

# Psychology (B.A.) Gerontology Track

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## Potential Career Paths

- Geropsychologist (PhD, PsyD)
- Gerontologist (Associates, BA, Masters, PhD)
- Social and Health Service Assistants (Certificate, Associates)
- Social Worker (MSW)
- Nursing and Home Health Aides (HS diploma, Associates)
- Medical and Health Services Managers (BA, Masters)
- Health Care Professionals (BA, RN)
- Long Term Administrator (BSH)

## Contact Information:

Department of Psychology  
200 Porter Hall  
Athens, OH 45701  
740-593-1707

psychology@ohiou.edu  
www.psych.ohiou.edu/

Assistant Chair for Undergraduate Studies in Psychology:  
Susan Tice-Alicke, PhD  
261 Porter Hall  
Athens, OH  
740-597-2718  
tices@ohiou.edu



## What are Gerontology and Clinical Geropsychology?

Geropsychology is a specialty of psychology that applies clinical and research information to the population of older adults. Geropsychologists address a variety of issues that affect older adults, such as loss of loved ones, relocation, medical conditions, change in employment status, memory, and family relationships.

Career opportunities for students interested in psychology and aging are expanding. The fastest growing segment of the U.S. population is people 65 years of age and older. There is a shortage of geropsychologists and the career opportunities are expected to increase.

A related field, gerontology, is the study of the physical, mental, and sociology of aging. Gerontologists are health care professionals who specialize in working with elderly patients. There are many career opportunities in gerontology. For example, gerontologists may work in human services, government agencies, retirement communities, health care, and nursing homes.

Geropsychology requires a doctoral degree in psychology. For gerontology, many



colleges and universities offer various levels of training (e.g. associates, bachelors, master's, doctorates, and certificates).

The purpose of this program is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of psychology while preparing students for advanced training in gerontology. Undergraduate training in gerontology prepares students seeking entry level positions working with older adults.

## Additional Resources

To learn more about gerontology or geropsychology, here is what you can do.

1 Visit the websites of professional organizations, such as Division 12, Section II (Clinical Geropsychology) or Division 20 (Adult Development and Aging) of the American Psychological Association, [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org), or the Gerontological Society of America, [www.geron.org](http://www.geron.org).

2 Gain experience by completing an internship or volunteering in health or mental health agencies serving older people.

3 Schedule a meeting with a gerontologist or geropsychologist to discuss their profession.

4 Read professional journals, such as *Psychology and Aging*, *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, and *The Gerontologist*.

If you are interested in pursuing a career in gerontology or geropsychology 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 with older people in a mental health setting or for admission to a graduate program specializing in gerontology or geropsychology.

## University and College Requirements

In addition to the requirements for the gerontology 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

<b>PSY 101</b>	<b>General Psychology (5)</b>	PSY 305	Human Memory (4)	PSY 341	Tests & Measurements (4)
<b>PSY 221</b>	<b>Statistics for Behavioral Sciences (5)</b>	PSY 307	Psycholinguistics (4)	<b>PSY 351</b>	<b>Intro to Clin &amp; Couns (4)</b>
<b>PSY 226</b>	<b>Research Methods (4)</b>	PSY 308	Human Judgment (4)	PSY 430	Psychoactive Drugs (4)
Biological—at least one of the following:		Developmental—at least two of the following:		Social/Organizational—at least two of the following:	
PSY 201	Sensation & Perception (4)	PSY 273	Child & Adolescent (4)	PSY 261	Industrial and Org (4)
PSY 203	Learning (4)	PSY 315	Behavior Genetics (5)	PSY 310	Motivation (4)
PSY 312	Physiological Psy (4)	<b>PSY 374</b>	<b>Adulthood &amp; Aging (4)</b>	<i>PSY 336</i>	<i>Social Psychology (4)</i>
PSY 314	Comparative Psych (5)	PSY 376	Disorders of Childhood (4)	PSY 337	Social Psych of Justice (4)
PSY 327	Human Psychophys (4)	<b>PSY 378</b>	<b>Psychology of Gender (4)</b>	PSY 361	Adv Org Psychology (4)
<b>PSY 380</b>	<b>Psy of Health &amp; Illness (4)</b>	Clinical—at least two of the following:		PSY 362	Personnel Psychology (4)
Cognitive—at least one of the following:		<b>PSY 233</b>	<b>Psych of Personality (4)</b>	<b>Note:</b> Courses in <b>bold</b> are required for the gerontology track and courses in <i>italics</i> are recommended.	
<b>PSY 304</b>	<b>Learning &amp; Cog Proc (4)</b>	<b>PSY 332</b>	<b>Abnormal Psych (4)</b>		

## 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.

## Extra-Departmental Required Courses

Psychology majors in the gerontology 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 gerontology 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.

## Requirements for Gerontology Certificate

Students in the gerontology track should complete the requirements for the gerontology certificate. Students must complete at least 28 credit hours from the list of courses below including an approved practicum, field experience, or internship. The practicum/field work/internship may not contribute more than 5 hours to the total 28 hours needed for the certificate.

PESS 421	Aging and Physical Act (4)	HS 491	Special Topics in Gero (1-4)	<i>Practicum/Field Experience Options</i>	
CLWR 482*	Thinking About Death (4)	HSL 300	Disorder of Comm (4)	HCCF 499	Family Studies (12)
HCCF 380	Death and Dying (4)	PSY 374	Adulthood and Aging (4)	HLTH 364	Comm Health (1-5)
HCCF 462F	Family Ties and Aging (4)	SW 381*	Counseling Older Adults (4)	HLTH 464	Comm Health Ser (15)
HCN 260B	Lifespan, Nutrition (1)	SW 440*	Mental Health and SW (4)	HLTH 480	Health Admin (10)
HLTH 225	Long-Term Care Ad I (4)	SW 486*	Aging in Amer Society (4)	HLTH 480B	Long Term Care Ad (15)
HLTH 290	Hlth Aspects of Aging (4)	Other courses may be substituted with prior approval of program coordinator.		HLTH 481	Health Admin (15)
HLTH 325	Long-Term Care Ad II (4)	* Courses that meet A&S area requirements.		HLTH 482	Long Term Care Ad (15)
HLTH 405	Long-Term Care Ad III (4)				
HLTH 406	Alt Long Term Care (4)				