

Psychology (B.A.) Health Psychology Track

This document has been created for advising purposes only. Please contact the department for major and/or graduation requirements.

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Potential Career Paths

- Health Psychologist (PhD)
- Health Promotion Specialist (MA, MPH)

Potential Graduate Programs

- Health Psychology
- Clinical Psychology (Health Concentration)
- Experimental Psychology (Health Concentration)
- Public Health
- Health Administration
- Occupational Health
- Health Communication

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What is Health Psychology?

Contemporary research in the areas of psychology, medicine, and physiology has led to a new way of thinking about health and illness. This conceptualization, termed the *Biopsychosocial Model*, views health and illness as the product of a combination of factors including biological characteristics (e.g., genetic predisposition), behavioral factors (e.g., lifestyle, stress, health beliefs), and social conditions (e.g., cultural influences, family relationships, social support).

Psychologists who conduct research or clinical work to understand how biological, behavioral, and social factors influence health and illness are called health psychologists. The term “health psychology” is often interchanged with the terms “behavioral medicine” or “medical psychology”.

Some modern *health psychologists* work or consult with a variety of social or health care professionals (e.g., physicians, dentists, nurses, physician’s assistants, dietitians, social workers, psychiatrists, pharmacists, physical and occupational therapists) to conduct research and provide clinical assessment and treatment services.

Many health psychologists work in academic or medical school settings. While more than half of health psychologists provide clinical



services as part of their duties, many health psychologists function primarily or exclusively in non-clinical roles involving teaching and research. Once a student completes his or her bachelor’s degree, the student may apply to a graduate program in health psychology or in any number of health-related fields.

The purpose of this program is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of psychology while preparing students for advanced training that is required to practice as a health psychologist or health promotion specialist.

Additional Resources

To learn more about health psychology, here is what you can do.

1 Visit the website of Division 38 of the American Psychological Association (www.health-psych.org) or the website of the Society of Behavioral Medicine (www.sbm.org).

2 Volunteer as a research assistant in a health psychology laboratory.

3 Volunteer in hospitals or other health settings.

4 Schedule a meeting with a health psychologist to discuss the profession.

If you are interested in pursuing a career in health 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 admission to a graduate program in health psychology.

University and College Requirements

In addition to the requirements for the health 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)	Developmental—at least two of the following:	Social/Organizational—at least two of the following:
PSY 221	Statistics for the Beh Sciences (5)	<i>PSY 273</i> <i>Child and Adolescent Psychology (4)</i>	PSY 261 Industrial and Organizational (4)
PSY 226	Research Methods (4)	PSY 315 Behavior Genetics (5)	PSY 310 Motivation (4)
Biological—at least one of the following:		<i>PSY 374</i> <i>Adulthood and Aging (4)</i>	PSY 336 Social Psychology (4)
PSY 201 Sensation and Perception (4)		PSY 376 Psych Disorders of Childhood (4)	PSY 337 Social Psychology of Justice (4)
PSY 203 Learning (4)		PSY 378 Psychology of Gender (4)	PSY 361 Adv Organizational Psychology (4)
PSY 312 Physiological Psychology (4)		PSY 470 Prenatal Influences on Development (4)	PSY 362 Personnel Psychology
PSY 314 Comparative Psychology (5)		Clinical—at least two of the following:	Note: Courses in bold are required and courses in <i>italics</i> are recommended.
PSY 327 Human Psychophysiology (4)		PSY 233 Psychology of Personality (4)	
PSY 380 Psychology of Health and Illness (4)		<i>PSY 332</i> <i>Abnormal Psychology (4)</i>	
Cognitive—at least one of the following:		PSY 341 Tests and Measurements (4)	
<i>PSY 304</i> <i>Learning and Cog Processes (4)</i>		<i>PSY 351</i> <i>Intro to Clinical and Counseling (4)</i>	
PSY 305 Human Memory		PSY 430 Psychoactive Drugs (4)	
PSY 307 Psycholinguistics			
PSY 308 Human Judgment and Decision Making			

Fieldwork and Research in Psychology

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

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

Extracurricular Requirements—Sciences & Mathematics

BIOS 170, 171 Introduction to Zoology (10)

BIOS 301A, B Human Anatomy (10)

BIOS 325 Genetics (5)

BIOS 345, 346 Human Physiology (7)

At least two of the following are required:

MATH 113 Algebra (5)

MATH 147 Game Theory (4)

MATH 150 Finite Mathematics (4)

MATH 163A, B Intro to Calculus (7)

MATH 263A, B Calculus (8)

Extra-Curricular Requirements—Social Sciences & Humanities

PHIL 130 Introduction to Ethics (4)

Additional Recommended Courses

ANTH 201 Intro to Biological Anthropology (5)

BIOS 413 Human Neuroscience (4)

SOC 101 Intro to Sociology (4)

SW 102 Intro to Social Work (4)

HLTH 230 Medical Terminology (2)

PHYS 201 Intro to Physics (5)

Additional Coursework

Students should consider completing additional relevant coursework to develop excellent written (department of English) and oral (school of communication) communication skills. Your advisor will be able to suggest courses to you.