

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Goals

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. The subject matter of psychology, rooted in the facts of experience and behavior, has a strong linkage with the biological and social sciences. Psychology also shares the concerns and issues of the arts and humanities because they, like psychology, deal with human experience, feelings and motivations. By studying the fascinating interactions among biological and environmental influences on behavior, students gain a better understanding of their own actions, emotions, and thought processes. By approaching its subject matter as problems of scientific investigation, psychology can help students better understand the issues and problems they encounter in today's society.

The psychology major is designed to provide students with a comprehensive (and interdisciplinary) body of knowledge and to enable students to develop powers of discrimination and judgment. Through the use of advised electives, individualized programs of study are developed to correspond to students' educational and career goals.

The psychology department's research facilities include laboratories in behavioral neuroscience, animal behavior, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, statistics and gerontology. Students are encouraged to become involved in research projects under the guidance of faculty members. These opportunities for research with faculty, and our program of off-campus co-ops and practicum placements provide students with hands-on experience to supplement their classroom learning. Students can also participate in a variety of social and scholastic activities such as Psi Chi (International Honor Society in psychology) and the Psychology Club.

The program leads to a B.A. or B.S. in psychology.

Bachelors

- Psychology, B.A. (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/undergraduate/programs-az/arts-sciences/psychology/psychology-ba/>)
- Psychology, B.S. (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/undergraduate/programs-az/arts-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs/>)
- Psychology: Concentration in Clinical and Counseling (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/undergraduate/programs-az/arts-sciences/psychology/concentration-clinical-counseling-psychology/>)

Minor

- Psychology, Minor (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/undergraduate/programs-az/arts-sciences/psychology/psychology-minor/>)

Courses

PSY 101 – Introductory Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

An introduction to basic psychological theory and research. The content of this course surveys the various subfields of psychology including: biopsychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, abnormal psychology, and social psychology.

PSY 201 – Developmental Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

The biological, affective, cognitive, and social domains of human development are studied individually and integrally as the stages of growth are traced from conception to death.

PSY 211 – Health Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

This course examines the role of psychological and social factors in health and illness, typically covering three general areas: (1) psychological factors affecting disease, (2) psychological and social consequences of illness and (3) psychotherapeutic interventions.

PSY 215 – Psychology of Aging (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

A study of development in adulthood and old age. The psychological, social, and biological determinants of age-related changes are discussed. Current theory and empirical evidence are considered. Topics include psychomotor, intellectual functioning, learning, personality and adjustment, and mental health.

PSY 221 – Statistics for Psych (AS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

A study and application of descriptive and inferential statistics used in psychological research including presentations of data, descriptive statistics, and testing of hypotheses.

PSY 222 – Research Methods (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101 PSY*221*

An introduction to research methods in psychology. Topics include observational, correlational, and experimental research, and application and interpretation of basic classical and Bayesian statistics. Students design, conduct, and present research projects to improve their interpretation and communication skills. Students must complete an introductory statistics course such as PSY 221 before taking this course.

PSY 231 – Behavioral Neuroscience (NS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

This course explores the relationship between the brain, its related systems, and behavior. The basic goals are to examine the physiological and neurological basis of behavior and to approach psychology from a biological perspective. Topics covered include: neuroanatomy and neurochemistry, sleep and arousal, biological rhythms, sexual differentiation and behavior, feeding behavior, the physiology of mental disorders, and neurological disorders.

PSY 232L – Behavioral Neuroscience Lab (LAB) (1 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101 PSY*231*

This laboratory, designed to be taken concurrently with PSY 231, will provide students with hands-on experience in neuroanatomy, small animal care, and behavioral testing. Students will also be afforded direct contact with the principles of research design and analysis by conducting laboratory experiments in physiological psychology. The course is optional for students enrolled in PSY 231 and is also open to students who have completed PSY 231.

PSY 252 – Personality Theory (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

This course emphasizes the study of diverse personality theories representing psychoanalytic, psychometric trait, social learning, and phenomenological viewpoints as well as related assessment techniques, research findings, and their respective applications.

PSY 265 – Industrial/Org Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

Applications of psychological principles to problems in the workplace are explored from the point of view of the individual employee and groups within and the organization. The course focuses on leadership, motivation, job satisfaction, and factors influencing productivity. Personnel selection, placement, training, development, appraisals, and organizational theory are also considered.

PSY 300 – Learning & Condition (NS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

This course is concerned with the detailed experimental study of both classical and operant conditioning, the major theories of learning in psychology. Topics to be covered include schedules of reinforcement, punishment and avoidance learning, discrimination and generalization, learned helplessness, and the influence of genetics on learning. Human applications of classical and operant conditioning will also be discussed.

PSY 307 – Special Topics in Psychology (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

Special topics courses in psychology are offered whenever departmental resources are sufficient to do so. Topics could include, but are not limited to, health psychology, sport psychology, forensic psychology, and biological basis of mental disorders. Students may take up to three special topics courses.

PSY 310 – Child Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

This course utilizes the concepts of developmental psychology to examine in detail physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development from the prenatal period until pubescence. Typical problems of parenting and child rearing are considering along with research.

PSY 322 – Psychological Assessment (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

This course is designed to provide a basic introduction to the field of psychological assessment. Theories, methods, applications, and limitations of assessment in the areas of intelligence, interest, aptitude, personality, and psychopathology are included, as well as problems of test administration, construction, and evaluation. As part of the course, students will be afforded direct experience with many well-known psychological assessment methods.

PSY 325 – Animal Behavior (NS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

An introduction to the study of animal behavior integrating classic and recent work in psychology, animal learning, zoology, neurobiology, physiology, and behavioral ecology. Evolutionary theory is used as an organizing framework for comparing behavior patterns in humans and other species.

PSY 325L – Laboratory in Animal Behavior (NS) (1 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101 and PSY*325 or PSY*300*

This laboratory course builds upon the theoretical and research foundation begun in PSY 325. Students will explore animal behavior through exercises designed to further understanding of the causation, development, evolution, and function of animal behavior. Field studies involving observational and experimental work will be included.

PSY 331 – Cognitive Psychology (NS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

Cognitive psychology is the scientific study of how people acquire and use information. The course emphasizes major theories in the field and the experimental investigation of such topics as pattern recognition, attention, knowledge representation, memory, problem solving, reasoning, and language.

PSY 333 – Sensation & Perception (NS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

An experimental-theoretical approach to the processing of sensory information and perceptual phenomena. The research questions, methods, and findings from basic sensory processes to complex cognitive processes are discussed. Major emphasis is on the visual and auditory systems. Practical applications are considered.

PSY 341 – Theories of Motivation (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

The study of motivation is an inquiry into the drives, needs, desires, and numerous other controlling forces operating in goal-seeking behavior. Physiological and behavioristic approaches, activation arousal theory, cognitive, social and self-actualizing theories, and research will be examined and compared.

PSY 342 – Social Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

This course considers how the variety of social influences impinging upon us daily contributes as one of the many determinants of our behavior in a variety of contexts. Topics covered include: impression formation, interpersonal attraction, the psychology of helping behavior, the development of attitudes, conformity behavior in groups, leadership, and the influence of physical environment on social behavior.

PSY 353 – Abnormal Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

An examination of the dimensions, theories, and empirical findings in psychopathology. Topics will include the concept of abnormality, problems and schemes of classification, a review of theoretical approaches to understanding the etiology of psychopathology, a survey of various clinical syndromes, and a discussion of the treatment of selected disorders.

PSY 355 – Clinical Psychology (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

This course surveys the major theoretical approaches and intervention techniques within the field of clinical psychology. Approaches covered include the psychodynamic, person-centered, gestalt, cognitive, and behavioral perspectives. Audio and video clips, demonstrations, and role-play exercises are used to supplement the traditional lecture-discussion format.

PSY 356 – Psychology of Gender (SS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

This course examines gender from a psychological perspective, including biological and social theories which attempt to account for gender differences in our society as well as cross-culturally, and evidence for the existence of sex differences in behavior. An attempt is made to understand the dynamic and perplexing changes facing men and women today.

PSY 361 – History & Systems (H) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

An overview of the historical development of the major doctrines in psychology is presented. This includes integrating social and political events with competing value systems in the formation of scientific thought, and examining how psychology was influenced by different philosophic schools of thought. Special attention will also be devoted to critical issues in the philosophy of science and theory construction.

PSY 371 – Psychopharmacology (NS) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

This course is designed to provide the student with a working knowledge of the basic principles of pharmacology, and an understanding of the behavioral and physiological effects of psychoactive compounds. An emphasis is placed on examining how the behavioral effects of drugs are brought about through their actions within the brain.

PSY 401 – Supervised Research (3.00 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

An opportunity for students to conduct collaborative research under the supervision of a faculty mentor or engage in an independent study program. Both options require a written report.

PSY 402 – Supervised Research (3.00 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

An opportunity for students to conduct collaborative research under the supervision of a faculty mentor or engage in an independent study program. Both options require a written report.

PSY 403 – Supervised Research (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

An opportunity for students to conduct collaborative research under the supervision of a faculty mentor or engage in an independent study program. Both options require a written report.

PSY 404 – Supervised Research (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

An opportunity for students to conduct collaborative research under the supervision of a faculty mentor or engage in an independent study program. Both options require a written report.

PSY 406 – Honors Thesis I (WI) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite PSY*101*

Individual research of a substantive nature pursued in the student's major field of study. The research will conclude in a written thesis or an original project, and an oral defense.

PSY 407 – Honors Thesis II (WI) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite PSY*101*

Individual research of a substantive nature pursued in the student's major field of study. The research will conclude in a written thesis or an original project, and an oral defense.

PSY 481 – Senior Seminar (WI) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101, PSY*221, and PSY*222*

This course is restricted to seniors, and is the capstone course in the psychology major. It involves an intensive investigation of a specific topic in psychology. Students will apply the knowledge and skills acquired over the course of their program to the study of the selected topic. The topic will be determined by the instructor and will vary from semester to semester. Emphasis will be placed on student presentations and participation in a seminar format.

PSY 491 – Practicum (WI) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Take PSY*101*

The opportunity to obtain applied experience in psychology through weekly volunteer work in local agencies carried out under supervision of a professor. Students will meet as a group on a regular basis to discuss their experiences.

PSY 492 – Practicum (WI) (3 credits)

*Prerequisite Must have taken PSY*101;*

The opportunity to obtain applied experience in psychology through weekly volunteer work in local agencies carried out under supervision of a professor. Students will meet as a group on a regular basis to discuss their experiences.

PSY 493 – Psychology Co-op (6.00 credits)

*Prerequisite PSY*101*

A junior or senior work-study program providing relevant paid employment experience. Registration will occur at the beginning of the experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, lending relevancy to learning and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities. Students interested in taking a co-op should talk to their adviser.

PSY 494 – Psychology Co-op (6.00 credits)

*Prerequisite PSY*101*

A junior or senior work-study program providing relevant paid employment experience. Registration will occur at the beginning of the experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, lending relevancy to learning and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities. Students interested in taking a co-op should talk to their adviser.

PSY 495 – Psychology Co-op (6.00 credits)

*Prerequisite PSY*101*

A junior or senior work-study program providing relevant paid employment experience. Registration will occur at the beginning of the experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, lending relevancy to learning, and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities. Students interested in taking a co-op should talk to their adviser.

PSY 496 – Psychology Co-op (6.00 credits)

*Prerequisite PSY*101*

A junior or senior work-study program providing relevant paid employment experience. Registration will occur at the beginning of the experience. The objective of the program is to integrate classroom theory and practical work experience, lending relevancy to learning and providing the student with a realistic exposure to career opportunities. Students interested in taking a co-op should talk to their adviser.