Career Orientation OverLay:
COOL for EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

The COOL for Experimental Psychology emphasizes specific coursework for psychology majors who wish to study the science of normal human behavior, and the academic or scientific, rather than the applied, aspects of psychology. Advanced degree programs offered in psychology departments around the nation include experimental, developmental, social/personality, quantitative, cognitive/learning and others. (See the handout entitled Applying to Graduate School: Areas of Specialization in Psychology, available in the Advising Center).

Experimental psychologists carry out research on basic areas of psychology (e.g., learning, memory, cognition, perception and language). Most experimental psychologists work in academic settings, but some experimental psychologists work in industrial or federal research laboratories on applied problems. (See also the COOL for Behavioral Neuroscience)

Developmental psychologists study how we develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally over the lifespan. Some developmental psychologists focus on just one period of life (e.g., childhood or aging). Developmental psychologists usually do research and teach in academic settings, but many act as consultants to daycare centers, social service agencies, etc.

Social psychologists study how our beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are affected by other persons. Some topics of interest are attitude formation and change, aggression, prejudice, interpersonal attraction, and social influence. Most social psychologists work in academic settings, but some work in federal agencies, businesses and health care settings doing applied research. (See also the Cool for Industrial Psychology and Business).

The focus of Experimental Psychology programs is on training individuals to carry out research and to teach in their specialty area. When you apply to graduate school, in most cases you will be applying for a program in a specialized area of psychology, rather than for a general psychology degree. For example, you would apply to a developmental program, a cognitive psychology program, etc. Most of the admission requirements to these programs will involve a general background in psychology, although having a solid background in your specialty area will definitely be an asset.

Your successful application to graduate school will depend on at least four things: (a) good grades, particularly in your psychology classes during your junior and senior years (3.0 overall is a minimum at many schools); (b) your letters of reference; (c) your research experience; and (d) your test scores such as the GRE (minimum requirements can vary from 500 to 650 on each of the Verbal and Quantitative portions of the exam). Note that an especially good way to get involved in research and to get to know professors who can write you letters of reference is to volunteer as a research assistant. This research experience can be taken for Psych 497 (Independent Study) course

credit. For more information about increasing your chances of being accepted into graduate school, talk to your advisor and instructors, and consult the handout entitled APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL: STRATEGIES AND TIME-LINE which is available in the Self-Advising Center in the Psychology Department.

Departmental Requirements

The Department of Psychology requires at least 30 credits in psychology, which must include Psych 111 (Introduction to Psychology), Psych 350 (Research Methods I), and Psych 351 (Research Methods II). In addition, the department requires successful completion of an elementary statistics course (Stat 330), Computer Science 147 or equivalent; and 15 credits of courses in psychology at the 400 level. See ADegree Programs for Majors in Psychology@ located in the advising center for specific information regarding psychology requirements for 400 level courses. All of these courses are recommended to acquire a strong background in Psychology; however, this COOL suggests that you choose one of two options.

<u>Option 1:</u>
<u>Cognitive/Sensation-Perception/Learning/Experimental/Cognitive Development</u>

Take all of the following:

Psych	213	- Developmental Psychology
Psych	440	- Experimental Methods
Psych	460	- Sensation and Perception
Psych	461	- Memory and Cognition
Psych	463	- Experimental Developmental Psychology
Psych	465	- Psychobiology
Psych	468	- Personality
Psych	480	- History and Systems
Psych	497	- Independent Study
Stat	331	- Regression

Take at least five of the following:

Psych	472	- Advanced Psychopathology
Psych	486	- Neuropsychology
Psych	471	- Psychology of Aging
Psych	499	- Honor=s Thesis
Philo	481	- Philosophy of Science
Philo	311	- Introduction to Logic
Bio	150	- General Biology
Bio	115	- Human Biology
Chem	150	- Principles of Chemistry I
Chem	160	- Principles of Chemistry I (Laboratory)
Phys	118	- Fundamentals of Physics
Zool	120	- Human Anatomy and Physiology
Zool	121	- Human Anatomy and Physiology (Laboratory)
CS	150	- Programming in Basic
CS	214	- Self-paced C (Programming Language)
CS	426	- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence

Math 103 - College Algebra
Stat 461 - Applied Regression Models
Stat 463 - Nonparametric Statistics

<u>Option 2: Social Psychology/Social Developmental</u>

Take all of the following:

Psych 213 - Developmental Psychology
Psych 214 - Social Interaction
Psych 440 - Experimental Methods
Psych 461 - Memory and Cognition
Psych 468 - Personality
Psych 470 - Experimental Social Psychology
Psych 480 - History and Systems
Psych 497 - Independent Study
Stat 331 - Regression

Take at least eight of the following:

CDFS 330 - Early Childhood Developmental
CDFS 450 - Middle Childhood and Adolescent Development
CDFS 460 - Adult Development and Aging
CDFS 482 - Family Dynamics in Aging
Soc 201 - Social Problems
Soc 412 - Sociology of Sex Roles
Soc 413 - Sociology of Work
Stat 461 - Applied Regression Models
Philo 311 - Introduction to Logic
Philo 481 - Philosophy of Science
Bio 115 - Human Biology
Chem 150 - Principles of Chemistry I
Chem 160 - Principles of Chemistry I (Laboratory)
Zool 120 - Human Anatomy and Physiology
Zool 121 - Human Anatomy and Physiology (Laboratory)
CS 150 - Programming in Basic
CS 214 - Self-paced C (Programming Language)
Math 103 - College Algebra
Psych 463 - Experimental Developmental Psychology
Psych 471 - Psychology of Aging
Psych 499 - Honor Thesis