Additional Information about the Psychology Concentration

How to Declare
In the spring of your sophomore year, during the end of March/beginning of April, you should meet with the Department of Psychology's Undergraduate Program Administrator. You will need to schedule your appointment in advance via the Web Appointment Scheduling System. Please bring your laptop or a hardcopy of your Internal Transcript (which you can print from TigerHub), and one copy of a Course Enrollment Worksheet (again, from TigerHub) filled out with the names of the courses you’re interested in taking in the Fall. The Undergraduate Program Administrator will review the courses you’ve already taken, discuss your planned Fall courses, and outline the requirements for the psychology concentration. You can then choose your concentration on the Registrar’s website (registrar1.princeton.edu) during the April declaration period.

Transfers and Late Concentrators
Students who submit late requests for admission to the Psychology Department, or who wish to transfer into the Department, will be accepted at the discretion of the Departmental Representative, if the Department can make adequate arrangements for supervision of junior and senior independent work.

Contacts

Undergraduate Program Administrator
Gina Touger
Peretsman-Scully Hall 105
Phone: 609-258-5289
Email: gtouger@princeton.edu

Undergraduate Departmental Representative
Professor Michael Graziano
Princeton Neuroscience Institute 281
Phone: 609-258-7555
Email: graziano@princeton.edu

Study Abroad
The Department allows concentrators to study abroad for one semester or a full year. Concentrators may receive credit for up to two courses per semester studying abroad, to count toward course requirements. Courses taken while studying abroad require advance approval of the Departmental Representative. To secure approval, students must document the workload and material covered by the courses.

Course Visits
If you wish to visit a course for a week or two for the purpose of deciding whether or not to take a course next year, please ask the lecturer’s permission to sit in.

Graduate Courses
Undergraduates may enroll in some graduate psychology courses, but the instructor’s and the Departmental Representative's permission are required.
Research Participation

Students in most undergraduate psychology courses must complete a research participation requirement in each of the first two of these courses taken. The standard requirement is that they participate in a total of four hours of experimental sessions per course. Students who do not wish to participate in experimental sessions must complete an alternative writing requirement. Students who do not complete the requirement by the end of the semester deadline will fail the course. Instructions for participating in research are distributed in each course at the beginning of the term.

Independent Work

Empirical research is at the core of our work as psychological scientists. As such, the primary goal of your independent work is to make sure you learn how to conduct and disseminate empirical research that makes a significant contribution to the larger field of psychology. During your junior and senior years you will learn:

1. To frame a scientific question and to select and organize material relevant to the question.
2. To critically analyze the primary scientific literature.
3. To select the appropriate methodological design and statistical analyses necessary to test a research question.
4. To develop clear presentation of the material including definition of a topic, statement of the plan of the paper, appropriate organization of the material, and good writing.
5. To develop independent thought, as shown by creativity in selecting or organizing the material to be discussed or by the presentation of original ideas or questions.

Junior Papers

To satisfy the junior independent work requirement, each student, in consultation with a faculty adviser in Psychology, must (i) write a report that includes a critical evaluation and a synthesis of compiled articles during the fall semester and (ii) write a research proposal during the spring semester.

Fall Semester Papers

Each student is assigned to work with one Psychology faculty member for the entire fall semester. The faculty adviser will create a list of approximately three key readings on a specific topic most likely related to the adviser’s research for all of that adviser’s junior-paper students to read. Students are expected to discuss the key readings with their adviser, find at least three additional relevant articles on their own, and write a 15- to 20-page report that includes a critical evaluation of each article and a synthesis of all of the articles. To help students learn how to find relevant primary sources, students will be required to attend on tutorial led by the psychology librarian.

Spring Semester Paper

Each student is assigned to work with one Psychology faculty member for the entire spring semester. Students are required to write a 30-40 page research proposal. A research proposal consists of: (a) comprehensive review and an exploration of the research literature on a psychology topic of importance; (b) extensive evaluation of the quality, findings, and implications of that body of research, including an ongoing appreciation and assessment of the research designs used throughout the research literature; (c) continuing display of both critical and original thought and analysis; and (d) presentation of at least one detailed research study idea (proposed hypotheses, methods, and statistical analyses) that would further the knowledge of, and/or address key issues raised in, the relevant literature. The research proposal may help students devise their senior thesis if in an area of continued interest, and regardless will provide practice with developing a
research question and designing a study to test it. If available, students can include pilot data in their spring junior paper.

A second adviser, serving as a reader, will also be assigned for the spring semester. Second advisers are usually from the Department of Psychology. Advisers from other departments will be considered only after the student has obtained permission from the primary adviser, the Departmental Representative in Psychology, and the potential second adviser. Then the student must submit written notification indicating the name and department of the second adviser.

**Format**

Junior papers must be submitted in the American Psychological Association format. The APA style manual is available in the Science Library for reference.

**Grading**

The fall semester grade will count for 40% of the final junior independent work grade. The spring semester grade will count for 60% of the final grade. Students will receive a single grade on their transcripts in the spring semester for fall and spring junior independent work.

**Late policy**

Extensions are not granted for any of the junior independent work, except in cases where the University criteria for extensions are met. These criteria include either the student's own illness, for which a written medical excuse must be provided, or a family emergency. In all other cases, a penalty will start to accrue on the student's grade beginning with the day following the deadline.

Grade penalties for unauthorized late junior papers follow a schedule wherein 1/3 of a letter grade is automatically deducted for every 48 hours (or part thereof) that the paper is late, weekend days included. A junior paper which is not received within two weeks of the deadline date will be given a grade of F. After the University deadline, no written work can be accepted for a passing grade without approval from the Dean of the student’s residential college.

If any of the components of the junior paper are not submitted, the student will fail the junior independent work for the year.

**Senior Thesis**

Each concentrator must prepare a senior thesis, based either on an empirical investigation conducted by the student in a laboratory or field setting or on a theoretical inquiry or computational modeling endeavor. In close consultation with a faculty adviser, each student develops, carries out, and writes up his or her own research project. The resulting thesis serves as the basis for the first part of the senior comprehensive exam (see below). Students are required to select a primary adviser from within the Department of Psychology. They will not be assigned a faculty member as was done for their Junior Independent Work. A second adviser, serving as a reader, will be assigned. Advisers from other departments will be considered only after the student has obtained permission from the primary adviser, the Departmental Representative in Psychology, and the potential second adviser. Then the student must submit written notification indicating the name and department of the second adviser.
Financial Support

Funds to support senior independent work are available from the Office of the Dean of the College and the Department of Psychology. To request funding, follow the steps below. Note that these dates are approximate. Exact dates and deadlines will be sent from the Dean’s Office in late September.

Step 1. Each senior who plans to conduct experimental independent work that will require funds must submit a proposal and an application, online, to the Office of the Dean of the College. The application will be made available starting in late September. The student must submit the proposal and the application online by early October. The proposal should include the following information:

(a) title of the thesis
(b) name of student
(c) description of procedure, including justification
(d) itemized budget: item description, estimated cost, justification

There are no limitations on the topic and awards may be used in various ways. Appropriate requests include, for example: travel to gather research materials, the purchase or duplication of scholarly sources, the planning and execution of questionnaires designed to gather data, and payment of subjects. The following requests will normally not be acceptable:

a) summer school grants
b) funds for typing, copying, or binding theses
c) support for work not directly related to the senior thesis
d) purchase of expensive equipment

Examples of funding proposals from earlier years are available in the Undergraduate Studies Office, room #105 in Peretsman-Scully Hall.

Step 2. The senior thesis adviser reviews/approves the application by mid-October.

Step 3. Funding proposals are then reviewed by the Office of the Dean of the College. As soon as the Dean has made his/her decision about funding, a departmental decision about supplemental funding is made based on the same application.

Step 4. Students will be informed whether they will receive funding by the Departmental Representative after the funds are granted.

Submission Instructions

A PDF of the senior thesis must be uploaded online to the Department of Psychology’s independent work webspace site. The cover page should include the title, author, and the fact that the work is a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the A.B. degree at Princeton University. The second page should include the Honor Pledge and your signature.
Length
Senior theses have no formal length requirements. Questions of length should be discussed with the adviser, but note that it is generally not true that longer is better. Copies of several past senior theses are on reserve in the Undergraduate Studies Office, room # 105 in Peretsman-Scully Hall. These should be consulted for questions of style, length, organization, and especially referencing.

Format
Senior Theses must be submitted in the American Psychological Association format or according to standards in neuroscience when appropriate. The APA style manual is available in the Science Library for reference.

Selection of Readers
There are two readers for each thesis, the student's adviser and a second reader who is selected by the Departmental Representative.

Grading
The senior thesis grade will be determined jointly by two readers. The student will receive written comments from each reader.

Late Policy
Extensions of deadlines are granted only under extraordinary (usually medical) circumstances. All requests for extensions must be submitted in writing to a Committee of Three, consisting of the student's adviser, the Departmental Representative, and the Senior Representative. Extensions beyond the University deadline require approval from both the Office of the Dean of the College and the Department of Psychology.

Grade penalties for unauthorized late senior theses follow a schedule wherein 1/3 of a letter grade is automatically deducted for every 48 hours (or part thereof) that the thesis is late, weekend days included. A Senior Thesis which is not received within two weeks of the deadline date will be given a grade of F. After the University deadline, however, no written work can be accepted for a passing grade without approval from the Dean of the student’s residential college.

Comprehensive Examination
The senior thesis serves as the basis for the first part of the senior comprehensive exam, a 60-minute oral examination conducted by two members of the faculty. The exam consists of two parts: (1) a defense of the thesis and a discussion of its implications, and (2) more general questions on the student's coursework and the broader field of psychology.

Resources for Independent Work

APA Writing Program
The Department of Psychology holds 1-2 workshops on the APA writing style. Attendance is mandatory, and using APA style is mandatory. You are encouraged to learn APA style from the manual, as well. When grading independent work, advisers will consult APA style checklists to ensure that your work follows the appropriate guidelines.

Senior Thesis Writers’ Group
The Department of Psychology holds ongoing group meetings centering on senior thesis writing, with the goal of providing an exchange of ideas, discussion, and advice about research strategies, oral presentations,
and critiques of work. Participation is voluntary, but please note that attendance of the first meeting of the
Senior Thesis Writers’ Group is mandatory for all seniors.

Statistics Tutoring and Consultation
The Department of Psychology holds ongoing individual consultation on statistical analysis of thesis data.
Participation is voluntary.

Human Subjects Certification Program
Students who are conducting empirical theses with human subjects must complete and pass the online ethics
tutorial and test, followed by ongoing ethics workshops and individual supervision regarding IRB procedures.
Participation is mandatory. For more information, consult Rosemarie Stevenson.

Grade Requirement
In order to graduate, each student must meet the following criteria:

(a) Achieve a grade of C or better for the average of all departmental courses taken for grade, regardless of
when they were taken. This average grade is computed by transforming grades to a numerical scale as follows:

F  D  C-  C  C+  B-  B  B+  A-  A  A+
0  1.0  1.7  2.0  2.3  2.7  3.0  3.3  3.7  4.0  4.3

Note that this scale preserves an equal interval between the grades F, D, C, B, and A. The required average is
therefore 2.00 or better. If a student fails a course and re-takes it, the new grade is substituted for the F and
then combined with the grades from the other courses to obtain an overall average.

(b) Receive at least a D in a course satisfying a departmental distribution requirement.

(c) Receive at least a D on junior independent work, the senior thesis, and the comprehensive oral exam.

Honors and Prizes

Honors
The A.B. degree may be awarded with honors, high honors, or highest honors. The proportion of students
receiving honors varies from department to department and, within any department, from year to year
depending upon the performance of that particular class.

Honors in the Psychology Department will be based on each student's performance in psychology courses
and independent work according to the following index:

Index = (9(C) + 4(S) + 2(J) + 1(E))/16

where C = the average grade for all departmental courses that were taken for grade; note that courses taken in
freshman and sophomore years are counted, and that taking more than the required number of courses does
not mean that grades can be dropped from the average; S = the grade on the senior thesis; J = the grade for
junior independent work; and E = the grade on the comprehensive examination. Psychology 101 and
Psychology 251 are not counted in this calculation. Faculty determination of honors is based primarily on the
rankings derived from the above formula without knowledge of the particular students involved. After the
honors awards are determined, the recipients are reviewed and where it is felt that the computed index does not fully reflect a student's work, a higher (but not lower) assignment of honors may be given.

**Prizes**

The Department of Psychology **Howard Crosby Warren Junior and Senior Prizes** are awarded by the department faculty on the basis of scholarly attainment and good character. The Junior Prize takes into account psychology average, overall average, and independent work. The Senior Prize takes into account the senior thesis, comprehensive examination grade, and psychology course grades.

The **Miller-Schroeder Memorial Prize** is awarded in memory of two psychology majors killed at Kent State University in May, 1970. The prize is awarded to the graduating senior whose thesis best exemplifies the application of psychological methods to the study of a problem of social significance.

The **Edward E. Jones Memorial Prize** is awarded to the graduating student whose senior thesis is judged to be the most outstanding work in social psychology, broadly construed. In keeping with Professor Jones’ own interests, special consideration will be given to theses that report innovative empirical research, although theses of a purely theoretical character will also be considered.

**Neuroscience Certificate**

The Department of Psychology offers the opportunity for concentrators to earn a certificate in Neuroscience. Interested students should discuss the program with the Certificate Director(s) and the Departmental Representative. Certain advanced courses taken in the program can count for the psychology concentration.