

PSYCHOLOGY (BA)

Health and Human Enrichment

As a Plymouth State psychology major you will engage in wide-ranging study of the mind, brain, and behavior, exploring why people act and think the way they do as you gain an extensive understanding of this fascinating field.

Our distinctive program will equip you with a rich and diverse portfolio of expertise. You'll acquire advanced data interpretation skills, use sophisticated research and measurement techniques, and employ critical evaluation and interpersonal awareness abilities, among other proficiencies that lead to many career options.

Degree Requirements

Course	Title	Credits
Major Requirements		
PS 2015	Introduction to General Psychology	4
PS 3115	Research Methods and Statistics I (QRCO,TECO)	4
PS 3125	Research Methods and Statistics II (WRCO)	4
PS 3605	Behavioral Neuroscience	4
PS	Psychology electives (not PSDI)	7-10
Group A		
Complete 8 credits from the following:		8
PS 3210	Learning	
PS 3220	Cognitive Psychology	
PS 3035	Social Psychology	
Capstone		
Complete 4 credits from the following:		4
PS 4365	Internship in Psychology	
PS 4405	Psychology Seminar	
PS 4945	Independent Research in Psychology	
General Education (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/)		
EN 1400	Composition	4
IS 1115	Tackling a Wicked Problem	4
MA (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#MATH)	Mathematics Foundations	3-4
CTDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#CTDI)	Creative Thought Direction	3-4
PPDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#PPDI)	Past and Present Direction	3-4
SIDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#SIDI)	Scientific Inquiry Direction	3-4

SSDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#SSDI)	Self and Society Direction	3-4
Directions (choose from CTDI, PPDI, SIDI, SSDI) (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/) ¹		4-8
DICO (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#DICO)	Diversity Connection	3-4
INCP (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#INCP)	Integrated Capstone	3-4
WECO (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#WECO)	Wellness Connection	3-4
GACO (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#GACO)	Foreign Language ²	6-8
Electives		32-39
Total Credits		120

¹ Directions should total 20 credits (unless the major has a waiver for a specific Direction).

² The foreign language requirement for all BA degrees calls for 0-8 credits: one year of one language (6-8 credits); or one 3000/4000 level world language course (3 credits); or being a native speaker of a language other than English (zero credit). American Sign Language I and II fulfill this requirement; however, American Sign Language does not satisfy the Global Awareness Connection.

Complementary Courses

It is recommended that BA Psychology majors take one year sequences in anthropology, biology, mathematics or sociology as well as Statistics I (MA 2300) (MATH).

Recommended Course Sequence

Check all course descriptions for prerequisites before planning course schedule. Course sequence is suggested but not required.

To complete the bachelor's degree in 4 years, you must successfully complete a minimum of 15 credits each semester or have a plan to make up credits over the course of the 4 years. For example, if you take 14 credits one semester, you need to take 16 credits in another semester. Credits completed must count toward your program requirements (major, option, minor, certificate, general education or free electives).

Course	Title	Credits
Year One		
Fall		
EN 1400	Composition	4
IS 1115	Tackling a Wicked Problem	4
PS 2015	Introduction to General Psychology	4
SIDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#SIDI)	Scientific Inquiry Direction ¹	3
Credits		15
Spring		
PS	Psychology electives (not PSDI)	4
MA (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#MATH)	Mathematics Foundations	3
PPDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#PPDI)	Past and Present Direction	4
SSDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#SSDI)	Self and Society Direction	4
Credits		15
Year Two		
Fall		
PS 3115	Research Methods and Statistics I (QRCO,TECO)	4
CTDI (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#CTDI)	Creative Thought Direction	3
Directions (choose from CTDI, PPDI, SSDI, SSDI) (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/) ¹		4
Electives		4
Credits		15
Spring		
Choose one Lab course from the following:		
PS 3035	Social Psychology	
PS 3210	Learning	
PS 3220	Cognitive Psychology	
PS 3125	Research Methods and Statistics II (WRCO)	4
DICO (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#DICO)	Diversity Connection	4
WECO (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#WECO)	Wellness Connection	4
Credits		16
Year Three		
Fall		
PS	Psychology electives (not PSDI)	4

PS 3605	Behavioral Neuroscience	4
GACO (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#GACO)	Global Awareness Connection	3
INCP (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#INCP)	Integrated Capstone	4
Credits		15
Spring		
Choose one Lab course from the following:		
PS 3035	Social Psychology	4
PS 3210	Learning	
PS 3220	Cognitive Psychology	
GACO (https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/general-education/#GACO)	Global Awareness Connection	3
Electives		8
Credits		15
Year Four		
Fall		
Choose one Capstone course from the following:		
PS 4365	Internship in Psychology	4
PS 4405	Psychology Seminar	
PS 4945	Independent Research in Psychology	
Electives		12
Credits		16
Spring		
Electives		13
Credits		13
Total Credits		120

¹ Directions should total 20 credits (unless the major has a waiver for a specific Direction).

Learning Outcomes

Students of Psychology will leave PSU knowing:

- General content knowledge across the range of psychology's major subareas.
- About the Nature/Nurture issue: The degree to which any behavior, emotion or mental condition is the result of genetic (nature) or environmental influences (nurture), such as learning or exposure to situations or substances before or after birth.
- How to conduct experiments, with humans or animals, to identify factors that predict or cause changes in any type of behavior or mental process.
- How to carry out statistical analyses on data collected in the above-noted experiments and interpret the findings.
- How to communicate the results of completed studies in writing (using American Psychological Association [APA] format) and verbally, both clearly and effectively.

- How to separate pseudoscience from legitimate scientific knowledge in the behavioral sciences as well as areas outside our field (e.g., medicine).
- How to recognize one-sided sources of information, be they political, theoretical, religious, philosophical or otherwise, and seek out balanced, ideally non-partisan sources of information on the same topics. The difference between empirical questions—those that can be answered by structured observations and organized collections of data—and philosophical questions, which generally cannot be answered empirically.
- How to design and conduct correlational/observational studies to determine which human or environmental factors are reliable predictors of behavior, and under what conditions.
- How to design and carry out “true” experiments to evaluate which human or environmental factors cause changes in behavior, and to identify how other factors might enhance or weaken the effects of the first.
- How to use statistical software (e.g., SPSS or Minitab) to analyze data from experiments or correlational studies to determine the probability that results could have occurred by chance (e.g., via an unlucky/disproportionate assignment to groups) and the strength of such associations (i.e., what proportion of behavioral variability is accounted for by our factor of interest). Students should be able to understand what the computer-generated results tell us.
- How to critically read reports of studies purporting to accomplish either of the above goals—prediction or causation—and determine whether or to what extent the conclusions are justified by the data.
- How to write clearly and convincingly about why people and animals behave the way they do. This goal applies both to communicating one’s own research findings as well as to analyzing, synthesizing and summarizing the results and writings of others.
- How to verbally present to others, about one’s own research or knowledge acquired by others, with the goal of educating them about the causes and correlates of human and/or animal behavior.
- How to be sensitive to the ethical considerations of conducting psychological research on human and animal subjects, and adhere to a code of conduct that includes, among other things: Always obtaining informed written consent from subjects before involving them in experiments; getting approval from any animal or human subject committees that oversee such research; and debriefing subjects once the study is completed. Researchers should also be prepared to help subjects get over any negative aftereffects of participation in a research project, such as feeling embarrassed, unintelligent, etc., especially if the study included any type of deception. In the case of deception, subjects should be thoroughly educated about why it needed to be used in the experiment.
- How to identify when correlational data is incorrectly used to support claims about causation. This very important error is pervasive in society and is especially damaging when committed by those with power to affect our lives (e.g., politicians, journalists, medical practitioners, scientists, lawyers, judges and juries). We want our majors to notice and vigorously challenge this error whenever and wherever it is encountered.
- How to perform well on tests of general content knowledge across the major subareas of psychology: learning, memory, cognition, social psychology, personality, sensation and perception, intelligence, motivation, emotion, psychological disorders and their treatment, research design and statistical analysis—and exhibit a fundamental understanding of the biological/neuroscientific bases of all the above-noted topics, as well as how they are affected by development across the lifespan (i.e., prenatal, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, aging). Along with the nature/nurture issue noted earlier, these last two italicized factors—biology/neuroscience and development across the lifespan—are dominant themes in modern psychology.
- How to be open-minded about things not yet known about human behavior and mental processes, and to resist forming premature and/or impenetrable beliefs about such things.
- How to be critical thinkers who are not afraid to be skeptical about suspicious sounding claims, especially about causes or predictors of behavior, and who demand solid, ideally empirical, evidence before accepting such claims.
- How to be unmoved by arguments by authority figures, especially when better ways exist to get the same information (e.g., science/empiricism).
- How to be willing to educate others about what they’ve learned about behavior and mental processes—whenever and wherever these topics come up. The field of psychology has begun to prioritize getting “what we know” into the public sphere, where it can and should inform public policy decisions, and students of psychology who share their knowledge are key players in this mission.
- How to be caring, empathic individuals, who, even if they’ve never experienced the challenges of others, particularly in the area of mental health, can nevertheless understand and appreciate what those challenges might be like. Psychology students who see others suffering from depression, anxiety, memory loss, traumatic stress disorder or any psychological challenge should be advocates for treatment and be willing to do whatever they can to encourage and help others get such help. Most psychological problems can be treated—through counseling/therapy, medication, or other approaches—but many who suffer are unaware of this, and/or believe that to even seek treatment shows weakness. Students of psychology can make a huge difference by challenging these attitudes.

Career Pathways

There are many different options for careers in Psychology. Here are some suggestions for how to begin your search:

What can I do with a degree in Psychology? – Many students do not realize how many opportunities there are in Psychology. You don’t have to go to grad school.

Psychology Career List

Direct Care: Mental Health Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist, School Psychologist, School Counselor, Recreational Therapist, Clinical Psychologist, Counseling Psychologist, Substance Abuse Counselor, Art Therapist, Social and Human Service Assistant, Fitness and Wellness Coordinator, Community Health Worker, Industrial/Organizational Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Intelligence Analyst, Forensic Science Technician, Healthcare Social Worker, Patient Representative, Genetic Counselor, Probation Officer, Administration, Operations Manager, Public Relations and Fundraising Manager, Technical Writer, Social and Community Service Manager.

Research: Clinical Research Coordinator, Social Science Research Assistant, Market Research Analyst, Statistician, Clinical Data Manager, Neuropsychologist, Archivist, Management Analyst, Testing/Test Development, Experimental Psychology.

Education: Psychology Teacher, Distance Learning Coordinator, Education Administrator, Instructional Coordinator, Tutor, Instructional Designer, Self-Enrichment Education Teachers.

Human Resources: Human Resources Specialist, Training and Development Manager, Compliance Manager, Customer Service Representative, Eligibility Interviewers, Occupational Health and Safety Specialist, Labor Relations Specialist.