packages such as SPSS.

PSY 552 Advanced Research Methods and Statistics II (4 credits)
This course will address statistical procedures appropriate for the analysis of multivariate psychological data. Topics include simple and canonical correlation, linear and multiple regression techniques, discriminant analysis, analysis of covariance, multivariate analysis of variance, and factor analysis. Practical understanding of these techniques will be achieved through hands-on analysis of research questions using large sample data bases and computerized statistical packages such as SPSS.

Content Courses

PSY 610 Learning and Behavior (4 credits)
Presentation of major concepts and findings from research on basic learning processes and exploration of their implications for complex behavior. Basic processes include classical and operant conditioning, stimulus control, reinforcement, and aversive control. Complex behaviors include attention, memory, and
dysfunctional behavior. The physiological basis of learning will also be explored.

**PSY 611 Advanced Physiological Psychology (4 credits)**
An examination of the biological foundations of human and animal behavior. The relationship between behavior and the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system will be emphasized, ranging from the cellular level to a consideration of whole neural systems whose activity supports behavior. Behaviors to be studied will extend from simple reflex arcs to the regulation of motivational states.

**PSY 612 Advanced Sensory Processes (4 credits)**
The manner in which different forms of stimulus energy in the environment are internalized by the organism will be considered in detail in this course. Visual, olfactory, gustatory, auditory, and tactile systems will be examined from biological and phenomenological perspectives. Also to be considered are theoretical issues such as how meaning and knowledge are derived from sensory stimulation.

**PSY 613 Psychopharmacology (4 credits)**
An exploration of the mechanisms of action of psychoactive drugs. The manner in which drugs enter, distribute themselves throughout, and exit the body will be considered. The relationship between alterations in behavior produced by drug administration and the changes that the drug produces in the functioning of the nervous system will be emphasized. Topics to be covered include routes of drug administration, drug absorption, transport, and elimination, mechanisms of action, the histories of miscellaneous drugs, and the behavioral and biological activity of alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, the opiates, the hallucinogens, the antipsychotics, amphetamine, and cocaine.

**PSY 614 Cognitive Science (4 credits)**
This course explores topics within the fields of cognitive psychology, cognitive science, and cognitive neuroscience. The course focuses on how humans make sense of our experiences. In particular, we will learn about how the human brain extracts information from the environment and how that information gets processed, represented, stored, and retrieved. Particular attention will be paid to the following topics: perception, attention, memory, imagery, intelligence, problem solving, creativity, robotics, and artificial intelligence.

**PSY 615 Health Psychology (4 credits)**
The course in health psychology will provide students with a basic understanding of the involvement of psychology in the fields of medicine and health care. A general overview of psychological and physiological factors that influence disease and disorders, prevention strategies, and psychologically based interventions will be presented. In addition, topics such as stress and disease, coping with illness and pain, compliance, and positive health behavior will be discussed. The theoretical emphasis of the course will be on a bio psychosocial perspective.

**PSY 616 Principles of Neuropsychology (4 credits)**
Principles of Neuropsychology will introduce students to the current state of the field and to recognized and commonly used approaches in the clinical understanding of human brain-behavior relationships. Emphasis will be placed on how the neurological substrate of the human brain governs and influences cognition; biological bases of language, memory, spatial processing, and emotion; principles of brain organization, localization of function and individual differences; and professional and clinical issues.

**PSY 617 Memory Organization and Retrieval (4 credits)**
This course examines a variety of issues in memory theory and research. Topics include models of memory, the effects of development and aging on memory, the relation between encoding and retrieval contexts, various sources of forgetting, amnesias, and the neurobiology of memory.

**PSY 618 Comparative Psychology (4 credits)**
Comparative psychology examines the evolution and development of animal behavior. In this course, students explore the similarities and differences in the behavior and mental processes among species, with special emphasis placed on comparing the characteristics of human behavior with those of other animals.

**PSY 620 Hormones, Brain and Behavior (4 credits)**
This course provides a survey of research on the relationship between the brain, hormones and social behavior (behavioral neuroendocrinology) in a wide range of species. Topics may include, but are not limited to, reproductive behavior, parental behavior, aggression, stress, sex-differences, learning and memory.

**PSY 621 Systems Neuroscience (4 credits)**
This course provides an in-depth exploration of the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system. We will cover the neuroanatomy of the major subdivisions of the human brain, the major sensory and motor systems, and higher order functions.

**PSY 650 Gerontology (4105) (4 credits)**
The purpose of this course is to provide both a general introduction to the multi-disciplinary field of gerontology and a specific focus on those aspects of aging that have been of particular interest to biologists and psychologists. Additionally, attention will be given to the effects aging changes have on the functioning and well-being of older adults.

**PSY 651 Advanced Psychopathology (4 credits)**
This course will introduce students to the current state of knowledge in the field of psychopathology, beginning with the major theoretical approaches that contribute to our understanding of abnormal behavior. In addition, this course will integrate developmental psychopathology, social psychology, and health psychology in enhancing our understanding of the etiology and course of psychopathology. Specific emphasis will be placed on examining some of the important current research issues in psychopathology, including why major depression is more prevalent among women, the linkage between autism and childhood vaccinations, and the efficacy of community-based prevention programs.

**PSY 652 Assessment and Evaluation (4 credits)**
The assessment and evaluation course will introduce students to various approaches and techniques in the assessment and evaluation of healthy individuals and clinical populations. Areas to be covered will include interviewing, behavioral observation, behavioral assessment, personality assessment, aptitude testing, cognitive assessment, neuropsychological assessment, and the reliability and validity of tests and measurements. An emphasis will be placed on the administration and interpretation of questionnaires, standardized and nontraditional tests and test batteries using real-life examples.

**PSY 653 Behavioral Medicine (4 credits)**
The purpose of the course in behavioral medicine will be to apply theories, techniques, and principles learned in health psychology to clinical populations. Coverage will include selected medical and psychophysiological diseases and syndromes (e.g., cardiovascular, stress disorders, chronic illnesses), psychological sequelae, and specific intervention strategies.

**PSY 654 Developmental Psychology (4 credits)**
This course reviews major theoretical perspectives and contemporary research in the field of developmental psychology. Emphasizing an ecological approach to human development, the course will examine how development in various domains (e.g. emotional, social, and cognitive) is influenced by the contexts in which development takes place (e.g. family, school, neighborhood, socioeconomic context, culture). Particular attention will be paid to development from birth through adolescence.

**PSY 656 Social Cognition (4 credits)**
Social cognition is the study of the ways in which we process social information—both accurately and inaccurately—and how that information processing determines our perceptions of, and behavior within, a complex social world. Many times we are unaware of just what had influenced us, and this course will illuminate some of those external influences. Automatic and controlled processing of information, social schemas, mental short-cuts to decision-making, attitude formation and change, social stereotypes, the development of our self-concept, and person perception are a few of the many topics covered.

**PSY 658 Phenomenon of the Self (4 credits)**
This course considers the phenomenon that is referred to as the “self.” What is the self? Where does it come from? How does it impact our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors? This course will provide in-depth considerations of classic and current issues in the study of the self, from the neurological basis of the self to the impact that thoughts and feelings about the self have on well-being. We will consider both the positive and the negative influences of the self as we review the most recent theorizing in the field. Our discussions will include cultural influences on the self that result in differential perceptions and behaviors.

**PSY 659 Advanced Child Psychopathology (4 credits)**
This course explores the empirical literature on the diagnosis, etiology, course, and treatment of various psychological disorders of childhood and adolescence. Students will become familiar with the DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria and their application to children, symptom presentation in children, and issues of differential diagnosis. We will consider how a developmental psychopathology perspective and bio psychosocial factors influence diagnosis,
treatment and research of child psychopathology. Empirically supported treatments for childhood disorders will be examined. Students will become familiar with the research methodologies used to develop and evaluate treatments with the goal of becoming wise consumers of treatment research.

**PSY 660 Ethics in Psychology (4 credits)**
This course will cover ethical and legal issues related to professional conduct in the practice of psychology, including topics such as ethical reasoning, the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, incorporating state regulations and rules of conduct, complaint resolution procedures, confidentiality, release of information, record keeping, informed consent, and the duty to warn. The course addresses ethical issues across specialties, from clinical to experimental psychology.

**PSY 661 Cross-Cultural Psychology (4 credits)**
This course will provide students with an overview of theories and research related to cross-cultural psychology. Students will learn how culture is defined and studied. They will learn about the major differences and similarities that have been found among cultures. In addition, they will learn to read and critique psychological literature that deals with culture.

**PSY 662, The Nature of Emotion (4 credits)**
This course will introduce students to the fastest-growing area of psychology, the science of emotion. The course will focus on the fundamental aspects of emotions, such as: What are emotions? What are the different theories put forth to understand emotions? How do emotions work? How are they instantiated in the nervous system? Additional topics include the interaction between emotion and cognition, the social nature of emotion, and the developmental process that shape emotion.

**PSY 591 Directed Studies I (4 credits)**
Research conducted under the direction of a member of the graduate psychology program faculty leading to the development of a proposal for a Master’s thesis.

**PSY 592 Directed Studies II (4 credits)**
Research conducted under the direction of a member of the graduate psychology program faculty leading to the development of a Master’s thesis.

**PSY 691 Master’s Thesis I (4 credits)**
Research conducted under the direction of a member of the graduate psychology program faculty leading to the completion of a proposal for a Master’s thesis.

**PSY 692 Master’s Thesis II (4 credits)**
Research conducted under the direction of a member of the graduate psychology program faculty leading to the completion of a Master’s thesis.