PSY 1-01 & 1-02 Introduction to Psychology

This course will survey current knowledge of human behavior. It will cover the entire spectrum of behavioral functions and examine the biological, cognitive and social processes that underlie these behaviors. Topics will include the brain and functioning of the nervous system, perception, thinking, learning and memory; conscious and unconscious motivations and emotion; language, intelligence, cognitive, social, and personality development; social perceptions, attitudes and social influence; psychological disorders and their treatment; and mental health. The focus of the course will be on understanding the major theories of human behavior and on understanding the practical and theoretical implications of these positions.

PSY 12 Abnormal Psychology

An introduction to the adult major psychological and psychiatric disorders. The symptoms and signs of psychosis, affective disorders and anxiety disorders will be discussed. The way these symptoms and signs constellate into various syndromes (e.g., schizophrenia, major depression), as defined in the DSM-IV, will be considered. Finally, for each of these syndromes, an introduction to the etiology (causes) and an overview of biopsychosocial management approaches will be presented.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9 or Jr. or Sr. Standing or consent

PSY 13 Social Psychology

Social psychology is the scientific study of the way people think, feel, and behave in social situations. It involves understanding how we influence, and are influenced by, other people and the social contexts around us. A primary goal of this course is to introduce you to the perspectives, research methods, and seminal findings of social psychology. Equally important is the goal of allowing you to cultivate your skills for analyzing the social situations and events that you encounter in your everyday lives. Lectures will be supplemented by classroom demonstrations, discussion, and various assignments.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9 or Jr. or Sr. Standing or consent

PSY 17 Industrial and Organizational Psychology

This course examines how psychology impacts businesses, companies, and non-profit organizations. Topics will include motivation of employees, classical and contemporary approaches to management, and behavior in organizational settings. Emphasis will be placed on preparing students for the “working world” through the foundations of psychology. As part of the final project, all students will select a current issue in the field of Industrial/Organizational Psychology, present an overview to the class, and submit a research paper on the topic.

Pre-requisite: Junior or Senior Standing.

PSY 25 Physiological Psychology

This course will serve as an introduction to the role of the brain in behavior. The course will begin by providing a basic understanding of the way the nervous system works. With this knowledge in hand, the physiological basis of behaviors such as hunger, thirst, sex, aggression, sleep, learning and memory will be explored. Special attention will be paid to recent advances in research in the growing area of biological contributions to mental disorders. This course is not meant for biology, biopsychology majors or for pre-medical students. Those students should take Psychology 103.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9

PSY 26 Animal Learning and Cognition

This course is an introduction to the study of cognition in animals. Through lectures and classroom discussions, question such as the following will be examined. Do animals think? If so, how do they think without language? How similar are our thoughts in comparison to those of apes or other animals? Do rats use cognitive “maps” to get around their spatial environment? How do bees learn and remember where rich sources of food are located? How do animals communicate information to one another? Why do different species of animals differ so much in their behavior? The course will survey the fundamental principles and theories or information processing and learning in animals. Topics to be examined across different animals include perception, stimulus selection and control, learning and memory processes, orientation in space and time, counting, communication behavior, and self-awareness. This course fulfills the 20-level requirement in the major and the option II requirement in the Cognitive and Brain Science major. It is also the prerequisite for the advanced laboratory course, Psy 46 Animal Learning Lab, which typically is offered in the Spring.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9

PSY 27 Perception

This course will provide an introduction to the processes that transform physical energies (e.g., light, sound, vibration) into psychological experiences (e.g., seeing objects, hearing noises, feeling textures). These processes are crucial for the basic survival of virtually all animal species and they are also prerequisite to the functioning of "higher" psychological processes such as thinking, socializing, playing games, and appreciating art and music. This semester’s version of the course will focus on visual perception, tactile perception (touch), their relationship to one another and to an observer’s movements and actions (reaching, locomoting, catching balls). Special issues such as the development of perceptual abilities in infants, perceptual systems in animals, pathologies of perception, and perception’s role in art and sports will also be incorporated. Class sessions will generally follow a lecture format. However, questions and discussion are encouraged, and demonstrations and guided observations will frequently be utilized. Course work will include reading textbook, web-based, and primary source materials; taking 2-3 exams; and preparing 2-3 brief reports on class activities.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9 or Jr. or Sr. Standing. For psychology majors, Psychology 27 can fulfill the department’s requirement that majors take a “20’s” level course. For all students, Psychology 27 can count as a “natural science” course for the basic distribution requirements. Psychology 27 can also serve as a psychology elective for Biopsychology majors as a prerequisite to Psychology 41 (the advanced laboratory course in perception and cognition).

PSY 28 Cognitive Psychology

This survey class examining human information processing systems will take a hands-on approach to exploring questions of how humans process information. In particular, through a combination of lecture and projects, the class will explore how stimulus information is transformed, stored, retrieved, and used. The course explores theoretical models of cognition, considering them in the context of both empirical research and everyday experience. Topics include object recognition, attention, memory, reasoning, wayfinding, language processes, decision making, and problem solving.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9
PSY 31 Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences

From the behavioral scientist's perspective, statistics are tools that can be used to detect systematic patterns in sets of data, and guide decision-making. In this course you will learn about statistics that allow a researcher to describe and summarize data and distinguish between chance and systematic effects in typical experimental contexts. To facilitate learning through hands-on experience, each student is required to enroll in one of four laboratory sections. Labs will involve application of the concepts and procedures discussed in class that week, and many will involve use of the SPSS statistical package.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9 (register for A, B, C, D, E, F, only)

PSY 32 Experimental Psychology

This is the basic laboratory course on psychological research methods which serves as the prerequisite for the advanced labs. Students will design, execute, and analyze individual and group experiments designed to familiarize them with the research methods used in psychological investigations. Paper assignments will provide experience with scientific writing in APA format. There are two lectures plus a 2.5-hour laboratory each week. Enrolling in PSY 32A, PSY 32B, or PSY 32C registers you for both the lecture and laboratory components of the course.

Pre-requisites: Psy 31 or Bio 132 (register for A, B, C only)

PSY 36 Experimental Social Psychology

This course focuses on the process of designing, conducting, interpreting, and presenting empirical research in social psychology. Students will be exposed to several different methods used in social psychological research, with an emphasis on true experiments. The use of these methods will be illustrated through readings and discussions of classic and contemporary research in social psychology. Class projects will provide students with hands-on experience in implementing these techniques. In the main part of the course, students will form research teams with the task of conducting empirical research on a topic of their choice.

Pre-requisites: Psy 13 and 32

PSY 38 Research Methods in Clinical Psychology

This course will teach the methods of clinical research as well as provide the experience of analyzing data. We will cover topics such as experimental design, diagnostic reliability, epidemiologic methods, research ethics, data analysis using SPSS, and the preparation of research reports.

Pre-requisites: Psy 31; 12 or 15

PSY 40 Lab in Physiological Psychology

This laboratory course is designed to introduce students to many of the research techniques employed in the behavioral neurosciences. Particular emphasis is placed on the examination of the anatomy and functional dynamics of the central nervous system with respect to behavior. Experiments investigating the physiological basis of feeding behavior, social behavior, drug abuse, learning and memory, affective behavior will be conducted. Techniques to be learned will include stereotaxic surgery, neurohistology, and neurochemical assays. The course will have one lecture meeting per week. Additional laboratory participation is required.

Pre-requisites: Psy 25 or 103

PSY 41 Perception and Cognition Laboratory

This course will examine mental processing using experimental techniques. It will focus on how our minds work when we think, reason, remember, learn, solve problems, perceive objects and/or understand language. The course will provide an opportunity for students to learn and use state-of-the-art experimental techniques for studying each of these processes. This experimental work will test current theories of cognitive processing in humans, with particular emphasis on examination of theories and models derived from the fields of cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, artificial intelligence, and philosophy.

Pre-requisites: Psy 26, 27, 28, or 29, Psy 31 or Psy 32

PSY 53 Engineering Psychology (Co-listed as ENP 53 ME)

This class is an introduction to the principles of Engineering Psychology as they apply to the analysis of human-machine interfaces. Some topics discussed include: the relationships between perception and cognition, design of displays and controls, information theory, and human error. Practical examples are drawn in order to illustrate the application of course material from transportation, organizational behavior, and product design. There is a midterm, final exam, project presentation and final paper, all of which require the ability to apply class discussions and reading material to answer true/false, multiple choice, and identification/essay exam questions. This course is only offered during the Fall semester.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9

PSY 58 Psychology of Sports

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the application of general psychological theories to sports, and to sensitize students to the special needs and issues of athletes. An equal emphasis will be placed upon theory, research, and applied sports psychology.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or 9

PSY 64 Introduction to Linguistics (Co-listed as Philosophy 15)

The contemporary science of linguistics is concerned with how humans encode their language in their brains, so that they can produce and understand an unlimited variety of utterances in context. This course will begin with a discussion of general properties of language: its cultural and political context and how it contrasts with other forms of communication. It then will turn to the problem of how children learn language and the possibility of a biological basis for the ability to learn language, often termed Universal Grammar. From this background, the course will work out some aspects of the structure of language: morphology (word structure), syntax (sentence structure), phonology (sound structure), and semantics (meaning), making use of problem sets involving English and other languages of the world.
PSY 71 Clinical Methods

This course focuses on the clinical skills and approaches that are required for work with patients with a wide range of psychiatric disorders and psychological problems. Students will learn how to conduct structured clinical interviews, will gain familiarity with cognitive and personality tests, and will learn about the psychotherapeutic process, including individual, group and family work, as well as ethical considerations. Hands on experience with testing instruments, videos, role play and case histories will be used as teaching aids throughout the course.

NB. This course is a prerequisite for Psychology 181A&B (Supervised Seminar in Field Work in Psychology). If you intend to do a year-long clinical psychology internship in your senior year, the course must be taken prior to it.

Pre-requisites: Psy 12, clinical psychology major, and Jr. or Sr. standing or permission of instructor.

PSY 91 Research in Psychology

Designed for students who wish to participate in an ongoing program of research. The student is expected to do background reading relevant to the research and to participate in as many phases of the research as possible.

Pre-requisites: 2 courses in Psych and Permission of Instructor

PSY 97 Readings in Psychology

Students choose a topic of mutual interest to themselves and a professor. The aim is to gain expertise on a selected, important psychological subject. A written document is usually expected. Students must get prior consent of the cooperating professor.

Pre-requisites: Permission of Instructor

PSY 99 Internship in Psychology

Students may obtain psychology department credit for internships at various off campus settings such as laboratories, hospitals, clinics, and schools. Of course, to receive credit in this course the work at the internship must be primarily psychological. (Credit may be obtained through All College 99 if the internship is not primarily psychological but is otherwise academically sound.) Course work relevant to the internship should precede it. Each participant in Psychology 99 must be sponsored by a faculty member in the psychology department who will judge the appropriateness of the internship for psychology credit. A minimum of 12 hours per week for the internship, as well as some written work, is required. The course must be taken Pass/Fail but still may be used as an elective in fulfilling the psychology concentration.

Pre-requisites: Permission of Instructor; pass/fail only

PSY 103 Brain and Behavior

This course, like its companion course, Psychology 25, explores the physiological bases of behavior. It differs from Psychology 25 in assuming that the student has some biology background and would like to go into the neuroanatomical, neurophysiological and neurochemical mechanisms of behavior in more depth. Psychology 103 also focuses on current research in the various areas of Psychobiology and future directions for research and its applications. General topic areas include: the nervous system, vision, neurological disorders, sex, hunger, thirst, sleep, aggression, reward mechanisms and addiction, learning and memory, and psychopathology.

Students who have already taken PSY 25 should not take PSY 103, they should instead select from one of the other advanced courses that focuses on the interaction of physiology and behavior.

Pre-requisites: Bio-psych Major or Bio 13 and 14

PSY 105 Psychoanalytic Theory

Evolution of psychoanalytic psychology and therapies to the present. Topics include unconscious motivation, dreams, personality development and dynamics, psychopathology, ego psychology, object-relations theory, self psychology, and relational approaches. Emphasis on psychoanalysis as a developmental psychology. Critique of psychoanalytic theories and methods.

Pre-requisites: Psy 1 or CD 1, & 1 of the following, Psy 11, 12, 14, or 15; or CD 9 or 61; or consent

PSY 106 Seminar in Clinical Psychology

This course will focus on the various theories and techniques of psychotherapy through readings and case studies (including films of therapy sessions). The major goal is to make the student conversant with the major schools of therapy and counseling, the theoretical basis of their techniques, and the techniques themselves. Other aspects of clinical psychology such as psychological assessment, professional ethics, and pathways towards becoming a psychotherapist will also be considered. Students will be responsible for active participation in a seminar format.

Pre-requisites: Psy 12, 31, or 71 and consent; or Clinical Psych Major and SR standing

PSY 107 Advanced Statistics I

Introduction to probability theory and the logical basis of statistical inference. Binomial and normal models are examined. Elementary signal-detection theory and process-trees are developed. Analysis of variance models are introduced with consideration of their implication in research design.

PSY 112 Biological Basis of Psychopathology

In this course we will explore the current research and theory concerning neuropathology, neurotransmitter systems, genetics, psychophysiology, and medication treatment in selected major mental disorders (e.g. schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorders, and developmental disorders).

Pre-requisites: Psy 12 or consent.

PSY 127 Behavioral Endocrinology

The topic for this course is the influence of hormones on behavior and the effect of behavior on hormones. We will consider in detail the interrelationships of hormones and sex, aggression, hunger, thirst, learning, and mood. This will be done both at the level of behavioral analysis and at the level of neuroendocrine mechanisms. The course will be about half lecture and half seminar in format and the last part of the seminar section will include presentations by the students on topics in Behavioral Endocrinology of their choice.

Pre-requisites: Psy 32, and Psy 25 or Psy 103
PSY 128 Nutrition and Behavior (Co-listed as Nutrition 128)

This advanced seminar examines the bidirectional effects of food consumption and behavior. Students will develop their knowledge base and critical analysis skills in this course. The seminar begins with the study of nutrition and psychological processes and then delves into more specific topics such as: dietary preferences, obesity, eating disorders, potential role of food in pain and pleasure, potential effects of food additives, and the effects of diet on cognition and sports performance. The format includes lectures, discussions, and student presentations. Readings are taken from textbooks, journal articles and popular press articles. The course is appropriate for juniors, seniors, and graduate students and is cross-listed as Nutrition 128.

Pre-requisites: Psy 31 or Bio 132 or CH 54; Co-listed with Nutrition 128

PSY 129 Cognitive Neuroscience

Psychology 129 will be an in depth exploration of several topic areas concerned with the neuronal basis of human mental processes. These will include: perception, memory, language, attention and consciousness. The class format will combine lecture (background information on a topic) and seminar/discussions.

Pre-requisites: Psy 32, any Psy 20 level courses or Psy 9. Meets concurrently with Psy 229.

PSY 134 Interpersonal Conflict and Negotiation

This semester will examine social psychological theories for conflict escalation and reduction of conflicts. The class will focus on research findings concerning social conflict, negotiation and mediation. Topics include: methodology for studying conflicts, individual differences and negotiation styles, the effect of physical components and culture on adversaries, strategic choices, social dilemmas, negotiators’ power and effective third party intervention in interpersonal and group settings. Case studies, various classroom demonstrations and exercises will be used.

Pre-requisites: Psy 13 or Consent

PSY 140 Seminar in Mathematical Psychology

The major theoretical journal in psychology is Psychological Review. Currently, about 40 percent of the papers in Psychological Review utilize mathematics in order to understand underlying psychological processes. Examples would include neural network models of learning, mathematical models for learning, memory, perception, classification, and decision making. This course is mainly a seminar, but there will be some lecture to establish the foundations. Students will be encouraged to explore mathematical psychology within the topic of their choice. The goal is to better understand journal articles in Psychological Review or in the Journal of Mathematical Psychology that are of interest to the student.

Pre-requisites: Psy 28 or 32 or Graduate standing. Meets concurrently with Psy 240.

PSY 144 Seminar in Memory and Retention

The broad questions addressed in this seminar are what constitutes the cognitive underpinnings of the highest order of consciousness, namely, self-reflective consciousness, and how did this kind of consciousness come into being. Basic issues include the cognitive mechanisms that enable people to monitor what they know and predict what they will know, the errors and biases involved in self-monitoring, and the implications of metacognitive ability for people’s self-determined learning, behavior, and their understanding of self.

Pre-requisites: Psy 26 or Psy 27 or Psy 28 or Graduate Standing meets concurrently w/ Psy 244

PSY 145 Mental Representation

This seminar-based course will explore how we mentally represent information and how we use this information. Topics will include mental representation formats, acquiring and updating mental representations, internal and external influences on mental representations, distortions and errors in representations, how mental representations are used across contexts, and atypical mental representations (e.g. synesthesia,savants)

Pre-requisites: Psy 26, 27, 28, or 29

PSY 150 Semantics

This course concerns the structure of meaning as it is encoded in human language and processed by the human brain. Topics include: mentalistic theories of sense and reference, word meanings, combining word meanings in phrasal meanings, and aspects of meaning not conveyed by words.

Pre-requisites: Phil 15 (Psy 64) Phil 133 or consent. Co-listed with Philosophy 111.

PSY 181 A and B Supervised Seminar in Field Work

This is a unique opportunity in which senior psychology/clinical majors participate in a year-long internship in psychiatry or psychology clinics and/or mental health/human service facilities in the Boston area. Students spend 12-16 hours per week at their placement for two semesters. Some opportunities for clinical research are also offered. Each week, students meet as a group with their professor. In these seminars, their clinical and clinical research experiences are discussed and analyzed; students present clinical work and case histories of individual clients and patients; all aspects of diagnosis and clinical management (ranging from psychotherapy to medication) are discussed. By the end of this seminar students will gain important insights into clinical work and research in a range of mental health/human service settings. This is an ideal opportunity for students interested in medical school, clinical psychology graduate programs, clinical research and all other careers involving work within the field of mental health and related disciplines. Cap for each class: 10 - 15 students. Note: Students needing a senior internship must attend a meeting that will be held in April.

Pre-requisites: Clinical Psych major and Senior Standing

PSY 191 Individual Research in Psychology

Advanced students have the opportunity to work out the design and execution of a research study. Students generally produce a written document describing their work; often this is a published article. Students must get prior consent of the supervising professor.

PSY 195-01 Senior Seminar: Cognitive & Brain Science

Year-long weekly research meeting of seniors in Cognitive and Brain Science major and others involved in a senior honors thesis. Provides a forum for discussion, presentation and planning of senior research projects, as well as exposing students to the range of faculty and graduate student research.

Pre-requisites: Senior Standing; 0.5 credit course.
PSY 196-01 Psychology of Bilingualism

In most of the world knowledge and use of more than one language in daily life is the norm. Even in the US where English is the dominant language, there is a growing awareness that knowledge of a second language is essential to our competitiveness in an increasingly interactive world and likely has certain cognitive benefits including improved executive functioning and protection against cognitive aging. In this course we will consider bilingualism broadly from a perspective of psychology. Topics included will range from second language acquisition to the social and cognitive implications of bilingualism as well as the interaction of a bilingual’s languages at the cognitive level. The class format will combine lecture (background information on a topic) and seminar/discussions.

Pre-requisites: Psych 32 and any other Psy course or Consent

PSY 197 Supervised Readings in Special Topics

This course requires that the student make arrangements with a professor to supervise the semester's work.

PSY 199 Senior Honors Thesis

If you plan to do an honors thesis, you must sign up for Psychology 199 both Fall and Spring of your senior year. Discuss this with a faculty sponsor.

PSY 229 Graduate Cognitive Neuroscience

This course will be an in depth exploration of several topics concerning the neuronal basis of human mental processes. These include: perception, memory, language, attention and consciousness. The class format will combine lecture (background information on a topic) and seminar/discussions.

Pre-requisites: Psy 229 meets with Psy129 but also includes a graduate only session for 1.5 hours per week. (TBA)

PSY 234 Graduate Core Course in Developmental Psychology

This semester’s core course has three primary goals. The first is to provide students with a fairly solid and canonical overview of the field of Developmental Psychology in general. This means we will touch briefly on a wide variety of topics encompassed by Developmental Psychology, in a sort of “souped up” version of an undergraduate survey course. Although we can’t cover all of the topics in depth, students will at least become familiar with a range of issues, methods, approaches, etc. that are “out there” in Developmental Psychology. Second, riding on top of our general overview, we will also go into some particular issues in greater depth. These issues will be selected with an eye to representing some of the most exciting, novel, controversial and current aspects of the field, and they will exemplify the depth and complexity with which many aspects of the more briefly visited topics might be investigated. Finally, through our work, I hope to encourage students, no matter what their major interests within psychology are, to “think developmentally” about them. Every psychological phenomenon or process is subject to development, of course, and understanding developmental concerns, approaches and intricacies could help take your thinking and research in physiological, cognitive or social psychology (for example) to another level. The “fourth dimension” of time processes of change over time adds fascinating complexity to the study of essentially any psychological process or behavior.

Pre-requisites: Graduate Standing (This course will meet once a week on Tuesday afternoons, and we will approach the goals outlined here through selected readings, mini-lectures, group discussion, student reports and presentations, and video demonstrations).

PSY 240 Seminar in Mathematical Psychology

The major theoretical journal in psychology is Psychological Review. Currently, about 40 percent of the papers in Psychological Review utilize mathematics in order to understand underlying psychological processes. Examples would include neural network models of learning, mathematical models for learning, memory, perception, classification, and decision making. This course is mainly a seminar, but there will be some lecture to establish the foundations. Students will be encouraged to explore mathematical psychology within the topic of their choice. The goal is to better understand journal articles in Psychological Review or in the Journal of Mathematical Psychology that are of interest to the student.

Pre-requisites: Psy 28 or 32 or Graduate standing. Meets concurrently with Psy 140.

PSY 244 Memory and Retention

The broad questions addressed in this seminar are what constitutes the cognitive underpinnings of the highest order of consciousness, namely, self-reflective consciousness, and how did this kind of consciousness come into being. Basic issues include the cognitive mechanisms that enable people to monitor what they know and predict what they will know, the errors and biases involved in self-monitoring, and the implications of metacognitive ability for people’s self-determined learning, behavior, and their understanding of self.

Pre-requisites: Graduate Standing (meets concurrently w/ Psy 144)

PSY 261 Seminar: Research in Psychology

This course will emphasize the skills that are necessary for a career as a professional psychologist including oral and written presentations, reviewing papers and grants, and advising. As one of the important parts of your future will be finding the resources for your research, grant writing will be a key part of the course. Therefore, each student will write and submit a grant application to a funding organization.

Pre-requisites: Graduate Standing

PSY 291 Graduate Research

PSY 295 Masters Thesis

PSY 297 Ph.D. Dissertation

PSY 401PT Masters Degree Continuation

PSY 402FT Masters Degree Continuation

PSY 405TA Graduate Teaching Assistant

PSY 406RA Graduate Teaching Assistant

PSY 501PT  Masters Degree Continuation

PSY 502FT Doctoral Degree Continuation