



STUDENT GUIDE TO THE PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

Follow the Psychology Department on Facebook for notices about events and job opportunities

General Information

Courses offered by the Department of Psychology provide students with the tools to succeed in a variety of nonprofit, corporate, organizational, or government environments. Core required courses provides a solid foundation in psychology while electives allow students to pursue their special interests. In addition, all psychology majors have the opportunity to conduct research under the supervision of a faculty mentor during their junior or senior year. [Faculty](#) have expertise in important areas like motivation, human development, decision making and cognitive processes, social psychology, and therapy and mental health.

The department offers one undergraduate program (BA in Psychology) and one graduate program (MS in Addiction Studies). Information about the graduate program can be found [here](#). Potential applicants to the one-year graduate program can schedule a meeting with Psychology Graduate Coordinator Shane Murphy (murphys@wcsu.edu, 203-837-9398).

Course requirements, prerequisites, and recommendations

The core requirements of WCSU's undergraduate degree can be found [here](#) and the Psychology program sheet is [here](#). While many courses are offered both semesters every year, not all are; the [course rotation schedule](#) details when courses are available. Descriptions of undergraduate psychology courses are available in the [undergraduate catalog](#).

Course recommendations are available for students who are interested in a specialization track in [Women's Studies](#), [Multi-cultural studies](#), or [Human Development](#). Course cluster recommendations are additionally available for students minoring in Biology with a [genetics/evolutionary focus](#) or an [animal focus](#).

Students can earn a [Minor in Psychology](#) by passing 18 credits in any psychology courses.

The [psychology with distinction option](#) is available to highly motivated upper-class majors interested in exploring a specific topic in psychology in great depth and conducting a research project. Prior approval from a psychology faculty member is required, a minimum overall GPA of 3.30, a minimum psychology GPA of 3.50 and completion of PSY 324.

Gaining applied experience

Students who are interested in gaining applied experience have several options available.

Students who take [PSY 306 \(Internship in Applied Psychology\)](#) get 120 hours of practicum experience at a site that they have selected with the instructor. Settings include social service, mental health, medical, and educational agencies.

[PSY 426 \(Advanced Seminar in Applied Psychology\)](#) is taught in a variety of areas (clinical, health, industrial/organizational, forensic, among others), according to the expertise of the instructor.

[PSY 439 \(Community Psychology\)](#) focuses on the amelioration of conditions inhibiting optimal development. Students complete a practicum of five hours per week in community agencies such as mental health clinics, substance abuse treatment facilities, Head Start, schools, and related social service settings.

Certification of Substance Use Counselors

Students who are interested in a career relating to substance use counseling should consider meeting the academic requirements for Connecticut state certification. We offer four courses in substance use counseling ([PSY 392, 393, 394 and 395](#)) which together meet the academic requirements for Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC) as defined by the Connecticut Certification Board (CCB). Other requirements for certification are 6,000 hours of paid substance use counseling experience and a passing score on a written test. Please check the [CCB homepage](#) for the most up-to-date certification information.

PsychAlliance

Students who are interested in exploring topics in the field of psychology and being part of a community should consider joining [PsychAlliance](#). PsychAlliance is a student run organization at Western Connecticut State University consisting of the [WCSU chapter of Psi Chi](#) and the [Psychology Student Association](#). Psi Chi is an International Honor's Society in Psychology and acceptance is based on scholastic achievement. Anyone with an interest in psychology, including non-majors, is welcome to join PSA and the PsychAlliance. The PsychAlliance has won several student leadership awards and the Psi Chi chapter has received several model chapter awards and the Eastern Regional Award from the International Honors Society.

Psychology Career Information

Not sure what to do with your degree in Psychology? Check out [this book](#) written by Dr. Kuther on Psychology Careers as well as this comprehensive resource created by Dr. Appleby. This resource provides information about 250 jobs that are related to psychology. It also provides information on careers which require a BA as well as careers requiring graduate school.

For More Information

If you would like more information, please contact the department chair, Dr. Daniel Barrett, Ph.D. (barrettd@wcsu.edu, 203.837.8869) or the department secretary, Carol O'Connor (occonnorc@wcsu.edu, 203.837.8470).

REGISTRATION & DEGREE WORKS

Locating your advisor

Go to www.wcsu.edu and click 'MyBanner' in the 'Essentials' tab → login with your WCSU username and password → click on 'DegreeWorks' → in the 'worksheet' tab it will say your advisor's name in the top section. Your registration date will also be specified on Banner.

Preparing for a registration meeting

After you've received an email with your registration date, email your advisor to schedule a meeting. Bring a tentative schedule for next semester. Your worksheet in Degree Works will show the requirements that you still need to meet. In addition to courses in your major, you are also required to take 40 credits of courses outside your major.

Competencies

You are also required to complete [competencies](#), which are course-based shared learning outcomes. WCSU's competencies are listed below; although they themselves do not carry any credit, the courses they are imbedded in do. Students must take two courses in three competencies and a minimum of one course in the remaining competencies. Whenever you complete a course with a competency, the Degree Works audit will mark that as complete.

First Year Navigation (FY) Competency
Creative Process (CP) Competency
Critical Thinking (CT) Competency
Health and Wellness (HW) Competency
Information Literacy (IL) Competency
Intercultural (IC) Competency

Oral Communication (OC) Competency
Scientific Inquiry (SI) Competency
Writing Intensive (W1) Competency, Tier 1
Writing Intensive (W2) Competency, Tier 2
Writing Intensive (W3) Competency, Tier 3
Culminating General Education Experience (CE)

Looking up classes

Look on [OpenClose](#) for a list of all the classes that WCSU offers in a particular semester. Select the semester you're planning for by clicking on 'Search a Different Term.' To search for courses based on their competency, click on 'Attribute Type' and select the competency you are looking for. Make sure to write down potential courses (and their CRN number) for when you meet with your advisor.