

As with all of UCCS, the undergraduate Psychology program continues to grow. Our department wants to make sure undergraduate students understand as much as possible about our degree program and how we operate. This document is intended to distribute information about our department and major as widely as possible.

Our Philosophy about Your Education:

The Psychology department has high standards and strict policies. Our goal is to make your degree in Psychology of the highest possible value. We believe the increasing number of students choosing to major in Psychology over the last few years is partly due to our reputation as a strong department.

The BA program teaches you about the science of Psychology. You learn basic findings and theories in the field of Psychology, and you learn about the methods through which that knowledge is generated. It is not an applied program. In other words, you need more formal training after the BA degree if you want to be a licensed clinician/ counselor/ therapist/ psychologist who provides direct services to people. We think of our BA in Psychology as comparable to an undergraduate degree in Biology for someone who plans to go to medical school and become a physician.

We recognize that many students want to graduate as quickly as possible. However, the Psychology department believes that it is not in students' best interest to graduate quickly if they have not acquired the knowledge and skills expected of people with BA degrees in Psychology. We function in a manner consistent with this belief.

We have a Director of Undergraduate Training (DUT; currently, Professor Lori James) who can be a helpful resource, and the Psychology Department chair (currently, Professor Mary Coussons-Read) is also available to help undergraduates with issues they encounter. All faculty in the department participate in student advising, and going to any Psychology professor with a problem you encounter can be a valuable first step. Frequently, they will refer you to the DUT or chair.

Some Important Details about Our Program:

We are strict about course sequencing and enforce all prerequisites. Requests to waive prerequisites are rarely granted. If we have a prerequisite course in place, it is because students need that information (or those experiences) in the subsequent course. Because students usually don't have complete knowledge of what a given course entails, most students are not in a position to judge for themselves whether they are adequately prepared for particular courses.

If you really have limited (or no) interest or ability in math, it will be hard for you to complete a Psychology degree. We require that you complete at least college-level algebra as part of our degree program. Consider this when selecting a major.

It can be difficult for students who do not have flexible schedules to complete a degree in Psychology. Our courses are typically offered during the daytime, and some required classes are not offered online.

Our courses are mostly large, fill quickly, and we typically offer only one section of a class each semester. This is a practical issue: We do not have enough teachers available to offer smaller courses or more class sections.

Many courses are not offered during summer term or as interim classes (between semesters). Typically, any class that involves several writing assignments cannot be offered in a shortened

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format because of the need for us to give you feedback, which requires more time than the condensed format allows.

Some of our elective classes are not offered very often. The frequency of offerings is available on our department webpage. Our priority is to offer required classes.

Some of our classes have teaching assistants (TAs). If your course has a TA, take advantage of that! Email them your questions, go to their office hours, etc. They are a valuable resource, here to help you.

In terms of transferring in credits from other institutions, some courses for the Psychology major are easily transferred. For example, General Psychology courses and many core courses (Abnormal, Learning, Cognition, Biopsychology, Developmental, and Social) are typically very similar to the ones offered at UCCS. Prerequisites for courses in our major, such as English composition courses and college-level algebra, are routinely accepted from other institutions. Other courses in our program are harder to satisfy at other universities. For example, the Professions of Psychology class must be taken at UCCS, because one of the major functions of the course is to introduce students to our program and the faculty who teach in it. We recommend that all students take that course as soon as they arrive at UCCS. The statistics and research methods courses at other universities vary a lot, and some will transfer as equivalent while others will not. A syllabus is typically needed to determine equivalency. If you are planning to transfer a statistics course from another university to UCCS, the course must have covered two-factor ANOVA. If it did not, you should take Psy 2120 Two-Factor ANOVA. Your statistics course hours will transfer, however, you will need this additional one credit course to fulfill your statistics requirement for the Psychology major. The advanced (or “senior”) seminar requirement is particularly hard to fulfill at another institution. An appropriate course will be small and discussion based, with substantial writing and participation components, along with some oral presentation and reading of original research.

Students should begin the methodology sequence in Psychology as soon as possible. Specifically, we require the equivalent of college algebra (Mat 1040) prior to taking the Psy 2100 (statistics) course, and Psy 2100 must be completed prior to taking the Psy 2110 (research methods) course. Students must earn grades of C- or better to have met the degree requirements, and we do not make exceptions. Psy 2100 and Psy 2110 cannot be taken concurrently, nor can Psy 2110 be taken concurrently with a senior seminar. If not started immediately, this sequence can hold up psychology majors’ degree completion, so please plan accordingly.

We offer an impressive experience for students who participate in our department’s honors program. This includes honors seminars, extra experience with statistics, and research experience with a faculty member. More information and program requirements can be found at <https://www.uccs.edu/psych/undergraduate/psychology-honors.html>

We have carefully considered the degree requirements for our program, so that when you graduate with your BA degree from UCCS, we are vouching for your competence with the subject matter. We care about your education, and that is why we have adopted our current procedures. We hope this information helps you better understand the Psychology program, and wish you the best in your undergraduate career.

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