Psychology

Donald S. Leitner, Ph.D., Chair
Clare Cony-Murray, Ph.D., Program Director

Program Overview
The Department of Psychology offers a curriculum emphasizing the manner in which psychological principles can be applied to our personal and professional lives. This curriculum has practical implications for our personal relationships, family lives, physical and mental health, success as leaders in our community and business, and our own personal growth. It can help us understand and deal with the difficult pressures we experience in contemporary life from violence, drugs, and exploitation.

Learning Goals and Objectives for the PLS Psychology Program

Goal 1. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in Psychology.

Objective 1.1: Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in Psychology as a social science.

Objective 1.2: Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in Psychology as a natural science.

Goal 2. Students will develop scientific reasoning and problem solving skills. They will be able to understand and apply basic research design and data analysis methodology in psychology.

Objective 2.1: Students will be able to understand and apply basic research design strategies.

Objective 2.2: Students will be able to understand and apply basic data analysis strategies.

Goal 3. Students will develop an understanding of ethically responsible behaviors in professional and personal settings in a landscape that involves increasing diversity.

Objective 3.1: Students will understand ethical psychological principles.

Objective 3.2: Students will be able to understand diversity, appreciate ethical behavior, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of Psychology as a discipline.

Requirements for the PLS B.S. Psychology

General Education Program Courses (See Curricula.)

Social Science: PSY 100 Introduction to Psychology

GEP Integrative Learning Component: Two courses
SOC 101 Intro to Sociology or SOC 102 Social Problems
BIO 161 Human Organism

Major Concentration
PSY 200 Personality
Or
PSY 120 Lifespan Development

And
PSY 201 Biological Bases of Behavior
PSY 210 Research Methods
PSY 211 Statistics for the Social Sciences (prerequisites: MAT 101-102; or MAT 118)
PSY 212 Multicultural Psychology

PSY Elective (Any PSY elective course)

Psychology Courses

PSY 100 Introductory Psychology (3 credits)
This course introduces the student to the research problems, methods, findings, and basic theory that constitute the scientific investigation of human and animal behavior.

**PSY 120 Lifespan Development (3 credits)**
This course looks at the changes that take place in our lives: in our bodies, our personalities, our ways of thinking, our feelings, our behavior, our relationships, and the roles we play during different periods of our lives. In this course we seek to describe these changes through the scientific research that has observed, measured, recorded and interpreted objective data on growth and development. Additionally we will seek to explain these changes insofar as possible, attempting answers to why they have occurred and what influential roles heredity and environment play.

*No prerequisite.*

**Notes:** This course is not open to students who have taken PSY 231.

**PSY 122 Abnormal Psychology (3 credits)**
How do we define what behaviors are abnormal? This course will provide an overview to the study of psychopathology, more commonly known as abnormal psychology. As an introductory course to abnormal psychology, it will focus primarily on the description of various psychological disorders, their clinical course, and the current understanding of the causes of these disorders. *Notes: This course is only open to students who are not and do not plan to be Psychology majors. Note: This course is not open to students who have taken PSY 232.*

*No prerequisite.*

**PSY 124 Human Sexuality (3 credits)**
The human sexual experience will be examined openly and objectively from physical, social, and psychological perspectives. Issues of current concern such as pornography, homosexuality, and sexuality and the handicapped will be explored in depth. Lectures and discussions may be supplemented by audio-visual materials and guest speakers.

*No prerequisite.*

**PSY 125 Forensic Psychology (3 credits)**
This course will provide a broad overview of the field of forensic psychology and the numerous ways that the discipline of psychology may be applied to the practice of the law. Forensic psychology focuses on the application of psychological research, methods, and expertise to issues that come before the legal system. The mental disorders that are encountered in forensic evaluations will be considered, along with the manner in which forensic psychologists assist judges and juries in determining criminal responsibility and punishment. Students will learn about the psychological underpinnings of crime; issues around competency to stand trial; issues around the insanity defense, capital murder and the death penalty; issues around child custody matters; jury selection; and interrogation procedures.

**PSY 200 Personality (3 credits)**
What are the forces that make us who we are, and uniquely different from all others? Is it our unique genetic make-up, our familial environment, our neighborhoods and peers, our culture? This course examines and strives to integrate human personality from several levels of analysis: trait level, biological level, motivational level, environmental level including microenvironments (family) as well as macro environments (neighborhoods, peers, culture), and cognitive level. Important psychological questions are built into this analysis, including the nature/nurture debate, conscious/unconscious processes, and free-will/determinism.

*Prerequisite: PSY 100.*

**PSY 201 Biological Bases of Behavior (3 credits)**
This is an introductory-level course exploring the relationship between human behavior and the functioning of the brain. Topics to be covered include research techniques in neuroscience, the structure and function of the peripheral and central nervous systems, the structure and function of nerve cells, the chemistry of the nervous system, and drug effects in the nervous system.

*Prerequisite: PSY 100.*

**PSY 210 Research Methods (3 credits)**
This course is an introduction to the techniques and methods of descriptive and inferential research as they are applied to psychological science. Topics include archival research, naturalistic observation, participant-observer research, clinical-case studies, correlational research, quasi-experimental designs, between- and within-subject experimental designs, and factorial-design research. *Prerequisite: PSY 100.*

**PSY 211 Statistics for the Social Sciences (3 credits)**
An introduction to the basic principles of descriptive and inferential statistics as they apply to
the quantitative analysis of behavior. Students will learn how to organize, condense, draw conclusions from, and present psychological data. Topics to be covered include frequency distributions, measures of variability and central tendency, correlation coefficients, sampling theory, hypothesis testing, and parametric and non-parametric tests. 

**Prerequisites:** PSY 100; and MAT 101-102 or higher.

**PSY 212 Multicultural Psychology (3 credits)**
We live in a multicultural society that requires an appropriate understanding of cultural diversity. This course will provide students with a theoretical and practical understanding of the effects of culture on human thinking and behavior. The course considers current theories and research on culture, gender, race and ethnicity with the goal of better understanding the ways in which the multicultural context influences psychological processes. The aim of the course is to achieve a better appreciation of cultural groups and consideration of cultural issues in interpreting social experiences. **Prerequisite:** PSY 100.

**PSY 220 Sensation and Perception (3 credits)**
The world around us abounds with all manner of sensory stimuli-visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, and gustatory. This course will explore the manner in which we internalize this information and use it as knowledge about what is going on around us. Each of the senses will be considered from biological and phenomenological perspectives, and the process by which we derive meaning from sensory activity will be examined. Topics to be covered include object perception, visual attention, music and speech perception, somatosensory processing, taste preferences, and smell recognition. **Prerequisite:** PSY 100.

**PSY 221 Animal Learning and Memory (3 credits)**
Other than that which is genetically coded, everything we know is derived from and reflects memory for information that we have learned in the past. This course introduces the student to the scientific investigation of the basic processes of learning and memory. Topics of discussion will include the traditional theories, methodologies, and empirical findings of habituation and sensitization, classical conditioning, and instrumental conditioning. In addition, mechanisms of retention, sources of forgetting, and the biological basis of learning and memory processes will be considered. **Prerequisite:** PSY 100.

**PSY 222 Neuropsychology (3 credits)**
Neuropsychology will introduce students to understanding human brain/behavior relationships. Emphasis will be placed on commonly used approaches in assessing and measuring human behavior and how the human brain is responsible for cognition, language, memory, spatial processing, emotion, and personality. Students will gain an understanding of principles of brain organization, individual differences, and professional and clinical issues in neuropsychology. **Prerequisite:** PSY 100.

**PSY 223 Health Psychology (3 credits)**
Health psychology is a field that incorporates many sub-disciplines of psychology with modern medicine. This course seeks to provide the student with an understanding of how social, psychological, and biological variables combine to cause illness, and how behavior and environments can be changed to promote health. One important focus of the course concerns understanding the nature of stress and the impact stress has on health. **Prerequisite:** PSY 100.

**PSY 224 Psychopharmacology (3 credits)**
How do drugs affect consciousness and behavior? This course will examine the action of many different drugs, both medicinal and illicit, from biological, behavioral, and social perspectives. 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 drug action, the histories of miscellaneous drugs, and the behavioral and biological activity of alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, the opiates, the hallucinogens, the antipsychotics, amphetamines, and cocaine. **Prerequisite:** PSY 100.

**PSY 230 Social Psychology (3 credits)**
The discipline of social psychology can be described as the study of the “power of the situation.” Although we like to think that our behavior and our attitudes are freely chosen by us, this course illuminates how powerful outside situational forces can be in shaping both. It involves the understanding of how people influence, and are influenced by, others around them; how we form impressions of others and of ourselves; what determines our attraction to others (or lack thereof); why we help one another, and why we hurt one another. In addition to a basic understanding of these phenomena, an equally important goal is to develop critical and integrative
ways of thinking about theories and research in social psychology.  Prerequisite: PSY 100.

**PSY 235 Psychology of Gender (3 credits)**
This course will examine a wide variety of psychological issues concerning gender. Topics will include gender bias in research, theories of gender, gender typing, cultural emphases on gender differences, gender and the self-concept, and psychological phenomena unique to women’s and men’s experiences. Prerequisite: PSY 100.

**PSY 250 History and Systems of Psychology (3 credits)**
This course is designed to provide the student with an integrated view of the development of the field of psychology. Emphasis is placed upon the philosophical antecedents and the biological background of the field as it developed during the nineteenth century, the systems period of the twentieth century, and the present state of the discipline. Prerequisite: PSY 100.

**PSY 390-391 Internship I/II (3 credits)**
Internship entails spending eight hours each week (for a total of 112 hours) at a site in which students' work will be supervised and evaluated. Settings include clinical, clinical research, counseling, hospital, educational research, special education, correctional, and industrial facilities. Prerequisites: PSY 100 and PSY 210. Notes: Permission of the course’s instructor and the Psychology Department chair are required.