

# **Proposal for a Change in Major of the Department of Psychology**

## ***Rationale for Changing the Psychology Majors:***

The current Psychology major has a large number of required courses, leaving little room for choice among psychology electives. This minimal flexibility for most majors became especially apparent after a comparison with other, similar programs from liberal arts colleges.

In summer 2009, a sub-group of department members began the process of examining our program relative to other psychology programs. An initial list of 32 institutions was developed in consultation with Michael Beseda. After extensive analysis, it was found that select comparison schools have fewer required courses, more flexibility in their majors and specializations, and they have more contemporary course offerings. These findings spurred discussion over the following months of how to revise the major. Key areas of discussion were the flexibility in our major, the need for students to have the ability to take electives, such as clinical and applied courses, and the possibility of a senior course.

The proposed new psychology curriculum serves to remedy these concerns, while still successfully meeting our stated goals as a department. In addition, by offering a “senior experience” with a choice of an off-campus internship, our new major brings us better into alignment with Goal 1 of the Academic Blueprint for the college which states, “Prepare students for ethical and effective engagement in a diverse and global environment.”

In 2006-07, the department decided to adopt-with revisions appropriate to our department- the learning goals suggested by the American Psychological Association. The following is a statement of the Learning Goals that appears in the catalog:

Upon completion of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, graduates will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical approaches, research findings, and historical trends in psychology.
- 2) Engage in informed, critical, intellectual discussion surrounding questions of human behavior.
- 3) Use multiple research methods and statistical tools to design research and collect, analyze, and interpret data; understand the limitations of these tools and methods; successfully interpret empirical research; demonstrate information competence through the use of key databases; and proficiently write a research report using the standard format use by the American Psychological Association.
- 4) Demonstrate the skills of skeptical inquiry and critical thinking in the analysis of peer-reviewed articles and articles appearing in the popular press.

- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of the multiple ways gender, culture, age, and sexual orientation affect psychological processes (i.e. perception, memory, learning, affect, social behavior, and development).
- 6) Use computer simulations and anatomical dissections to demonstrate the role of biology and neurology in learning, memory, language and neurological and biological pathologies;
- 7) Apply psychological theory and research to issues in your career, personal life, and problems of social justice in the world around you

The new major would propose to meet these goals via the required courses in the following ways:

Goal #1: This goal is met by Psychology 1 and 2. Components of this goal are then built upon and further developed in upper division Psychology courses, including 140, 150, 160, 110, 126, 127, and 128.

Goal #2: This goal is met by Psychology 140, 150, 160.

Goal #3: This goal 3 is met in Psych 3 and 103.

Goal #4: This goal is met in Psych 1, 2, 3, and then further developed in 103, 140, 150 and 160.

Goal #5: This goal is initially addressed in Psychology 1. It is also addressed in Psych 140, 150, 160 and in 126, 127, 128. It is also expanded upon across the curriculum in non-required (elective) courses.

Goal #6: This goal is addressed in Psych 2. Dissections and simulations are also used to illustrate these principles in 110.

Goal #7: This goal is met in Psych 1, Psych 140, 150, 160 and in Psych 126, 127, 128. It is also met through service learning experiences in non-required courses. It is met via laboratory experiences in Psych 106 and more effective implementation is being explored via internships in 195.

Given their centrality in meeting our departmental goals, these courses listed above formed the basis for our new major. As seen below, the new major will allow Psychology students to meet the goals of the department via fewer required courses. In addition, the new major contains five core courses, which will ensure coverage of the breadth of psychology; sets of required courses and increased electives, to allow for depth; and a “senior experience” course to allow students to place their education into practice and/or into perspective.

Ten tenured psychology faculty who are teaching full time in the department (Elena Escalera, Lynnyonne, Cotton, Emily Hause, Mary True, Keith Ogawa, Hoang Vu, Hiroko Nakano, Jim Temple, and Paul Zarnoth), four faculty members currently not teaching full time in Psychology (Mary McCall, Jose Feito, Sally Stamp, Brother Camilus), two adjunct faculty members (Carole

McKindley-Alvarez and Rita Smith), and two lecturers would be able to contribute actively to the required and elective courses in the new major.

### ***Overview of the Proposed Revision to the Psychology Major:***

We do not expect the number of psychology majors to increase or decrease as a result of the new curriculum – it is expected to remain stable at around 160 majors.

The new major will continue to provide a broad background in Psychology. Similar to the existing major, the child/adolescent development concentration will provide emphasis for those who intend to work with specific child or adolescent populations. The social concentration is designed for students who are interested in human resources, community psychology, or organizational psychology. The personality concentration is designed for students who wish to pursue careers in social work, counseling or clinical psychology. The behavioral neuroscience concentration (formerly called the experimental/neuroscience concentration) will serve students interested in specializing in cognition and the brain.

Students earning a degree in General Psychology (rather than a concentration) would have considerably more flexibility in choosing courses under the new curriculum, thereby allowing them to better prepare for a greater variety of career goals. The students earning a degree in General Psychology would be able to select 5 “free electives” from among all the upper-division courses psychology. The current version of the General Psychology major offers no “free electives.” The concentrations would offer less flexibility in course selection than General Psychology; however, they too would offer more flexibility than in the case under the existing curriculum. One additional benefit of the new curriculum is that those students who find it difficult to enroll in all of the required courses for a concentration will now be able to more easily switch to the General Psychology track and graduate on time.

Please note that the psychology department is proposing the elimination of the concentration in adolescent/adult development (though the concentration in child/adolescent development would remain). Although it is always difficult to eliminate a concentration, the department no longer has a faculty member teaching full time in the department who specializes in adult development. Therefore, we have concluded that we do not currently have the resources to continue to adequately support this concentration.

### ***Major Requirements:***

The curriculum of the Psychology Department is divided into four content areas: biological, developmental, personality, and social courses. The proposed major and proposed concentrations listed below will continue to reflect these.

Under the new major, psychology students, regardless of concentration, are required to take the following five courses:

Psych 1: Introduction to Personal-Social Psychology  
Psych 2: Introduction to Brain and Behavior  
Psych 3: Psychological Methods and Analysis I  
Psych 103: Psychological Methods and Analysis II  
Psych 110: Psychobiology

In addition, students would choose two of the following courses:

Psych 140: Human Development  
Psych 150: Personality Psychology  
Psych 160: Social Psychology

And one of the following courses:

Psych 126: Sensation and Perception  
Psych 127: Cognitive Science  
Psych 128: Neuropsychology

And one of the following courses:\*\*

Psych 100: Seminar in Psychology  
Psych 106: Experimental Research  
Psych 195: Special Field Study

And select 5 additional Upper Division Psychology electives.

\*\*These three courses represent a choice between three different kinds of advanced/senior experiences. Psychology majors will be expected to choose an advanced theory course (psych 100), an advanced research course (psych 106) or an intensive internship experience (psych 195). The students will be encouraged to choose the option that best fits their own individual academic interests and goals. In the near future, we will be further refining the guidelines, requirements and academic components of the 195 internship course to allow it to better serve a greater number of psychology majors. In the meantime, to allow 195 to be eligible to fulfill the role of an advanced elective within the major, we are proposing the following changes to its catalog description:

### **195 Special Field Study**

~~This course may be taken only on a pass/fail basis and does not count toward the major.~~  
Prerequisites: upper-division standing as a psychology major, sponsorship by a psychology faculty member, and approval of the Department of Psychology chair. ~~This course may be taken for .25, .50, or 1.0 course credit as determined by the faculty sponsor.~~

### ***Requirements for Social Concentration:***

The proposed social concentration would share the same *core curriculum* as the proposed new major. All psychology students, regardless of concentration, are required to take the following five courses:

Psych 1: Introduction to Personal-Social Psychology  
Psych 2: Introduction to Brain and Behavior  
Psych 3: Psychological Methods and Analysis I

Psych 103: Psychological Methods and Analysis II  
Psych 110: Psychobiology

*All* students within the social concentration would be required to choose one of the following three advanced cognitive/neuroscience courses:

Psych 126: Sensation and Perception  
Psych 127: Cognitive Science  
Psych 128: Neuropsychology

*All* students within the social concentration would be required to choose one of the following three “senior experience” courses:

Psych 100: Seminar in Psychology  
Psych 106: Experimental Research  
Psych 195: Special Field Study

In addition to completing the core curriculum as listed above, a student who chooses the social concentration would be required to do the following:

- Complete the following course:  
Psych 160: Social Psychology
- Select ONE of the following two courses:  
Psych 140: Human Development  
Psych 150: Personality Psychology

In addition to completing the core curriculum as listed above, a student who chooses the social concentration would be required to do the following:

- Complete 3 of the following courses\*:  
Psych 115  
Psych 147  
Psych 157  
Psych 165  
Psych 172  
Psych 180

\*Of these courses, at least two of them must include Psych 165, Psych 172 or Psych 180

*All* students within the social concentration would be required to complete two additional upper division Psychology electives.

### ***Requirements for the Personality Concentration:***

The proposed personality concentration would share the same ***core curriculum*** as the proposed new major. All psychology students, regardless of concentration, are required to take the following five courses:

Psych 1: Introduction to Personal-Social Psychology  
Psych 2: Introduction to Brain and Behavior  
Psych 3: Psychological Methods and Analysis I  
Psych 103: Psychological Methods and Analysis II  
Psych 110: Psychobiology

*All* students within the personality concentration would be required to choose one of the following three advanced cognitive/neuroscience courses:

Psych 126: Sensation and Perception  
Psych 127: Cognitive Science  
Psych 128: Neuropsychology

*All* students within the personality concentration would be required to choose one of the following three “senior experience” courses:

Psych 100: Seminar in Psychology  
Psych 106: Experimental Research  
Psych 195: Special Field Study

In addition to completing the core curriculum as listed above, a student who chooses the personality concentration would be required to do the following:

- Complete the following course:  
Psych 150: Personality Psychology
- Select ONE of the following two courses:  
Psych 140: Human Development  
Psych 160: Social Psychology

In addition to completing the core curriculum as listed above, a student who chooses the personality concentration would be required to do the following:

- Complete 3 of the following courses\*:  
Psych 147  
Psych 148  
Psych 152  
Psych 157  
Psych 170  
Psych 174

\*Of these courses, at least two of them must include Psych 152, Psych 170 or Psych 174

*All* students within the personality concentration would be required to complete two additional upper division Psychology electives.

### ***Requirements for the Child/Adolescent Development Concentration:***

The proposed child/adolescent concentration would share the same **core curriculum** as the proposed new major. All psychology students, regardless of concentration, are required to take the following five courses:

Psych 1: Introduction to Personal-Social Psychology  
Psych 2: Introduction to Brain and Behavior  
Psych 3: Psychological Methods and Analysis I  
Psych 103: Psychological Methods and Analysis II  
Psych 110: Psychobiology

*All* students within the child/adolescent concentration would be required to choose one of the following three advanced cognitive/neuroscience courses:

Psych 126: Sensation and Perception  
Psych 127: Cognitive Science  
Psych 128: Neuropsychology

*All* students within the child/adolescent concentration would be required to choose one of the following three “senior experience” courses:

Psych 100: Seminar in Psychology  
Psych 106: Experimental Research  
Psych 195: Special Field Study

In addition to completing the core curriculum as listed above, a student who chooses the child/adolescent concentration would be required to do the following:

- Complete the following course:  
Psych 140: Human Development
- Select ONE of the following two courses:  
Psych 150: Personality Psychology

## Psych 160: Social Psychology

*All* students within the child/adolescent concentration would be required to complete the following advanced developmental course:

Psych 142: Adolescence

In addition to completing the core curriculum as listed above, a student who chooses the child/adolescent concentration would be required to do the following:

- Complete 3 of the following courses\*:

Psych 008

Psych 141

Psych 143

Psych 144

Psych 147

Psych 148

Psych 165

Psych 174

\*Of these courses, at least one of them must include Psych 141 or Psych 144

*All* students within the child/adolescent concentration would be required to complete one additional upper division Psychology elective.

### ***Requirements for the Behavioral Neuroscience Concentration:***

The proposed behavioral neuroscience concentration would share the same ***core curriculum*** as the proposed new major. All psychology students, regardless of concentration, are required to take the following five courses:

Psych 1: Introduction to Personal-Social Psychology

Psych 2: Introduction to Brain and Behavior

Psych 3: Psychological Methods and Analysis I

Psych 103: Psychological Methods and Analysis II

Psych 110: Psychobiology

In addition to completing the core curriculum as listed above, a student who chooses the behavioral neuroscience concentration would be required to do the following:

- Select ONE of the following three courses:

Psych 140: Human Development

Psych 150: Personality Psychology

Psych 160: Social Psychology

*All* students within the behavioral neuroscience concentration would be required to complete the following three advanced cognitive/neuroscience courses:

Psych 126: Sensation and Perception

Psych 127: Cognitive Science

Psych 128: Neuropsychology

*All* students within the behavioral neuroscience concentration would be required to complete the following “senior experience” course:

Psych 106: Experimental Research

*All* students within the behavioral neuroscience concentration would be required to complete three additional upper division Psychology electives.

### ***Catalog Description:***

#### **Major Requirements**

##### **Core Curriculum**

Intended to give breadth and scope of the discipline, all psychology majors are required to fulfill the following five courses: Psychology 1, 2, 3, 103, 110.

##### **Course Prerequisites and Requirements**

A minimum grade of C– in all prerequisites is required for admission to all courses. Prerequisites may be waived at the discretion of the instructor.

##### **Lower Division**

Psychology 1, 2 and 3 are required for all psychology majors. A minimum grade of C– is required for all lower division courses

##### **Upper Division**

There are four major concentrations in the Department of Psychology. A student may elect to follow any one of these programs for a bachelor of science degree:

##### **General Psychology**

For the student who wants a general education in psychology, a sequence of upper-division courses in addition to the core curriculum is offered which must include one of Psychology 126, 127 or 128; two of Psychology 140, 150 or 160; one of Psychology 100, 106 or 195; and five upper division Psychology electives.

##### **Behavioral Neuroscience Concentration**

For the student with an interest in the biological bases of behavior, a sequence of upper-division courses in addition to the core curriculum is offered which must include Psychology 106, 126, 127 and 128; any two of Psychology 140, 150, 160; and any three upper division Psychology electives.

##### **Child/Adolescent Development Concentration**

For the student interested in working with individuals in educational or social service settings, a sequence of upper-division courses in addition to the core curriculum is offered which must include Psychology 140, 142; one of Psychology 126, 127 or 128; one of Psychology 150 or 160; and one of Psychology 100, 106 or 195. The sequence must also include 3 of Psychology 008, 141, 143, 144, 147, 148, 165 or 174, and at least one of these courses must include Psychology 141 or 144. Finally, the sequence must also include one additional upper-division psychology elective.

##### **Social Psychology Concentration**

For the student interested in community or organizational psychology, a sequence of upper-division courses in addition to the core curriculum is offered which must include Psychology 160; one of Psychology 140 or 150; one of Psychology 126, 127 or 128, and one of Psychology 100, 106 or 195. The sequence must also include three of Psychology 115, 147, 157, 165, 172,



or 180, and at least two of these courses must include Psychology 165, 172 or 180. Finally, the sequence must also include two additional upper-division psychology electives.

### **Personality Psychology Concentration**

For the student interested in social work or counseling/clinical psychology, a sequence of upper-division courses in addition to the core curriculum is offered which must include Psychology 150; one of Psychology 140 or 160; one of Psychology 126, 127 or 128; and one of Psychology 100, 106 or 195. The sequence must also include three of Psychology 147, 148, 152, 157, 170, 174, and at least two of these courses must include Psychology 152, 170 or 174. Finally, the sequence must also include two additional upper-division psychology electives.

### ***Impact on Psychology Majors:***

For majors, there is more flexibility, a somewhat more deliberate but also flexible culminating experience, while still addressing the departmental learning goals. Also, all students will now be required to take one of the cognitive/neuroscience courses, a general area that has grown in importance over the past decades. Other than that, the new major and any of the concentrations within the new major would require fourteen psychology courses, the same as the number for the old major and all other concentrations for the old major. New core curriculum requirements, such as writing, would be addressed within this new major by required courses.

### ***Impact on Psychology Minors:***

There will be no impact on psychology minors. We aren't proposing any change to the minor.

### ***Impact on Transfer Students:***

The new proposed psychology major will offer distinct advantages for these students. They will be able to more easily transfer in upper-division psychology courses that don't clearly match any of our courses as electives. As it is now, the transfer students sometimes don't receive any course credit for these courses because we don't have any electives in our curriculum.

### ***Impact on Other Students:***

None that we can foresee.

### ***Impact on Other Departments:***

There should not be any impact on other departments. We aren't planning to stop offering any courses that we are currently offering. So, for example, 140 will continue to be offered, so nursing will not be impacted.

Students typically do not pay much attention to the exact courses required before deciding upon a major. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that the proposed changes to the major will cause an undecided student to choose psychology rather than another major.

***Implementation Costs:***

The proposed new major would not require the creation of any new psychology courses. It would not require any new resources from the library. Nor would it create any new demands on other departments within the college.