

Psychology (B.A.)

Pre-Law 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

- Lawyer (JD)
- Non-profit Advocacy (JD)
- Lobbyist (typically JD)

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What is Psychology Pre-Law?

The purpose of the psychology pre-law track is to provide students with a comprehensive background in psychology while insuring that students who want to become lawyers complete the recommended coursework for law school.

Psychology is a natural major for someone interested in a career in law. There are many reasons for this. First, lawyers must interact with people of various kinds, including clients, judges, jurors, and other lawyers. Second, lawyers are often expected to deal with cases that rely on complex scientific evidence. It is to a lawyer's benefit to have a strong understanding of research methodology and statistics, which are both fundamental to the field of psychology. Third, lawyers often find themselves interacting with the social service system, including psychologists, social workers, and so on. An understanding of these professions should be helpful to a lawyer.

Unlike medical school, for example, there are no specific required courses for law school. Instead, the *Pre-Law Committee of the American Bar Association Section of Legal Education and Admissions* to the Bar recommends that students complete coursework that they find interesting and that helps them to develop certain critical skills. The psychology pre-law



concentration has been developed with these recommendations in mind.

Typically, a Pre-law student begins their application for law school during fall of their last year of undergrad. Nationally, the average GPA of a student entering law school is 3.2, and only original grades (not retaken grades) are considered in the GPA calculation. Once admitted, law school typically lasts three years.

To practice law, a lawyer must complete a law degree from an accredited law school, pass a national licensing exam and complete the licensing requirements of the state in which the lawyer wishes to practice.

Additional Resources

To become more involved in pre-law or learn about the legal profession, here is what you can do.

1

Visit the website of the American Bar Association to learn more about law school and legal careers (www.abanet.org). Also visit the Law School Admission Council regarding the law school admissions process (www.lsac.org).

2

Volunteer in criminal justice or other legal settings.

3

Schedule a meeting with a lawyer to discuss the legal profession.

If you wish to pursue a legal career be sure to work with an advisor to develop an academic plan that is tailored to your interests. Your plan should lead to the acquisition of basic knowledge and the development of core skills required for law school.

University and College Requirements

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

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

Fieldwork and Research in Psychology

PSY 489 (1-5, 5 max)—Credit for volunteer work in a mental health or healthcare setting. Volunteer hours are expected for application to many law schools.

PSY 390 (1-5, 15 max)—Credit for participating in research.

Oral Communication/Listening Abilities

At least two of the following are required:

COMS 103	Public Speaking (4)
COMS 214	Argumentative Analysis (4)
COMS 315	Advanced Argument (4)
COMS 351	Courtroom Rhetoric (4)
COMS 352	Political Rhetoric (4)
COMS 353	Contemporary Rhetoric (4)
COMS 442	Responsibilities of Speech (4)

Analytical/Mathematical/Financial

Math—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)

The following courses are required:

ACCT 101, 102	Managerial Accounting (8)
PHIL 120	Principles of Reasoning (4)

The following courses are recommended:

ACCT 217	Introduction to Taxation (4)
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Human Behavior

At least three of the following are required:

SW 384	Social Welfare Law (4)
SOC 101	Introduction to Sociology (4)
SOC 201	Contemporary Social Problems (4)
SOC 260	Criminal Justice (4)
SOC 261	Deviant Behavior (4)
SOC 362	Criminology (4)
SOC 363	Juvenile Delinquency (4)
SOC 429	Sociology of Courts (4)
SOC 464	Law and Social Control (4)
SOC 471	Gender and Justice (4)

History

At least three of the following are required:

HIST 212	History of U.S. 1828– 1900 (4)
HIST 213	History of U.S. since 1900 (4)
HIST 306	U.S. Environmental Hist (4)
HIST 307	Famous Trials(4)
HIST 309A, B	American Constitutional Hist (8)
HIST 310A-C	20th Century America

Political Thought

At least three of the following are required:

POLS 101	American National Government (4)
POLS 230	Comparative Politics (4)
POLS 250	International Relations (4)
POLS 301	Politics of Law (4)
POLS 401, 402	American Constitutional Law (4)
POLS 403	Civil Liberties (4)
POLS 409	Criminal Proceedings (4)
POLS 410	Public Policy Analysis (4)
POLS 413	Administrative Law (4)
POLS 420	Women, Law, and Politics (4)
POLS 425	Envir & Nat Resources Politics (4)
POLS 455	International Law (4)
POLS 477	Legal Theory & Social Problems (4)
POLS 488	Public Dispute Resolution (4)