

# Psychology

*Chair:* Erin Pahlke

Thomas Armstrong (on Sabbatical, Spring 2019)

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Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior, and the application of that science to improve the quality of life.

A student who enters Whitman without any prior college-level preparation in psychology will complete 36 credits to fulfill the requirements for the psychology major.

**Distribution:** Courses completed in psychology apply to the social sciences distribution area, with the following exceptions:

Cultural pluralism or social sciences: 239, 309, 311, 319, 336

Quantitative analysis and social sciences: 210

Science or social sciences: 360

**Learning Goals:** Upon graduation, students will demonstrate:

- **Knowledge of psychology**
  - Show familiarity with important psychological discoveries. Use psychological theories to explain or predict behavior and mental processes. Use scientific evidence to evaluate theoretical claims. Describe ways to apply psychological concepts to pressing social issues or in individual, relational, educational, occupational, or clinical contexts. Analyze complex, enduring, or controversial “big ideas” in psychology.
- **Scientific reasoning**
  - Find, read, and understand credible sources of psychological scholarship. Use skeptical inquiry and creative thinking to critique psychological theories and research findings. Propose meaningful research questions. Use statistical and research design concepts to test hypotheses. Analyze and interpret psychological data. Use knowledge about the scientific method to evaluate the quality of research evidence. Evaluate how well research findings apply to the world at large.
- **Ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world**
  - Apply the principles of research ethics, including in research with diverse or vulnerable persons or nonhuman animals. Discuss how societal or cultural developments may relate to the way psychologists theorize about behavior and mental processes. Recognize ways in which sociocultural, theoretical, or personal biases may influence the design and interpretation of research. Show sensitivity to issues of power, privilege, and discrimination, including when interacting with people of diverse abilities, backgrounds, and cultural perspectives. Recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural, international, and other forms of human diversity.
- **Communication**
  - Communicate effectively about psychological science in oral and written formats in ways that are consistent with established standards, including with the use of information technology as appropriate. Present clear and coherent arguments, including with the display of data.
- **Professional development**
  - Seek and respond appropriately to feedback from educators, mentors, supervisors, or experts to improve performance. Collaborate on group projects productively. Describe how psychological science or scientific problem-solving may be helpful in the workplace. Propose self-management and self-improvement strategies based on psychological knowledge. Discuss the meaning of one’s identity as a student of psychology in terms of the field’s history and contemporary issues.

**The Psychology major:** Psychology 110, 210, 210L, 220, 420, 495, and 496 or 498; and other courses selected with the approval of the major adviser, including one from each of three foundation areas and one 300-level seminar

course numbered 300-349, to make a total of 36 credits; one course of at least two credits, other than independent study, in biology; and one course of at least two credits in philosophy, excluding independent study and Philosophy 200. The three foundation areas are: Clinical/Personality (Psychology 260 or 270); Cognitive/Learning/Physiological (Psychology 229, 360, or 390); and Developmental /Social (Psychology 230 or 240). Students must complete Psychology 210, 210L and 220 by the end of their junior year. The senior assessment consists of Psychology 420, a thesis paper, and a one-hour oral defense of the senior thesis.

**The Psychology minor:** Psychology 110, 210, a 300-level seminar, and two additional psychology courses, for a minimum of 15 credits and excluding Psychology 407, 408, 495, 496, and 498.

### **110 Introduction to Psychology**

**Fall, Spring**

**Staff**

**3 credits**

The science of psychology as intended for general and beginning students. Designed to introduce students to the technical vocabulary, methodology, and principal fields of research. Analysis of such topics as learning, development, personality, behavior pathology, emotions, and social behavior. All sections designed to introduce the student to the basic material of the introductory psychology course.

### **210 Psychological Statistics**

**Fall, Spring**

**Fall: Prull; Spring: Herbranson**

**3 credits**

This course introduces students to descriptive, correlational, and inferential statistical methods as well as some of their applications in psychology. The final grade is based on completion of homework assignments and examinations. The material is at an intermediate level of complexity, and students are advised to take the course early in preparation for more advanced work. Psychology 210L also is required for the psychology major. Not available to senior psychology majors without department consent.

### **210L Statistics Lab**

**Fall, Spring**

**Fall: Prull; Spring: Herbranson**

**1 credit**

This lab is an introduction to the use of automated statistical analysis tools appropriate for large data sets. The final grade is based on completion and interpretation of weekly data analysis assignments. *Pre- or corequisites:* Psychology 210.

### **217 Psychology and Law**

**Spring**

**Michael**

**3 credits**

This course introduces the ways in which psychological research and practice influence the legal system and, to some extent, how law influences mental health practitioners. Topics that illustrate issues related to science vs. pseudoscience, improving measurement and decision-making, mental health, and human diversity will receive emphasis. The general topics may include: investigation techniques, pretrial consulting, forensic assessment in criminal and civil cases, psychology of the trial and jury, punishment and correction, psychology of victims, discrimination, and civil rights. The specific topics may include psychological ethics, profiling, interrogation, lie detection, jury selection, competence to stand trial, eyewitness testimony accuracy, the insanity defense, jury decision-making, mental illness and retardation of the offender, psychopathy, battered spouse syndrome, and contributions of psychology to legal cases related to race, gender, and sexual orientation. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110.

### **219 Educational Psychology**

**Not offered 2018-19**

**4 credits**

In this course, we will investigate issues and research in educational psychology. The course will focus on theories within the field of child and adolescent development as they apply to educational theory and practice. We will read both theoretical and empirical literature, with an eye toward using psychological concepts to improve children's and adolescents' educational outcomes. Topics will include student development, evaluation techniques, tracking and ability groupings, teaching approaches, and motivation. Assignments will include short response papers related to

observations and readings, exams, and a final project that requires students to apply their knowledge to an issue in education. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110.

### **220 Research Methods**

**Fall, Spring**                      **Fall: Pahlke; Spring: Blagov, Michael**                      **4 credits**

This course will provide students with an understanding of the research methodology used by psychologists. Students will learn to read and critique psychological studies and learn the details of experimental design. Students will also design an empirical study, review the related literature, and learn to write a formal APA-style research report. *Prerequisites:* Psychology 110, 210 and 210L.

### **229 Cognitive Psychology**

**Fall, Spring**                      **Fall: Michael; Spring: Prull**                      **4 credits**

This course examines the theories, issues, and research associated with the ways that people come to know and understand the world in which they live. Topics include pattern recognition, attention, memory, imagery, language, problem-solving, decision-making, and consciousness. Course meetings are twice weekly. At least two essay examinations and one research paper are required. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110 or consent of instructor. Credit not allowed if Psychology 349 has been taken.

### **230 Social Psychology**

**Fall**    **Staff**    **4 credits**

This course provides students with a broad introduction to the field of social psychology, the study of how others influence our thoughts, feelings, and behavior in a social world. Course content will focus on both theoretical and empirical research to explore the ways in which social situations affect our cognition, emotion, and action, and the ways in which the self contributes to the social construction of human behavior. Specific topics include social judgment, group behavior, stereotyping and prejudice, conflict and war, liking and love, helping, and persuasion, among others. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110 or consent of instructor.

### **232 The Psychology of Prejudice**

**Not offered 2018-19**    **4 credits**

This course will introduce students to theoretical and empirical research in psychology aimed at understanding the nature of prejudice and intergroup conflict. Topics will include stereotyping, origins of prejudice, biases in social perception and judgment that maintain prejudice, the effects of prejudice on those targeted by it, consequences of intergroup interaction, and means of reducing prejudice in the self and others. The course will focus primarily on racial and gender prejudice, although prejudice based on sexuality, age, class, and other social identities may be discussed. Students will be encouraged to examine their own social identities and intergroup interactions with a goal of understanding how to experience and promote more positive interactions between members of different social groups. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110 or consent of instructor.

### **239 Psychology of Women and Gender**

**Not offered 2018-19**    **4 credits**

This course will begin with an empirical and theoretical exploration of conceptions of sex and gender. We will then explore how gender differences manifest themselves in all aspects of women's lives, including childhood, love and dating relationships, sex, marriage, the media's influence, work, violence, and mental health. Although we will touch on men's issues, the focus will be on women's experiences. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110 or Gender Studies 100.

### **240 Developmental Psychology**

**Spring**    **Pahlke**    **4 credits**

This course provides students with a broad introduction to developmental psychology, the study of how we go from a single cell to a walking, talking, thinking adult in a social world. The goals of the course are to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills using readings, data and video on issues in perceptual, motor, social, and cognitive development, from pre-natal development through emerging adulthood. Students will understand the

major issues in developmental psychology and developmental processes through critical reading of research reports and popular press, evaluating conflicting data, interpreting data, and generating testable hypotheses. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110.

**247, 248 Special Topics**  
**3-4 credits**

These courses focus on topics within psychology and/or research interests of psychology faculty. These courses are generally not offered regularly. Enrollments in 200-level special topics courses can be larger than the limited-enrollment 300-level seminars, and these courses may provide broad surveys of a certain domain within psychology. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110. Any current offerings follow.

**247 ST: Cells to Brain to Mind**

**Spring**

**Wallace and Withers**

**4 credits**

This introduction to psychobiology will relate the molecular and cellular workings of the brain to behavior and mind. We will cover the cellular basis of information flow across neural networks (including basic science behind psychopharmacology), sensation and perception, conscious and unconscious behavior, learning and memory, neurobehavioral disorders, and how the interplay between genes and environment contributes to the biological basis of individuality. The course will be a mix of lectures and in class projects that draw on case studies and animal models to help develop an understanding of the tools and experimental approaches used in psychobiology.

*Prerequisite:* Psychology 110 or consent of instructor. Distribution area: science.

**260 Abnormal Psychology**

**Fall, Spring**

**Fall: Armstrong; Spring: Blagov**

**4 credits**

This course is a broad overview of psychopathology. It covers the classification, symptoms, epidemiology and morbidity, and prominent etiological models of the major kinds of psychological disorders. It examines critically issues related to different approaches to diagnosis, the standard of treatment for different disorders, and several types of research. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110.

**270 Personality Psychology**  
**credits**

**Blagov**

**4**

This course is about the science of individual differences (meaningful ways in which people differ) and personality structure (the organization of mental processes shared by most people). We will examine personality theories and research examples from several psychological paradigms. We will address such issues as the measurement, science vs. pseudoscience, and pathology of personality. The readings will include a textbook, and they may include a few articles and short stories. Assessment may include quizzes, exams, and written critiques of personality test results. Students will choose to critique either their own results or those of volunteers. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110.

**301 Issues in Infancy: Walking, Talking and Imitating**

**Not offered 2018-19**

**4 credits**

This seminar will investigate current thinking and research about selected aspects of early motor, cognitive and social development. We will look in depth at three selected topics, reading original research articles and theory papers on each and trying to weigh the evidence. The topics for this semester include learning to walk, early word learning, and imitation as a mechanism for early learning. Each of these topics is of long-standing interest in the field of infant development and raises a variety of issues, which are currently being actively researched. Coursework will involve reading original source materials, and class sessions will include discussion, debate, videos, and student presentations. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 240.

**309 Science of Sexual Orientation**

**Fall**

**Blagov**

**3 credits**

This advanced seminar explores critically the contemporary psychological science of human homosexuality (major theories, methods, findings, and gaps in our knowledge). Other forms of sexual diversity may be addressed. The course emphasizes empirical studies and reviews in such areas as the subjective experience, psychobiology, and

developmental course of homosexuality, as well as questions related to same-sex relationships and parenting, sexual-minority discrimination, and gay-affirmative therapy. Most class meetings will involve guided discussion of assigned readings; toward the second half of the semester, students will lead discussion with the instructor's support. Additional assignments may include weekly written responses to the readings and two or three papers. May be taken for credit toward the Gender Studies major. *Prerequisites:* Psychology 110 and 210 or consent of instructor.

**310 Seminar in Adolescent Development**  
**Spring Pahlke**

**3 credits**

This seminar course explores development over the course of adolescence, focusing on physical, cognitive, social, and personality transitions. Students will explore central psychological issues of this developmental period (e.g., identity, autonomy, intimacy, and sexuality). Because development takes place in context, we will pay particular attention to the influences of family, peer group, school, and culture. Coursework will involve reading original source materials, and class sessions will include a combination of lecture and discussion. Assignments will include writing related to observations and readings, oral presentations and discussion-leading, and a theoretical paper. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 240.

**311 Development and Parenting Across Cultures**  
**Not offered 2018-19**

**3 credits**

This seminar explores development and parenting across cultures. The first half of the course will focus on theory and research on families in cultures outside the U.S. The second half of the course will focus on racial/ethnic groups within the U.S. Topics will include parental beliefs and expectations, parenting strategies, parental engagement, and children's and adolescents' academic and social outcomes. Weekly written responses, a theoretical paper, and class participation will form the basis of the course grade. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 240.

**317 Perspectives on Disgust**  
**Not offered 2018-19**

**3 credits**

What makes something disgusting? Why do we experience disgust? How did it evolve? How is it shaped by culture? What role does disgust play in moral judgment? What role does disgust play in psychopathology? This course will explore these questions and more through classic and contemporary works of psychologists, evolutionary biologists, cultural anthropologists, and literary writers. In addition, the course will provide a foundation in psychological research and theory on emotion. *Prerequisite:* six credits in psychology.

**319 Poverty and Child Development**  
**Not offered 2018-19**

**3 credits**

This course will review psychological research on the impact of persistent poverty on infant and child development. Major areas addressed in this class will include prenatal care; early neuromotor, cognitive, emotional, and social development; academic achievement; and the outcome of these regarding adolescent and adult achievement, attachment, and health. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 240 or consent of instructor.

**320 Seminar: Psychology of Aging**  
**Not offered 2018-19**

**3 credits**

This course surveys basic knowledge in the psychology of aging. Models of successful aging, social changes in late life, age-related changes in cognitive and intellectual functioning, psycho-pathology and the consequences of age-related degenerative diseases (Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases) are among the topics discussed. The course will likely motivate students to examine their preconceptions about older people and the aging process. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110.

**324 What is Mental Illness?**  
**Not offered 2018-19**

**4 credits**

This course will explore controversial issues that arise in defining mental illness. For example, is mental illness categorically different from everyday psychological distress? To what extent are psychological disorders unique to a culture or a historical time period? To what extent are they rooted in biology? Could some mental illnesses

represent evolutionary adaptations gone awry? To address these questions and others, we will draw on multiple disciplines, integrating perspectives from the social and biological sciences, as well as the humanities. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 260.

### **330 Personality: Clinical Science and Research**

**Not offered 2018-19**

**3 credits**

What is personality, and in what important ways do people differ? Valid theories of personality and its pathology may help us ask research questions, make clinical inferences, and treat patients. How do scholars evaluate such theories? Students will critique primary sources (with a focus on modern theories) and collaborate to interpret quantitative and qualitative data and to complete an original research project. The main goal will be to help students enhance their scientific critical thinking while theorizing about what it means to be a person.

*Prerequisite:* Psychology 260 or 270, or consent of instructor.

### **336 Social Stigma**

**Not offered 2018-19**

**3 credits**

This course will examine research and theory on social stigma from a social psychological perspective. Topics will include the origins and functions of stigmatization, mechanisms and consequences of social stigma, and coping strategies of stigmatized individuals. Special attention will be paid to targets of stigma, including those stigmatized by their race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. The psychological effects of prejudice and discrimination for these targets will be discussed. This course is conducted primarily as an advanced seminar in psychology.

*Prerequisite:* Psychology 230.

### **339 Comparative and Evolutionary Psychology**

**Fall**

**Herbranson**

**3 credits**

This seminar explores psychological topics across a wide variety of species, with a particular emphasis on evolution as a determinant of behavior and cognition. Course content will include modern research on animal behavior and ethology, stressing the importance of an animal's biological, ecological and social milieu. Specific topics may include dominance and social structure, foraging, mating, predation, communication, perception, conflict, and cooperation. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 229, 360, or 390.

### **347, 348 Special Topics Seminars**

**3-4 credits**

These seminars focus on specific topics within psychology and/or research interests of psychology faculty. These courses are generally not offered regularly. Individual courses may be taught only once, and course offerings are likely to change substantially from year to year. Enrollments are generally limited to 12 students per class so that class discussion opportunities are maximized. *Prerequisite:* eight credits in psychology. Any current offerings follow.

### **347 ST: When is science (un)reliable?**

**Fall**

**Armstrong and Parker**

**2 credits**

In this course, we will explore the so-called "reproducibility crisis" that has struck fields from psychology and economics to ecology and cancer biology. Students will learn statistical principles at the heart of the reproducibility crisis; they will learn how disregard for those principles undermines the reliability of scientific inference; and they will learn how such disregard has been incentivized by various institutions. Students will learn to recognize problematic research practices and will critically evaluate scientific claims both in the scientific literature and in the popular press. Further, they will evaluate and debate proposals for institutional policies designed to reduce bias and improve reproducibility. This course meets once per week for 1 hour and 20 minutes. May be elected as Biology 371. Course does not fulfill the Psychology major requirement of 2 credits in Biology, whether registered through Psychology or Biology. *Recommended Prerequisites:* any statistics course. Distribution area: social science or science.

**349 Seminar in Human Memory****Fall****Prull****3 credits**

Other than that which is genetically coded, everything that we know about the world represents some aspect of human memory. This seminar examines historical and contemporary accounts of human memory, with particular emphasis on reading and discussing primary research articles. Neurobiological as well as psychological perspectives to the study of human memory will be taken. Domains that are likely to be explored include memory processes (e.g., encoding, storage, and retrieval), distinctions (e.g., short-term/long-term, episodic/semantic, implicit/explicit) and systems (e.g., temporal and frontal lobe correlates of memory). Class presentations and an empirical project are required components of the course. *Prerequisites:* Psychology 110 (or equivalent) and 229.

**353 Practicum in Psychology****Not offered 2018-19****1-3 credits**

Practicum experiences allow students to integrate and apply issues they have learned in coursework. Placements vary by semester and may include school, hospital, community, or outpatient sites. Students engage in a minimum of three hours per week in off-campus placement, complete readings and assignments, and meet weekly with course instructor. *Prerequisites:* Psychology 110 and consent of instructor. *Corequisites:* Psychology 356 (if taking for the first time).

**356 Applied Psychology****Not offered 2018-19****3 credits**

This course focuses on the applications of psychology in community settings. Integrates theory, research, and treatment modalities to introduce the scientist practitioner model of psychology. Addresses professional issues and career possibilities in applied areas of psychology. Class sessions devoted to a discussion of the readings, exposure to basic therapeutic skills, and group supervision of practicum experiences. All students required to be concurrently enrolled in Psychology 353. *Prerequisites:* Psychology 260 and consent of instructor. *Corequisite:* Psychology 353.

**358 Research Experience****Not offered 2018-19****3-4 credits**

A supervised research experience in an ongoing lab project, arranged with the instructor, giving students the opportunity to recruit participants, collect, code, and analyze data, as well as read relevant literature and write lab reports. *Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

**360 Physiology of Behavior****Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course will introduce students to modern physiological approaches to the study of behavior. It will cover the research methods and equipment used in modern neuroscience and the theoretical implications of a physiological approach to psychology. Specific topics will include the electrical and chemical basis of neural functioning, the structure and function of sensory and motor systems, the physiological basis and treatment of psychopathology; and the biology of central processes including but not limited to learning, memory and emotion. *Prerequisites:* three credits each of psychology and biology. *Co-requisite:* Psychology 360L.

**390 Psychology of Learning****Spring****Herbranson****4 credits**

This course uses principles of conditioning and learning to explore how humans and animals adapt their behavior to meet changing environmental demands. Students will learn about historical and modern applications of Pavlovian and operant conditioning, and will apply those models to contemporary problems in psychology. In the associated lab, rats will be used as a model organism to demonstrate principles of learning as tools for the modification of behavior. *Prerequisite:* Psychology 110.

**407, 408 Independent Study****Fall, Spring****Staff****1-3 credits**

Independent study in an area of special interest selected by the student with direction of a staff member.

*Prerequisite:* consent of instructor.

**410 Multivariate Statistics for Psychology****Fall****Herbranson****2 credits**

This course covers advanced statistical procedures, with an emphasis on multivariate analyses. Class meetings will involve analyzing and interpreting complex data sets. We will also consider how the availability of advanced statistical analyses influences measurement, theory, and experimental design within the field of psychology.

Intended for students who already have an understanding of basic statistics and are familiar with IBM SPSS software. *Prerequisites:* Psychology 210 and 210L.

**420 Contemporary and Historical Issues in Psychology****Fall****Armstrong, Pahlke****4 credits**

This capstone course considers where psychology came from, what it is now, and what the field should be, through close reading of historical and current literature. Goals are: 1) to provide senior psychology majors a conceptual and historical background by which to consider contemporary matters of pressing concern; 2) to assist students in their integration of psychology as a discipline; and 3) to consider the wide range of ethical issues pertinent to the study and practice of psychology. Students are asked to write several position papers, complete a take-home exam, and lead a class discussion on a current debate. *Prerequisites:* restricted to senior psychology majors and minors; others by consent of instructor. Required of all senior psychology majors.

**495 Thesis****Fall****Staff****3 credits**

First semester of a yearlong thesis project, including weekly meetings with class, with adviser, and several drafts of a well-documented proposal due throughout the semester.

**496 Thesis****Spring****Staff****3 credits**

Second semester of a yearlong thesis project. Weekly meetings with class, with adviser, an oral presentation on the thesis project, and a polished final draft submitted before April 1.

**498 Honors Thesis****Spring****Staff****3 credits**

Second semester of a yearlong thesis project. Weekly meetings with class, with adviser, an oral presentation on the thesis project, and a polished final draft submitted before April 1. In addition, a public presentation, preferably at a professional or student conference, is required.