

PSYCHOLOGY

Departmental Guidelines

Psychology is the scientific study of behavior. As a behavioral science, psychology focuses on mental states, feelings, overt actions, and physiological processes and how these dimensions of behavior interact and influence one another over time. The courses offered in the Psychology Department examine contemporary psychological theories, research, and special topics in the field; give you the opportunity to learn and practice research methodologies and strategies used in the discipline; and challenge you to apply your knowledge of psychological science to social issues and your everyday life. The Psychology Department is also committed to the University's focus on educating students in the liberal arts. To this end, the coursework and faculty facilitate your discovery of connections between psychology and other disciplines and, ideally, will foster your development as a human being and citizen.

The course offerings in the Psychology Department strive to:

- Present an overview of contemporary psychology, including both the natural and social science aspects of the discipline.
- Stimulate interest and curiosity about human and animal behavioral phenomena.
- Promote an understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry and the methodologies used in psychological science.
- Explore applications of psychology to personal and social issues. Some examples of these applications include study techniques and academic performance, the effects of anxiety or stress on performance, and the role of prejudice in society.
- Facilitate and encourage the discovery of connections between psychology and other disciplines: For instance, connections to biology (e.g., neuroscience), computer science and philosophy (e.g., cognitive science), psychological questions raised in the humanities and arts, and psychological assumptions reflected in political, social, and economic theories.

The first priority for all majors should be to obtain a strong foundation in the basic topic areas of psychology and in the research methodologies associated with psychological science. For this reason, all students begin with PSYC 100 - Introduction to Psychology which includes a lab component. Subsequently, all psychology majors and minors take a series of research oriented courses that allow them to develop their understanding of and skills engaging in psychological science. Students also explore specific psychological perspectives and topics in their elective and seminar courses. Psychology majors are urged to select a broad range of courses in addition to those offerings that are relevant to their primary interests. Students of psychology should aim for both breadth and depth of knowledge in the discipline. The requirements for Denison's psychology major are relatively flexible so that students can select courses and experiences that best complement their personal goals. At the same time, the flexibility of these requirements necessitates that psychology majors work closely with their academic advisors to develop an appropriate plan of study.

Writing Program Statement: The curriculum for psychology majors and minors is structured to allow students to develop their writing skills in line with the goals of the Denison Writing Program. First, students learn to tailor their writing style to meet the needs of a scientific audience. Students are provided instruction in APA style and the conventions

adopted by psychologists in their written communications. Students learn a scientific writing style characterized by parsimony, objectivity, and the citation of empirical evidence to support one's claims. The development of these scientific writing skills are coordinated across the department's research courses. In addition, across the curriculum, students write both formal and informal papers that challenge them to integrate information about a topic from multiple sources, to evaluate the ideas from those sources, and to generate and then defend their own ideas about the topics.

Mission Statement

Psychology, broadly defined, is the science that involves the study of physiological, behavioral, and mental processes in humans and animals. Psychology has several interrelated facets, being a scholarly discipline, a scientific field of study, and an applied profession. As a scholarly discipline, psychology represents a major field of study in academic settings. As a scientific field of study, psychology entails the investigation of human and animal phenomena, principally by examining the factors that affect psychological processes. As an applied profession, psychology involves the application of knowledge, skills, and techniques to the prevention and solution of individual and social problems.

The Department endeavors to introduce students to theories, research and special topics in the field of psychology, enable students' understanding and development of scientific inquiry skills, and increase students' awareness of the application of psychology to social issues.