

## Psychology

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The Bachelor of Arts in psychology program focuses on the scientific study of behavior, cognition, and emotion. Through in-depth exploration of psychological theory and research—including hands-on learning in research laboratories, internships, and community-based projects—students gain understanding of the complexities of psychological phenomena. The psychology department helps students develop and appreciate the importance of critical thinking combined with empirical evidence in understanding human and animal nature. The department offers learning experiences that enrich students' understanding of functioning from behavioral, biological, cognitive, developmental, humanistic, organizational, psychodynamic, social, and sociocultural perspectives.

### Requirements for the Major

Requirements for the major: 12 course units

All students must take four Core courses in sequence, three Foundation courses, three Specialized courses, one Psychology Option, and one Senior Experience course. It is permissible to take more than this minimum. Psychology majors may choose a specialization; each specialization requires one or two Foundation courses in addition to other course requirements. For students who select a specialization within the major, specialized courses and a Senior Experience course are chosen from options relevant to the area of interest or specialization. A student may opt not to have a specialization. Please see the [Psychology Department web page](#) for more detail, including specialization-specific requirements.

<b>Specialization</b>	<b>Required Foundation Course(s)</b>
<i>Biopsychology</i>	PSY 212/Biopsychology PSY 214/Cognitive Psychology <i>or</i> PSY 213/Learning and Memory
<i>Cognitive Psychology</i>	PSY 214/Cognitive Psychology PSY 213/Learning and Memory
<i>Counseling and Clinical Psychology</i>	PSY 216/Personality Theory and Research PSY 217/Abnormal Psychology
<i>Developmental Psychology</i>	PSY 220/Development across the Lifespan
<i>Industrial/Organizational Psychology</i>	PSY 267/Organizational Psychology
<i>Social Psychology</i>	PSY 215/Social Psychology

### **A. Core Courses:** (Four required courses taken in sequence.)

PSY 101/General Psychology

PSY 121/Methods and Tools of Psychology

PSY 203/Design and Statistical Analysis

PSY 299/Research Seminar (recommended to be taken in specialization, if applicable.)

**B. Foundation Courses:** (Choose at least three)

- PSY 212/Biopsychology
- PSY 213/Learning and Memory
- PSY 214/Cognitive Psychology
- PSY 215/Social Psychology
- PSY 216/Personality Theory and Research
- PSY 217/Abnormal Psychology
- PSY 220/Development across the Lifespan
- PSY 267/Organizational Psychology

**C. Specialized Courses:** (Select at least three 300-level courses from options relevant to one's area of specialization, if applicable.)

**D. Psychology Option:** (Select one additional course at the 200-level or above; 300-level or above is encouraged.)

**E. Senior Experience:** (Select at least one 400-level course.)

**Regulations and Other Requirements****Experiential Learning Opportunities in Psychology (ELOPsy)**

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of the undergraduate psychology program at TCNJ. We assert that learning through direct experience is one of the most powerful and transformative learning strategies. The Experiential Learning Opportunities in Psychology (ELOPsy) at TCNJ encourage direct student involvement in and exploration of psychological theory, research, and application. Such experiences are designed to target integrative learning objectives. Experiential Learning Opportunities in Psychology include:

- PSY 390, 492/Collaborative Research Course and Senior Collaborative Research Course
- PSY 391/Independent Study in Psychology
- PSY 393, 493/Independent Research in Psychology and Senior Independent Research in Psychology
- PSY 396, 496/Senior Honors Thesis in Psychology I and II
- PSY 397/Instructional Internship in Psychology
- PSY 399, 499/Internship in Psychology and Senior Internship in Psychology

Students may take ELOPsy courses multiple times (with the exception of PSY 396, 496, which may be taken once only, and 397, which may be taken twice only). A maximum of one 300-level ELOPsy course may be counted as a Specialized course in the psychology major and minor; one 300- or 400-level ELOPsy course may be counted as the Psychology Option in the psychology major; one 400-level ELOPsy course may be counted as the Senior Experience course in the psychology major (see specific psychology specialization requirements). Some ELOPsy courses may be taken for variable credit (PSY 397, 399/499, and 391/393). All other ELOPsy courses are one unit courses. Prerequisites and requirements for the ELOPsy courses vary. See the [Psychology Department website](#) for further information about these special opportunities.

**Psychology Major with Education as Dual Major**

See advisors in Education and Psychology Departments. All psychology major requirements and regulations apply.

ECE 201/Infant through Adolescent Development for Early Childhood, ELE 201/Child and Adolescent Development, SPE 203/The Psychological Development of Children and Adolescents, or NUR 110/Development of Unitary Man and Environment Across the Life Span may count as PSY 220, a Foundation course. However, a student cannot count BOTH PSY 220 and the equivalent (ECE 201, ELE 201, SPE 203 or NUR 110) in the psychology major.

**Departmental Honors in Psychology**

To receive Honors in Psychology, a student must complete both Honors Thesis courses (PSY396 and PSY496) with grades of B+ or higher. (Grades between B and C- in PSY396 and/or PSY496 can still satisfy major requirements, but would not result in the conferral of departmental Honors.) These two courses, PSY396 and PSY496, are taken consecutively across two semesters. PSY396 may count as a specialized course within the major or as a psychology option (refer to major requirements for more detail). PSY496 satisfies the senior experience requirement for the major. Completing the Honors Thesis involves the execution of the proposed project, an oral presentation of the results, and a defense meeting with the thesis committee. All documents and detailed procedures pertaining to the Honors Thesis process are available on the Psychology Department website.

**To be eligible to begin an Honors Thesis, a student must:**

- Have earned a GPA of 3.3 or higher in all Psychology courses
- Received a grade of B or higher in PSY 299
- Have Junior standing or higher

**To obtain approval for their project, a student must:**

- Obtain sponsorship from a full-time member of the Psychology Department faculty
- Create a thesis committee comprising the faculty sponsor and two additional members.
- With input from the faculty sponsor, complete the standardized Honors Thesis application document (PSY396) on the Psychology Department website, which involves a description of the proposed project, reporting preliminary references, and articulating learning objectives.
- Receive approval of the Honors Thesis Proposal (PSY396) from the Psychology Department's Independent Study Committee

**To complete the project and receive the designation of Psychology Honors, a student must:**

- Consult with their committee and share progress on the project at the end of the PSY396 semester
- With input from the faculty sponsor, complete the standardized Honors Thesis application document (PSY496) on the Psychology Department website, which involves a description of the process by which the project will be completed such as identifying

sources of information, securing approvals for data collection, and articulating learning objectives.

- Receive approval of the Honors Thesis Proposal (PSY496) from the Psychology Department's Independent Study Committee
- Complete an APA style, minimum 20 page length paper
- Complete an oral presentation of their project as well as a defense meeting with the thesis committee
- Earn minimum grades of B+ in both PSY396 and PSY496
- Submit a copy of the final paper (with thesis committee and faculty sponsor feedback incorporated) for department archives

Students earning Psychology Honors will be recognized at the Psychology Department graduation ceremony.

### **Program Entrance, Retention, and Exit Standards**

Every major program at the College has set standards for allowing students to remain in that program, to transfer within the College from one program to another, and to graduate from a program. The following are the standards for psychology programs with minimum grades noted in parentheses:

- **Retention Standards**

1. In accordance with TCNJ policy, students must achieve a minimum Psychology GPA of 2.0 in order to graduate with a Psychology major.
2. As the Department's designated performance standard, students must achieve a minimum grade of C+ in PSY 101 and 121.
3. Students must achieve a minimum grade of C- in all other Psychology courses that count towards the major.

- Repeating Courses

TCNJ policy on repeating courses states that "A student may repeat any course once. If a student desires to take a course more than twice, permission must be obtained from the chair of the department in which the student is majoring and the chair of the department offering the course." However, it is the Psychology Department's policy that the Chair will not offer permission for a student to take a course more than twice.

For PSY 101, 121, 203, and 299: If a student does not achieve the minimum grade requirement after two attempts at the same course (e.g., two grades of less than C- in PSY 203), the student is dismissed from and no longer eligible to pursue the major.

For all foundation courses (200-level courses other than 203 and 299): The department implements a "three strikes" policy for these courses. Upon the third instance of a grade less than C- in the foundation courses (e.g., less than C- two times in PSY 216 and one time in PSY 217; less than C- in three different foundation courses), that student is

dismissed from and no longer eligible to pursue the major. Strikes cannot be erased by repeating a course and then achieving the minimum grade; the grade for the student's earlier attempt at the course is included in the strikes tally. The minimum grade policy only applies to courses the student plans to apply to the psychology major; thus, a student may count a foundation course with a grade less than C- towards a free elective (although it would still count as a strike).

- Withdrawing from Courses

TCNJ policy on course withdrawal states that "When a student withdraws from a course, that enrollment falls under the course repeat policy. A student may repeat any course only once without permission, regardless of whether a grade or a W was earned." However, with the exception of PSY 101, 121, 203, and 299 (see below), the Psychology Department does not count a course withdrawal as an attempt at that course. Psychology majors wishing to take a Psychology course for a third time due to one previous withdrawal from that course may request permission to take the course from the Department Chair or Associate Chair.

For PSY 101, 121, 203, and 299: If a student withdraws twice from the same course, that student is dismissed from and no longer eligible to pursue the major. For example, if a student withdraws from 203 one semester and then withdraws from 203 another semester, that student is dismissed from and no longer eligible to pursue the major. Medical withdrawals and involuntary withdrawals (e.g., financial withdrawals) are the exceptions to this policy.

- Procedure for Student Notification of Unsatisfactory Grade

If students do not achieve the minimum grade required in PSY 101, 121, 203, 299, or foundation courses, or if they withdraw from PSY 101, 121, 203, or 299, they will receive an advising hold. Students will then receive an email from the department office (with their advisor cc'ed) reminding them of these retention standards policies and notifying them of the advisor hold, which will require them to schedule a meeting with their advisor. Students should meet with their advisors at the beginning of the subsequent semester to review their course history and these retention standards policies.

- Procedure for Appeal:

A student may appeal dismissal from the major, or argue for reinstatement into the major following dismissal, by arranging a meeting with the Psychology Department Chair and filing a formal appeal. The student bears the burden to support his or her appeal, which must be submitted to the Department Chair in writing. In the case of a successful appeal, the Department Chair may grant

permission for the student to take a Psychology course for a third time. If the student believes the Department Chair has not handled the appeal fairly, the student has the right to file a complaint with the Psychology Department Ethics Committee.

- Transfer into the program from another program within the College requires completion of an application process that occurs once each semester. To apply, students must have earned a grade of C+ or higher in PSY 101 and must submit an essay: Please complete a 400-800 word essay describing your past preparation and future plan for success in Psychology. In your description, please make sure to include all of following elements:
  - Describe any past coursework in social sciences, physical sciences, or math/statistics and how these courses have helped you prepare to succeed in psychology.
  - Describe any past non-classroom experiences in any of the sciences (e.g., volunteer work, internship, research experience) and how these experiences have helped you prepare to succeed in psychology.
  - Describe your plan for successfully completing the psychology major, with attention to how you expect to complete all necessary coursework given your current class rank. For example, if you are currently a second-semester junior, you might include plans for taking courses over the summer or taking a fifth year in order to complete the necessary coursework.
  - Discuss why, given your interests and plans, Psychology would be a good major for you.

Please refer to our website for additional details.

- Transfer students who wish to enter The College of New Jersey with a psychology major or double major must meet college transfer admission standards.
- All students (including transfer students) must take at least seven psychology course units at The College of New Jersey.
- Students must earn a C- or better in each course applied to the psychology major (with the exception of PSY 101 and PSY 121 as stipulated above). However, a psychology course for which the grade is D+ or D may be applied toward graduation as a free elective.
- In accordance with College policy, courses may only be repeated **once**.

### Requirements for the Minor

A five-course minor in psychology is available. Requirements for the minor include:

1. Completion of PSY 101 and 121 (grade of C+ or higher in both courses).
2. Completion of three additional courses: one Foundation course and two Specialized courses. Psychology minors should consider taking PSY 121 before taking upper-level psychology courses.
3. All grades C- or better (with the exception of PSY 101 and PSY 121 as stipulated above).

At least one-half of the courses required for the minor must be completed at The College of New Jersey or through previously approved study abroad. One Experiential Learning Opportunity in Psychology (ELOPsy) course may count toward the Psychology minor.

### Recommended course sequence

#### First Year

FSP	First Seminar	1 course unit
PSY	96/Orientation to Psychology	0 course units
PSY	101/General Psychology	1 course unit
PSY	121/Methods and Tools of Psychology ( <i>Prerequisite:</i> PSY 101)	1 course unit
PSY	1-2 Foundation courses	1-2 course unit
WRI	102/Academic Writing (if not exempted)*	1 course unit
	Foreign Language (if not exempted)**	2 course units
	Liberal Learning	1-3 course units

\*It is recommended that students exempted from these courses take other liberal learning courses.

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#### Total for year

**8 course units**

*If a student has earned transfer credit for PSY 101 (or its equivalent) or has earned a score of four or higher on the AP Psychology test, PSY 121 should be selected and an additional foundation course should be taken in the first year.*

#### Sophomore Year

PSY	97/Exploring the Psychology Major	0 course units
PSY	203/Design and Statistical Analysis ( <i>Prerequisite:</i> PSY 121)	1 course unit
PSY	299/Research Seminar ( <i>Prerequisite:</i> PSY 203)	1 course unit
PSY	Foundation courses	1-2 course units
PSY	Specialized course	1 course unit
	Foreign Language (as needed)	1 course unit
	Liberal Learning courses	2-4 course units

#### Total for year

**8 course units**

*Psychology majors may choose an optional primary specialization in sophomore year by completing a Specialization Choice Sheet (available on the psychology department website) in consultation with their psychology advisors and submitting it to the psychology department main office. PSY 299 (Research Seminar) is recommended to be taken in the chosen specialization.*

#### Junior Year

PSY	98/Exploring the Psychology Profession	0 course units
PSY	Specialized courses	1-2 course units
PSY	Psychology Option (any 200- or 300-level psychology course)	1 course unit
	Liberal Learning courses	1-2 course units
	Electives (may include additional PSY courses)	3-4 course units

#### Total for year

**8 course units**

#### Senior Year

PSY	99/Psychology Professional Seminar	0 course units
PSY	Choose one Specialized course	1 course unit
PSY	Senior Experience course	1 course unit

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Liberal Learning courses  
Electives

1-2 course units  
4-5 course units

**Total for year**

**8 course units**