DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

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psychology.vcu.edu (http://www.psychology.vcu.edu)

In addition to the Bachelor of Science in Psychology, the Department of Psychology offers instruction in clinical, counseling, health and general psychology leading to the Doctor of Philosophy degree. Students in all doctoral degree programs are educated first as psychologists and then helped to develop competence in a more specialized area relevant to their scholarly and professional objectives. In addition, special training and experience in college teaching is available.

Honors in psychology

Psychology majors in the baccalaureate program can earn honors in psychology. Any student is eligible to join the program if he or she declares a major in psychology, meets one of the following entrance requirements and joins the Honors College.

Entering freshmen must have combined SAT scores of at least 1910 and rank in the top 15 percent of their high school graduating class and present an unweighted 3.5 GPA (4.0 scale). Students transferring to VCU must have a 3.5 cumulative GPA in at least 30 college semester hours of credit and have no more than 60 college semester hours of credit. Continuing VCU students must have a 3.5 cumulative GPA and have taken a minimum of 20, but no more than 60, credits at VCU.

Once admitted to the program, the honors student must complete an honors thesis during a three-semester course sequence (PSYC 497, 498, 499), typically begun in their junior year, in which they propose, conduct and successfully defend their research.

A student in the program will graduate with honors in psychology if he or she has completed this three-course sequence with an A in each course, has maintained a GPA of 3.5, overall and in psychology, has had their thesis defense approved by members of the committee with no more than one negative vote and has completed all other requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Psychology.

Psychology advising (Psyugrad)

Students choose to major in psychology for many reasons. Most often they select the major from a combination of wanting to help other people and wanting to learn the scientific principles of behavior. Students in the program expect to receive career counseling and information on graduate and/or professional school training. The department has developed methods to meet these expectations.

Psyugrad has been established by the department to provide advising to undergraduate majors with educational and career planning. Students are shown how to choose appropriate electives for bachelor's-level careers in mental health services, personnel, management, corrections, rehabilitation, health services, education and laboratory research. In addition, all psychology majors are enrolled in PSYUGRAD, a Blackboard organization. PSYUGRAD provides up-to-date information on research opportunities, jobs, special presentations and advising documents.

The adviser's role is to consult with students about various areas of professional opportunity, explain the role of graduate education and suggest general areas of study outside of the psychology department that might fit the student's interests and goals. Advisers are available on a walk-in basis at the department's Psyugrad Advising Office located at the White House, 806 W. Franklin Street, Room 107. Hours are posted on PSYUGRAD Blackboard.

PSYC 492 and PSYC 494 are two of the upper-level electives specifically designed to enhance the psychology major's career pursuits for either employment or graduate-level training. Both of these courses provide opportunities for direct, practical experience with close supervision. Students may register for one, two or three credits following consultation with a faculty mentor who will supervise the experience. Students are expected to work three hours per week per credit hour for each of these experiences. They may be repeated for up to a total of 12 credits, but with no more than six credits of each.

The Department of Psychology offers service-learning courses (PSYC 307/LFSC 307; PSYC 493) that involve participation in an organized community service experience. Through classroom discussions and written assignments, students relate theories and research presented in class with community experiences. Through service-learning courses, students:

• Gain an understanding and appreciation of the community and its diverse people
• Explore an area of study or a career option
• Critically reflect on their values and responsibilities as citizens

In many cases, a service-learning course will meet the urban experience general education requirement (refer to the Schedule of Classes).

• Psychology, Bachelor of Science (B.S.) (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs/)
• Psychology, Bachelor of Science (B.S.) with a concentration in:
  • Addiction studies (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs-concentration-addiction-studies/)
  • Applied psychology (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs-concentration-applied-psychology/)
  • Life science (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs-concentration-life-science/)
• Pre-graduate school (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs-concentration-pre-graduate-school/)
• Urban psychology (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/psychology/psychology-bs-concentration-urban-psychology/)
PSYC 101. Introduction to Psychology. 4 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture and 1 computer-assisted instructional hours. 4 credits. A survey of the basic principles, methods of investigation and fields of study and application. Includes individualized application of principles and methods in computerized learning activities. This course is a prerequisite for upper-level work in the field of psychology.

PSYC 201. Career Development in Psychology. 2 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Introduction to the discipline of psychology and the career alternatives available in various specialties. Self-assessment, career decision-making skills, educational program planning methods will be covered. Special topics will include graduate/professional school options, opportunities for minority students and job search strategies for the B.A. or B.S. psychology major.

PSYC 214. Applications of Statistics. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PSYC 101 and STAT 210 both with a minimum grade of C. Frequency distributions, measures of central tendency and variability; sampling, probability, correlation and significance tests as applied in psychological data.

PSYC 301. Child Psychology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. A study is made of the growth and development of the child until puberty. Childlike is viewed in terms of physical, mental, social, emotional and educational factors. PSYC 304 Life Span Developmental Psychology also may not be taken for credit.

PSYC 302. Psychology of Adolescence. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. A study of mental, moral, social and physical development from puberty to maturity viewed as in child psychology. Designed for secondary school teachers, youth leaders and professional psychologists.

PSYC 303. Personal Adjustment. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Surveys major theories of personality as a basis for studying theory, research and intervention into areas that require personal adjustment. Such areas include sense of self, stress and coping, work and career and several varieties of interpersonal relationships. Positive adjustment and growth as well as problems are discussed.

PSYC 304. Life Span Developmental Psychology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Reviews the basic concepts and principles of physical, cognitive and social development at each major stage of life-prenatal, infancy, toddlerhood, preschool, middle childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. Consideration is given to the study of development at each stage of life and to different theoretical explanations for development. PSYC 301 Child Psychology may not also be taken for credit.

PSYC 305. Educational Psychology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. The application of psychological principles to the teaching-learning process, with special emphasis on theories of learning and development. Crosslisted as: EDUS 305.

PSYC 306. Psychology of Adult Development. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. The life stages and transitions of the young adult, middle age and young-old phases of the life cycle are considered, following a review of methods of research within life-span development psychology. Topics include the impact of events such as birth of the first child, job relocation, mid-life re-evaluation and anticipated retirement.

PSYC 307. Community Solutions: Multiple Perspectives. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Explores possibilities for addressing social concerns of the Richmond community by understanding the complex nature of social issues as essential to their successful amelioration via perspectives of life and social sciences. Toward this end, expertise from the social sciences, the life sciences and the community are integrated. Includes a service-learning experience (a 20-hour volunteer requirement). Crosslisted as: LFSC 307.

PSYC 308. Stress and its Management. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Physiological and psychological aspects of stressors and the stress response. Review of principles, research and methods of stress management, such as relaxation, self-suggestions, meditation and biofeedback.

PSYC 309. Personality. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. The study of the various approaches to understanding human behavior in terms of personality theory. Various theories will be examined for commonality and uniqueness in assumptions, dynamics and development of personality.

PSYC 310. Industrial Psychology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Application of psychological principles and techniques to problems in personnel management and human engineering; recruitment, selection, training and placement in industry; criteria in testing and test development; morale evaluation and improvement, employee counseling; work-management communications; human engineering in equipment design, quality control, working conditions and safety.

PSYC 317. Experimental Methods. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 2 laboratory hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 214 with a minimum grade of C. Introduction to experimental procedures and laboratory techniques in psychology. Demonstrations and experiments in sensation, perception, learning, emotion and motivation.

PSYC 318. Principles of Psychological Tests and Measurements. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: minimum grade of C in PSYC 101 and minimum grade of C in STAT 210. Concepts in psychological measurement and a survey of commonly used tests; testing procedures and rationale underlying these tests; tests of intelligence, aptitude, achievement, interest and personality critically examined, procedures described for selecting and evaluating specific group tests in these areas.

PSYC 321. Social Psychology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Survey theory and research in social psychology. Topics include interpersonal and social influence processes, attitudes and social cognition, the impact of personality on social behavior, conformity, leadership and small group behavior.
PSYC 322. Personality and Behavior of the African American. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. A study of personality factors such as motivation, ego-functioning and the socialization processes, with special emphasis on living conditions of African-Americans. Crosslisted as: AFAM 322.

PSYC 323. Interpersonal Relations. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Analyzes human relations from various theoretical perspectives. Typical topics include the effects of attraction, friendship, love and dependency on relationships; the evolution of relationships from initiation through termination. Strategies for increasing effectiveness of communication between individuals also are addressed.

PSYC 333. Psychology and Religious Experience. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Religious belief and experience as viewed by major psychological theorists. How psychological methodology has been used to study religious experience. Topics include personality factors and development, conversion experiences, religious experiences and mental health and human values. Crosslisted as: RELS 333.

PSYC 335. Psychology of Women. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Overview of issues in psychology relevant to women. Topics include: research methods of women’s issues; sex-role socialization; women and hormones; psychological androgyny; personality theory and counseling strategies for women; women and language; women and violence; and rape and abuse. Crosslisted as: GSWS 335.

PSYC 340. Introduction to the Helping Relationship. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Overview to the dynamics of communication in a helping relationship. Didactic material includes the principles of empathy, nonverbal behavior, problem-solving, crisis intervention and interview techniques. Basic paraprofessional counselor skills will be demonstrated and practiced through structured exercises.

PSYC 341. Group Dynamics. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Social and psychological principles and research related to the individual in groups. Specific topics include motivation for individuals forming and joining groups, performance and productivity of group members, group leadership and majority and minority influence. The group will be examined in relation to the larger society and as a subculture in itself. Crosslisted as: SOCY 341.

PSYC 401. Physiological Psychology. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Data from the fields of anatomy and physiology are presented, and their implications for psychology are discussed. The central nervous system, internal environment, vision, audition, reflexes, emotion, learning behavior disorders and their physiological components. Behavior of the human organisms is studied from the biopsychological point of view.

PSYC 404. Social Psychology of Emotions. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PSYC 101, SOCY 101. An examination of the social shaping of emotion as well as its function in maintaining the social process. Cross-cultural uniformities and diversity in basic emotions and their expression are addressed as well as selected social psychological theories of emotions.

PSYC 406. Perception. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Perception of information from sensory systems with concentration on vision and hearing. Research and theories on how we learn and judge color, form, movement, depth and how individuals integrate these in object identification.

PSYC 407. Psychology of the Abnormal. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Development of personality is discussed, with emphasis on factors leading to maladjustment. Lectures and reading cover the symptom groups of emotional disorders of both psychological and organic origin. Methods of assessing and treating these disorders are surveyed.

PSYC 410. Principles of Learning and Cognition. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Comprehensive treatment of learning and cognition with emphasis on humans, from behavioral, cognitive, biological and developmental viewpoints. Topics include conditioning, information processing, memory, sociobiology and cognitive and moral development.

PSYC 412. Health Psychology. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Application of the principles and techniques of psychology to the field of medicine, to health maintenance and to illness. The integration of theoretical, research and applied issues is emphasized in the analysis of such topics as psychological/behavioral factors contributing to and protecting against physical illness (stress, smoking, exercise), factors relating to treatment and recovery (coping, treatment compliance), psychological problems resulting from illness and injury, and specific techniques and problem areas in health psychology (such as biofeedback, pain management, pediatric psychology, geropsychology, rehabilitation psychology and lifestyle change.).

PSYC 414. Psychology of Women's Health. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Overviews the psychological research on women's health. Topics include health behavior change, personality and individual differences, cognitive factors, disease-specific behaviors and interventions. Crosslisted as: GSWS 414.

PSYC 415. Psychological Theories of Addiction. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Enrollment restricted to psychology majors (standard curriculum/all concentrations) and minors in psychology. An overview of current and historical theories related to the causes of and risk factors for problematic drug use and other addictive behaviors. Describes specific effects of different drugs of abuse and explores various behaviors (gambling, gaming, internet use) that have been identified as addictive in nature. Provides an understanding of the harms and costs associated with drug use and abuse, major approaches to understanding drug addiction (e.g., epidemiological, biological, genetic, behavioral, cognitive, transtheoretical/motivational, sociocultural, developmental), and the human experience of addiction. Introduces research methods used to generate knowledge about the causes of drug use and abuse.

PSYC 416. Psychological Treatment of Addiction. 3 Hours. Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 415. Enrollment restricted to psychology majors (standard curriculum/all concentrations). A review of evidence-based practices in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of substance use, abuse and dependence, and comorbid conditions. Discusses psychosocial and psychological approaches as well as medication-assisted therapies for substance use disorders. Examines societal views of addiction and their influences on treatment capacity and services, as well as treatment needs and services for special populations (e.g., pregnant women, adolescents).
PSYC 426. Child Psychopathology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PSYC 101.

PSYC 451. History of Psychology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PSYC 101 and senior standing. Traces the history of ideas about mind and behavior as they relate to the theory and practice of psychology.

PSYC 491. Topics in Psychology. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Maximum total of 6 credits in topics courses. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. An in-depth study of selected topics and issues in psychology. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics to be offered.

PSYC 492. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1, 2 or 3 credits per semester. Maximum of 6 credits for all independent study courses. PSYC 492, PSYC 493 or PSYC 494 may be repeated for a total of 6 credits but a maximum of 12 credits total for all three courses. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Open only to students of junior or senior standing who have acquired at least 12 credits in the departmental discipline. Determination of the amount of credit and permission of instructor and department chair must be procured prior to registration of the course. Independent study is defined as student-conceived and initiated readings or research project which is supervised by a psychology faculty member. An oral examination or written, comprehensive paper is required at the end of the semester.

PSYC 493. Fieldwork: Human Services. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 credits. PSYC 492, PSYC 493 and PSYC 494 may be repeated for a total of 6 credits but a maximum of 12 credits total for all three courses. Prerequisite: PSYC 101. Open only to students of junior or senior standing who have acquired at least 12 credits in the departmental discipline. Students are placed in an agency, which will provide supervised work experience in various aspects of helping other people. The setting might be a government or private community agency, or a corporation, depending on the student’s goals. The student works eight hours per week at the placement site, attends several group discussion sessions during the semester and completes written assignments. This course is designed to enhance the psychology major’s career pursuits for either graduate-level training or post-baccalaureate employment.

PSYC 494. Research Internship in Psychology. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1, 2 or 3 credits per semester. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits with adviser’s approval. PSYC 492, PSYC 493 or PSYC 494 may be repeated for a total of 6 credits but a maximum of 12 credits total for all three courses. Prerequisites: PSYC 101 and permission of faculty research supervisor must be obtained prior to registration. PSYC 214 and PSYC 317, or permission of supervisor. Students will work on various phases of a research project (design, data collection, data analysis, manuscript writing) under a psychology faculty member’s close supervision. This course is designed to enhance the psychology major’s career pursuits for either graduate-level training or post-baccalaureate employment.

PSYC 497. Honors in Psychology I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PSYC 317 (co-requisite with permission) and admission to the honors in psychology program. First in a three course sequence to develop, execute and defend an empirically based thesis in psychology. Students will work with a mentor to develop ideas into a tangible research project, working toward a proposal.

PSYC 498. Honors in Psychology II. 3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 497 with a grade of A. Students will refine research ideas developed in PSYC 497 into a formal proposal document with introduction, method and proposed results. Students are expected to propose the thesis to their committee members no later than the second week of this course and begin data collection thereafter.

PSYC 499. Honors in Psychology III. 3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PSYC 498 with a grade of A. Students will complete the research project developed in PSYC 497 and 498 and generate the final thesis, including introduction, method, results and discussion. Students must orally defend the thesis to their committee members by the end of this course with time for revisions to be submitted within the semester’s defined grading period.