

# **Community College of Philadelphia**

## **Proposal for Associate in Arts in Psychology**

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## **I. Abstract**

The department of Psychology, Education, and Human Services at Community College of Philadelphia is proposing a new Associate of Arts curriculum in Psychology for students interested in majoring in psychology and in transferring to a Psychology program at a four-year college. This curriculum is designed to give students a broad-based and coherent background in psychology and related disciplines needed to major in the field.

Currently students can 'create' their own psychology program by enrolling in the Liberal Arts: Social and Behavioral Science Option, however students would need to know or be advised to select appropriate courses for transfer. Creation of this new curriculum will make that path transparent to students. Also, it will allow students with a strong interest in psychology to obtain a specific degree in that discipline rather than the more general social-behavioral sciences category.

## **II. Opportunities and Problems Addressed by the Proposed Program.**

The Psychology faculty have gathered both formal and informal data on student interest in a psychology major at Community College of Philadelphia. In Spring 2009, the department completed a survey of 150 students in two hundred level psychology classes and found that 88.7% planned to attend a four-year college and 56.8% of them were interested in majoring in psychology. In Spring, 2008, the faculty examined the data forms of all students enrolled in Liberal Arts- Social/Behavioral Science Option curriculum during fall 2007 semester to see how many students might be possible psychology majors. Faculty classified those students who had taken two or more psychology courses to be possible majors. Out of a total of 250 students in the curriculum, 81 students fit the criterion as possible majors. Since many of the students in that curriculum were only in their first or second semester at the College and had not yet had the opportunity to take additional psychology courses, the number of possible majors could be considerably higher.

There is also significant informal evidence of student interest in a psychology program. Many students in psychology courses have expressed to faculty an interest in majoring in psychology. Each semester faculty from the Counseling Center as well as the coordinator of the BHHS program have referred students interested in majoring in psychology to the department chair.

Currently, most students who are interested in Psychology take the Liberal Arts- Social/Behavioral Science Option because that curriculum most closely fits their needs. There are, however, several problems with this curriculum for a psychology major. First, since it is a broad curriculum for students interested in the social sciences, it does not give the potential psychology major enough direction. The student can easily end up taking courses that are unnecessary or are a poor match with transfer requirements. Many students, for example, fail to take important classes, such as statistics, which are required by baccalaureate programs in psychology.

A second problem is that there is no practical way to identify psychology majors. This makes mentoring and advising these students challenging. A psychology curriculum will make it possible to identify psychology majors, so that they can be advised and mentored by full-time psychology faculty. Research on best practices clearly shows that improved advising leads to higher student satisfaction and better retention and graduation rates.

Besides resolving these problems, creation of a psychology curriculum would allow the development of transfer agreements with psychology departments at other colleges. Transfer agreements would minimize loss of credits that students experience when they transfer and assure that they get junior status at the four-year college. This would allow students to take junior level courses as soon as they transfer and they would not have to repeat courses. These agreements would also encourage CCP students to stay at the College and earn an Associate degree. (see p. 4)

Changes in the College and the department membership in recent years make offering this curriculum more feasible. The addition of new faculty from diverse psychology backgrounds has allowed us to expand our course offerings and will give students a more balanced perspective on psychology. The department has added new courses, such as Psychology 202 - Human Sexuality and Psychology 110- Introduction to Applied Psychology: Principles of Behavior in Everyday Life which gives students critical research experience. Faculty are currently developing a new Adolescent Psychology course and revising several of our other courses to ensure that they are up to date and that the course documentation reflects the rich learning experiences that occur in Psychology courses.

### **III. Expected Program Participants.**

Students planning to transfer to four-year colleges and major in psychology would be the primary student constituency for the program. However, a major in psychology could be an excellent choice for many liberal arts students even if they do not currently plan to go for a four -year degree. The psychology program will be a broad-based curriculum that will offer a sequence of courses starting from one-hundred level and moving to more advanced and specialized two hundred-level courses. The program will focus on developing the students' critical thinking and writing skills as well as exposing them to scientific and quantitative reasoning.

### **IV. Description of Proposed Program**

#### **A. Student Learning Outcomes**

The student learning outcomes listed below are based on American Psychological Association's guidelines for undergraduate degree programs in psychology<sup>1</sup>.

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of psychology's major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends.
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the principles of research design and an ability to apply them.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically, creatively, and when possible, to use the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways psychology is applied in the realms of work, personal life, education and other real-world situations.

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<sup>1</sup> American Psychological Association. (2007) APA guidelines for the undergraduate psychology major. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from [www.apa.org/ed/resources.html](http://www.apa.org/ed/resources.html)

- Demonstrate understanding of the career choices open to psychology students and of how to plan individual career goals.

### **B. Meeting the College Mission.**

The proposed psychology curriculum is very well aligned with the values expressed by the College's Mission Statement. The curriculum will prepare students for transferring to baccalaureate institutions as well as help develop their writing, critical-thinking and scientific-reasoning skills. The study of psychology gives students greater insight into their own strengths, needs, and aspirations and exposes them to the diverse ways in which people think and behave. These are key values expressed in the College's mission.

### **C. Program Transferability.**

The curriculum was discussed with representatives of Temple University, our main transfer partner, who were very positive about the feasibility of the curriculum articulating with their baccalaureate degree. Recently, the curriculum was also sent to additional local colleges and universities with positive results. Holy Family University, LaSalle University and St. Joseph's University all expressed interest in the curriculum as a transferable major into their Psychology programs. The transfer counselor has sent the curriculum document to be reviewed by area baccalaureate colleges. Further, this program has been designed to be consistent with state requirements that public higher education institutions have 60 credits that transfer to other public higher education institutions within the state.

### **D. Enrollment Management.**

Department faculty will meet with counselors and advisors to explain the new curriculum. Psychology department faculty will also explain the new curriculum and its purpose in their classes in order to identify students who would be interested in the program. The faculty will serve as both advisors and mentors to students in the curriculum. Psychology faculty would also work with the faculty in closely related programs such as Behavioral Health/Human Services, and Youth Work, and with related disciplines such as Sociology to properly identify potential students and inform them of the options available to them.

## **V. Internal Program Coherence**

### **Student Experience**

The recommended sequence begins with students taking Introductory Psychology in the first semester along with general education courses such as English 101, math and CIS 103. Psychology 101 should be taken in the first year (preferably in the first semester) so that students get an overview of the field, an introduction to the controversies and theoretical perspectives in the field and to the type of work done by psychologists.

Psychology has a strong relationship with the natural sciences. In fact, psychology since its early roots, has defined itself as natural science (Watson, 1913). Therefore, students need to develop a strong understanding of the scientific method and of basic research techniques. The Program will require two semesters of natural science, with at least one being a laboratory science. Biology is recommended because of the close connections between biology and psychology. Psychology majors are also required to take Psychology 110 --Introduction to Applied Psychology: Principles of Behavior in Everyday Life. This course engages students in hands-on psychological research

and helps them understand how the scientific method is used to explore questions related to human behavior. Students will be required to take a statistics course because it is required in all baccalaureate programs and is essential to understanding how to evaluate the validity of psychological research.

APA guidelines for undergraduate psychology degrees urge undergraduate programs to expose students to a wide variety of sub-fields in psychology. For that reason, students are required to take one class in human development (Psychology 215), one course on Abnormal Psychology (Psychology 205) and have a choice of several psychology electives such as Social Psychology, Child Psychology, Adolescent Psychology, Personality and Human Sexuality.

Psychology majors should also appreciate that psychological perspectives are not the only way of understanding or scientifically studying human behavior. To facilitate this, students also need to be exposed to the related disciplines in the social sciences that most directly complement psychology, such as Sociology and Anthropology. This will give our students a broader perspective and an understanding of how social forces and social structures impact human behavior.

## Curriculum Map Psychology Curriculum

The Psychology curriculum prepares students to achieve the expected student learning outcomes identified in the College catalog. The following table demonstrates how learning activities in specific courses map to these learning outcomes. Since the Psychology curriculum is designed as a transfer program rather than a terminal degree we do not expect students to be at “Mastery level” when they graduate from the program. Students are expected to achieve “mastery level” after they complete their course work at the four-year college.

Key:

I – Introduced

R-Reinforced and opportunity to practice

M-Mastery at exit level

A-Assessment evidence collected

Required Courses	Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes				
	Demonstrate basic understanding of psychology’s major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends.	Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the principles of research design and an ability to apply them.	Demonstrate the ability to think critically and use the scientific method to describe, explain, predict and control mental processes and behavior.	Demonstrate an understanding of the ways psychology is applied in the realms of work, personal life, education and other real-world situations	Demonstrate understanding of the career choices open to psychology students.
Psychology 101	I, A	I, A	I, A	I, A	I, A, M
Psychology 215	R, A		R, A	R, A	R, A
Psychology 110		R, A	R, A	R, A	R, A
Psychology elective	R, A		R, A	R, A	R,A
Psychology 205	R, A		R, A	R, A	R, A

## CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The Psychology degree program is for students planning to transfer to baccalaureate programs in psychology after study at Community College of Philadelphia and for students undecided about their long-term educational goals, but interested in the behavioral sciences. Because transfer institutions require specific courses to be taken prior to entry, it is highly recommended that students consult catalogues of schools to which they might transfer and transfer worksheets available in the Career and Transfer Center, as well as their advisors and mentors, in order to make appropriate selections for their elective courses.

The A.A degree in Psychology is appropriate for students who wish to emphasize behavioral science fields, whether for personal interest or with goal of transfer to major in psychology or in related fields such as cognitive science, counseling, and educational psychology.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this program students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of psychology's major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends.
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the principles of research design and an ability to apply them.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically, creatively, and when possible, to use the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways psychology is applied in the realms of work, personal life, education and other real-world situations.
- Demonstrate understanding of the career choices open to psychology students and of how to plan individual career goals.

## Psychology

Course Number and Name	Prerequisites and Co-requisites	Credits	Gen Ed Req. CCP
<b>FIRST SEMESTER</b>			
ENGL 101—English Composition I		3	ENGL 101
Math 151-Linear Mathematics (or higher)	Math 118 with a C or better or Math 161 placement	3	Mathematics
CIS 103—Applied Computer Technology		3	Tech Comp
PSYC 101-Introduction to Psychology		3	Soc Science
SOC 101-Introduction to Sociology or ANTH 112-Cultural Anthropology		3	
<b>SECOND SEMESTER</b>			
ENGL 102—English Composition II	ENGL 101	3	ENGL 102 & Info Lit
Math 251-Statistics for Science	Math 118 or Math 161 placement	4	
Humanities Elective		3	Humanities
PSYC 110-Introduction to Applied Psychology: Principles of Behavior in Everyday Life		3	
Lab Science: Biology recommended		4	Natural/Lab Science
<b>THIRD SEMESTER</b>			
Humanities Elective		3	
PSYC 205-Psychopathology/Abnormal Psychology	PSYC 101	3	Writing Intensive
Science: Biology recommended		3/4	
General Elective		3	
PSYC 215-Developmental Psychology	PSYC 101	3	Amer/Global Diversity
<b>FOURTH SEMESTER</b>			
Psychology Elective	PSYC 101	3	
General Elective		3	
General Elective		3	
General Elective		3	
General Elective		3	
<b>MINIMUM CREDITS NEEDED TO GRADUATE</b>		<b>62</b>	

### GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Sociology 101 fulfills the College's Interpretive Studies requirement. If a student does not take Sociology 101 than that student needs to fulfill the Interpretive Studies requirement through a Humanities Elective or General Elective. A more detailed explanation of the College's general education requirements appears elsewhere in this catalog and on [www.ccp.edu](http://www.ccp.edu).

For More Information Contact:

The Division of Liberal Studies Room BR-21 , 1700 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130, Telephone (215) 751-8451; or the College Information Center (215) 751 8010.



## **VI. Program Institutional Congruence**

Creating a separate program for psychology will allow faculty to better identify those students interested in psychology. This will increase student engagement by helping students interested in psychology to develop relationships with one another and with psychology faculty.

In contrast, the current Liberal Arts-Social Behavioral Science Option prepares students for transfer to four-year programs in a wide range of social and behavioral sciences. The catalog page for this program reads:

The Social/Behavioral Science Option is appropriate for students who wish to emphasize social science fields, whether for personal interest or with the goal of transfer to major in such subjects as sociology, social work, counseling, psychology, urban studies, political science, geography, anthropology, economics, history, pre-law or related fields.

A minor revision to the Liberal Arts-Social/Behavioral Sciences Option will be written deleting the words counseling and psychology from the catalog description because this proposed curriculum provides a more defined path into those fields.

The new curriculum will be housed in the Department of Psychology, Education and Human Services. It will meet all of the College distribution and General Education requirements.

## **Program Support Structure**

The Library is already well-equipped with psychology texts and reference materials. Psychology faculty will work with the Library Departmental Liaison on an ongoing basis to ensure that psychology journals and other resources are adequate to meet the needs of students in the curriculum.

The Learning Laboratory will be valuable in providing academic support to students in the new curriculum.

The Audio-Visual department has relevant psychology videos on file. Websites and book publishers also provide excellent materials for teaching psychology.

Faculty plan to develop a psychology club where students can participate in co-curricular activities related to psychology.

## **VII Proposed Courses**

There are no new courses currently being proposed for the curriculum. A psychology course on statistics is being considered.

## **VIII. Fiscal Implications**

- A. Estimated Enrollment: A review of student data forms, show 81 students in the Liberal Arts Social/Behavioral Science Option who have taken two or more psychology classes. Based on this, we estimate the curriculum should have about 50 students after the first year and we will grow modestly in subsequent years.

- B. Projected budget: Effect on the college budget will be minimal. This program will use current faculty and current courses.
  
- C. There are no specialized space needs.