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.

THE PROGRAM
The Psychology Department at Gonzaga offers both a major and minor in psychology. Students that choose to major in psychology choose a certain number of courses from each of our four clusters. Students are also required to take some classes from each cluster, but they can customize so that they are taking classes that are of most interest to them. Students that choose to minor in psychology are required to take three lower-division and four upper-division courses.

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.

Students who possess a critical curiosity about the functions and causes of behavior and decision-making are invited to choose a major in Psychology. Gonzaga’s Psychology program embraces learning both in and outside of the classroom (e.g., research assistant in faculty labs, internships, volunteer work).

CLUSTERS

Cluster A - Basic psychological processes
Courses include:
• Cultural Psychology
• Emotion
• Sensation and Perception

Cluster B - Social, developmental, and interpersonal psychology
Courses include:
• Child Psychology
• Psychology of Aging
• Social Psychology

Cluster C - Applied, clinical, and other types
Courses include:
• Clinical Neuropsychology
• Educational Psychology
• Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Cluster D - Advanced research, theory, and application
Courses include:
• Advanced Research Methods
• Comparative Psychology
• History and Systems of Psychology
FOUNDATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY AT GU

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 (i.e., generating hypotheses and figuring out how to test them) to complicated questions about human thinking and behavior. This class allows students to be able to ask that question and then set out to find answers.

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.

Recently completed research projects include:

• The Effects of Handwritten vs. Typed Notes on Retention
• Facebook Frienemies and Relational Mobility
• Gratitude and Our Planet: Changing Behaviors
• Gratitude: Reducing Loneliness in Older Adults
• Narcissism and Reactivity to an Awkward Stimulus

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 work in non-profit settings. Because psychology relates to so many other fields, students are encouraged to pursue majors and/or minors 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.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Recent Psychology graduates have enrolled at the following institutions for graduate or doctoral programs:

• Arizona State University
• Columbia University
• New York University
• Northeastern University
• Oxford University, England
• Santa Clara University
• Seattle University
• University of California, Los Angeles
• University of Denver
• University of Illinois
• University of Iowa
• University of Massachusetts
• University of Nebraska
• University of Oklahoma
• University of Oregon
• University of Portland
• University of Washington

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