

Psychology (B.A.) Forensic Track

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Potential Job Titles

- Forensic psychologist (MA, PhD, PsyD)
- Clinical psychologist (MA, PhD, PsyD)
- Correction's/parole officer (BA)
- Residential youth counselor (BA)
- Crime analyst (BA)

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What is Forensic Psychology?

Forensic psychology is the application of psychology to the criminal justice system. Forensic psychologists may deal with legal issues, such as public policies, new laws, and whether a defendant was insane at the time a crime was committed. Forensic psychologists also conduct research on jury behavior or eyewitness testimony.

Forensic psychologists may be employed in a variety of settings including prisons, state hospitals, federal and local law enforcement agencies, community mental health centers, juvenile detention facilities, universities, or private practice.

Many students are drawn to forensic psychology because of the interest in "criminal profiling." The reality is that most law enforcement agencies do not use criminal profiling procedures, and those who may use similar procedures are more likely to employ law enforcement personnel rather than a forensic psychologist.

Entry-level positions with a bachelor's degree in this specialty are rare. However to begin getting some experience and work before graduate school, one could work as a probation/parole officer, case worker, or residential youth counselor.



In order to have a career in forensic psychology one will need a graduate degree, either master's or doctorate.

The purpose of this program is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of psychology while providing students who want a central focus on the application of psychological principles to the legal system.

Additional Resources

To become more involved in forensic psychology or learn about the profession, here is what you can do.

- 1 Join professional organizations, such as Division 41 (American Psychology-Law Society) of the American Psychological Association, www.ap-ls.org
- 2 Read professional journals, such as Law and Human Behavior Journal, Criminal Justice and Behavior, Journal of Forensic Sciences, and Psychology, Crime, and Law.
- 3 Schedule a meeting with a forensic psychologist to discuss their profession.
- 4 Volunteer in a related setting.

If you are interested in pursuing a career in forensic psychology be sure to work with an advisor to develop an academic plan that is tailored to your interests. Your plan should lead to the completion of coursework that is useful for employment in an entry-level job working in the criminal justice system or admission to a graduate program in psychology.

University and College Requirements

In addition to the requirements for the forensic psychology track, which are listed below, be sure to complete all other university and college requirements, including the foreign language requirement.

If you are planning to start college-level foreign language with a course beyond 111, you are advised to begin foreign language in your first year. If you are starting foreign language with 111, begin language courses no later than the junior year.

Required Courses in Psychology

PSY 101 General Psychology (5)

PSY 221 Statistics for Behavioral Sci (5)

PSY 226 Research Methods (4)

PSY 321 Advanced Statistics (5)

Biological—at least one of the following:

PSY 201 Sensation & Perception (4)

PSY 203 Learning (4)

PSY 312 Physiological Psychology (4)

PSY 314 Comparative Psych (5)

PSY 327 Human Psychophysiology (4)

PSY 380 Psy of Health & Illness (4)

Cognitive—at least one of the following:

PSY 304 Learning & Cog Proc (4)

PSY 305 Human Memory (4)

PSY 307 Psycholinguistics (4)

PSY 308 Human Judgment (4)

Developmental—at least two of the following:

PSY 273 Child & Adolescent (4)

PSY 315 Behavior Genetics (5)

PSY 374 Adulthood & Aging (4)

PSY 376 Disorders of Childhood (4)

PSY 378 Psychology of Gender (4)

PSY 470 Prenatal Infl on Dev (4)

Clinical—at least two of the following:

PSY 233 Psych of Personality (4)

PSY 332 Abnormal Psych (4)

PSY 341 Tests & Measurements (4)

PSY 351 Intro to Clin & Couns Psych (4)

PSY 430 Psychoactive Drugs (4)

Social/Organizational—at least two of the following:

PSY 261 Industrial and Org (4)

PSY 310 Motivation (4)

PSY 336 Social Psychology (4)

PSY 337 Social Psych of Justice (4)

PSY 361 Adv Org Psychology (4)

PSY 362 Personnel Psychology (4)

Note: Courses in **bold** are required for the school psychology track and courses in *italics* are recommended.

Extra-Departmental Required Courses

Psychology majors in the forensic track must complete three courses in ONE of the following natural science areas: Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Environmental and Plant Biology, Geography, Geology, or Physics.

Courses that fulfill this requirement are listed under the Natural Sciences Area Requirement in the College of Arts and Sciences section of the catalog. The three courses that you choose must have the same departmental prefix, with the following exception: BIOL 101 may be combined with either two Environmental/Plant Biology (PBIO) courses or two Biological Sciences (BIOS) courses.

Psychology majors in the forensic track must complete two courses in either mathematics or computer science. Students may select any two courses in Mathematics (MATH) 113 or above except (251) OR any two courses in Computer Science (CS) 200 or above. You may choose MATH 250, but only if completed BEFORE you take PSY 221.

The following courses are required of students in the forensic track:

SOC 101 Intro to Sociology (4)

SOC 260 Criminal Justice (4)

SOC 261 Deviant Behavior (4)

SOC 362 Criminology (4)

SOC 366 Sociology of Correction (4)

Additional Recommended Courses

ANTH 447

Forensic Anthropology (4)

POL 409

Criminal Procedure (5)

SOC 351

Elementary Research Techniques (4)

SOC 363

Juvenile Delinquency (4)

SOC 364

Police and Society (4)

SOC 464

Law and Social Control (4)

SOC 467

Violence Against Women (4)

SOC 471

Gender and Justice (4)

Note: Be sure to check prerequisites for coursework.

Fieldwork and Research in Psychology

PSY 489 (1-5, 5 max)—Credit for volunteer work in a mental health or health care setting.

PSY 390 (1-5, 15 max)—Credit for participating in research under the supervision of a faculty member.

Students in the forensic track are encouraged to complete the three courses in Biological Sciences or Chemistry