



Psychology

Gonzaga's Psychology Department emphasizes the observable and experiential aspects of human behavior. Thus, a central aspect of our mission is to ensure that students appreciate and understand the scientific method upon which modern psychology is based and learn the skills essential to scientific inquiry. Beyond providing a broad foundational knowledge base, we also seek to educate students in ways that encourage self discovery, expand critical thinking skills, enhance written and oral expression, develop awareness of ethical issues and human diversity, and inspire a life-long commitment to service and social justice. We hope that students leave our program well prepared for success in graduate or professional school or in their unfolding careers.

THE PROGRAM

Psychology is a fascinating and complex science aimed at understanding why humans think and behave as they do. Psychologists specialize in many different areas including social, developmental, animal behavior, learning, cognition and clinical to name a few. Psychology tackles difficult and interesting questions like: What role do emotions play in the way we think? Are emotions helpful or a hindrance to rational decisions? At what age can a toddler take another child's perspective? How might understanding this help one better teach or parent? How do we form impressions of other people? How accurate are those impressions? Can we really pay attention to more than one thing at once? Students who possess a critical curiosity about the functions and causes of behavior and decision-making are invited to choose a **major in Psychology** (33-34 credits). Gonzaga's Psychology program embraces learning both in and outside of the classroom (e.g., research assistant in faculty labs, internships, volunteer work) while remaining centered on employing the scientific method to answer questions like those above.

THE FIRST TWO YEARS

During their first two years, psychology majors concentrate on fulfilling many of their core curriculum requirements in areas like English, philosophy, religious studies, and history. However, they also take three very important introductory courses as part of the psychology major.

First, psychology majors take a course in **general psychology**. In general psychology, students are introduced to the different specialties in the field and learn about key studies and theories that psychologists have contributed to each of those specialties.

Second, students take a course in **statistics**. In statistics, students learn about essential measurement tools necessary for making sense of all the psychological studies that they will read about.

Third, students take a course in **research methods**. This class provides students with the tools for applying the scientific method (e.g., generating hypotheses and figuring out how to test them) to complicated questions about human thinking and behavior. "Why do people do that?!" This class allows students to be able to ask that

question and then set out to find answers. This class will also prepare students for reading studies in the advanced courses.

THE LAST TWO YEARS

During their last two years, students go deeper into the science of psychology. They choose a certain number of courses from each of four clusters, exploring the areas of psychology that interest them. Students are required to take some classes from each cluster below but they can customize so that they are taking classes that are of the most interest to them.

Cluster A covers basic psychological processes. Courses include Biological Psychology, Cultural Psychology, Sensation and Perception, Cognition, and Emotion.

Cluster B addresses social, developmental, and interpersonal psychology. For example, some courses in this cluster are Social Psychology, Personality, Child Psychology, and Psychology of Aging.

Cluster C looks at applied, clinical, and other types of psychology. Its courses include Educational Psychology, Culture and Mental Health, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Psychopathology, and Clinical Neuropsychology.

Cluster D focuses on advanced research, theory, and application. Under this cluster, students may take courses like Advanced Research Methods, Psychological Assessment, History and Systems of Psychology, Mindfulness and Psychotherapy, and Comparative Psychology.

Finally, to graduate with a major in psychology, each student must pass a comprehensive exam. While there are multiple exam options, the most common one students take is the Major Fields Test in Psychology. Our psychology majors graduate with a solid understanding of the major findings and theories in multiple areas of psychology.

Students may also complete a minor in psychology from Gonzaga. The minor has the same three required lower-division courses as the major. Minors are then required to take only four upper-division psychology electives from any of the clusters.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Gonzaga's Psychology program offers a variety of opportunities for students to participate in research with a faculty member or to create and conduct their own individual research projects. Gonzaga psychology students have an impressive record of presentations and awards at major national conferences like the annual conferences of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the Association for Psychological Science (APS).

Spokane is the regional hub of the Inland Northwest and offers a variety of service-learning and practicum experiences for psychology students. Current psychology students are gaining hands-on experience by working at the Department of Social and Health Services, Spokane Mental Health, and the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery. Others are hired as crisis-line counselors at Spokane's First Call for Help.

RESEARCH CONCENTRATION

This is a special pathway within the psychology major. If you are planning for doctoral level graduate studies this may be a great opportunity for you. The research concentration will give you additional experience in research and data analysis.

OUTCOMES

Many psychology students choose to establish careers in education, business, law, and medicine where they have discovered their background in psychology to be beneficial. Additionally, graduates are competitive applicants for service programs such as Teach for America, Peace Corps, and Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Still others have gone on to non-profit settings. Because psychology relates to so many other fields, students are encouraged to pursue additional studies in other disciplines while enrolled at Gonzaga as well.

The curriculum is designed to prepare students for the rigors of graduate study, and feedback from alumni indicates that they are prepared beyond the level of most of their peers from other institutions. For the past several years, strong students, especially those who have obtained research experience, have been

highly competitive applicants for master's and doctoral programs throughout the country.

Recent Psychology graduates have attended the following graduate schools:

Ph.D. Programs

- Arizona State University
- Northeastern University
- University of Alabama
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Denver
- University of Illinois
- University of Iowa
- University of Montana
- University of Nebraska
- University of Nevada, Reno
- University of North Carolina, Greensboro
- University of Oklahoma
- University of Oregon
- University of Portland
- University of Washington
- Washington State University

Psy.D. Programs

- George Fox University
- Loyola University Maryland
- Pacific University

M.A. Programs

- Eastern Washington University
- Gonzaga University
- Santa Clara University
- Seattle University
- University of Washington
- Villanova University
- Washington State University
- Western Washington University

FACULTY CONTACTS & SPECIALTIES

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