

Psychology

Department of Psychology, College of Arts & Sciences



What Is Psychology?

How do we learn, think, and solve problems? Are depression and schizophrenia caused by biochemical imbalances or by stressful experiences? Why do some people act violently? How can we promote psychological health?

Psychology examines human behavior and experience in order to address these and other important questions. Few major areas of study are as broad and extensive as psychology. From the activity of brain cells to the interaction of individuals in groups, from emotions to memories, psychology attempts to understand the behaviors, experiences, and mental activities of humans.

Faculty

Western Illinois University's Department of Psychology has 24 full-time faculty, all with advanced degrees from major universities, thus ensuring that every course is taught by someone who has extensive training in psychology. No courses are taught by graduate students. Psychology faculty also maintain active research programs in their disciplines. Each year, they publish numerous articles and books and present papers at regional, state, national, and international conferences. Their specializations and research interests cover such varied topics as personality, social and cognitive psychology, school and clinical psychology, and neuroscience. Much of this research is carried out with student collaboration.

Scholarships and Awards

The Jim Joyce Scholarship is given automatically to incoming freshman Psychology majors with an ACT score of 26 or above. The Jim Joyce Award honors superior scholarly and professional performance at Western. Two Eric Ward Tutoring Awards are given each year to the best statistics students. The Donald Poindexter Award supports independent research carried out by ethnic minority students, and the Jim Ackil Award supports neuroscience research.

Detailed information on scholarships is available from Western's Scholarship office, (309) 298-2001, or on the web at wiu.edu/Scholarship.

The Major

The Bachelor of Science degree with a major option in psychology requires that all students take introductory psychology, statistics, research methods, and additional courses selected from electives such as developmental, abnormal, physiological, and cognitive psychology. The Bachelor of Science degree with a major option in forensic psychology requires core courses in psychology and law, and enables interested students to take an array of courses from different departments emphasizing human behavior in the civil and criminal justice system.

The Minors

The study of psychology leads to a greater understanding of people; therefore, a Psychology minor is an excellent complement to many majors. The courses required for a minor may be selected from courses that are consistent with your major, interests, and career plans. The department also offers minors in the areas of forensic psychology, neuroscience, aging studies, and psychology of substance abuse.

Honors in Psychology

To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must meet two of the following three criteria: Have an 1160 SAT (24 ACT), have a 3.4/4.0 GPA or higher, or be in the top 15 percent of their graduating class. Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 grade point average on a 4.0 scale based on 12 or more semester hours. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.

In Psychology, in addition to completing other requirements, each Honors student completes a thesis, which can serve as a showpiece of academic ability for graduate school admission and job entry.

Special Opportunities

As a major, you will have the opportunity to earn field experience credit for work in such agencies as community mental health or rehabilitation centers. Majors and minors can also earn credit for participation in HOTLINE, a student-run crisis intervention telephone service.

Besides assisting in research projects, students have opportunities for extensive contact with faculty through individual readings, undergraduate seminars, and departmental committee memberships. Advanced students have opportunities to present their research projects at student-oriented and professional conferences, and to apply for financial assistance in the form of research grants.

Psychology students can join the Psychology Club or its companion organization Psi Chi, the national honor society in psychology. These organizations publish a newsletter; put on social activities; and sponsor educational events such as lectures, field trips, and programs on such topics as careers and graduate school.

After College

Western's graduates are employed in a variety of fields, including social services, residential developmental disability facilities, mental health and substance abuse facilities, management, human resources, marketing, sales, and education. If you plan further study, your psychology degree will prepare you for graduate programs in all branches of psychology. An undergraduate major in psychology also provides valuable preparation for professional schools of medicine and law.

Graduate Programs

The Department of Psychology offers work leading to a Master of Science degree in the areas of clinical/community mental health and general experimental psychology, and a specialist degree in school psychology.

Facilities

The department is housed in Waggoner Hall, which contains teaching, clinical training, and research facilities. Waggoner Hall has observation rooms, small experimental cubicles, an equipment construction shop, animal facilities, and a psychology-training clinic serving adults and children. There are several student lounges and two computer labs available.

For More Information

The Department of Psychology can be contacted by telephone at (309) 298-1593, by e-mail at psychology@wiu.edu, or by fax at (309) 298-2179. Information can be accessed via the Internet at wiu.edu/psychology.

Campus Visits

The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open most weekdays from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. when the University is in session. Group information sessions are available on Mondays and Fridays at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and individual appointments can be made on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Campus tours are conducted at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments with advisors, faculty or a financial aid advisor may be arranged separately during the week. The Admissions Reception Center is open from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. most Saturdays when the University is in session. A group information session is available at 10 a.m., and a campus tour is conducted at 11 a.m. Students may schedule a visit or tour online at wiu.edu/admissions by selecting "Visit Campus." Students may also schedule a visit, tour or individual appointment by calling toll free (877) PICKWIU (742-5948) or (309) 298-3157, or by emailing admissions@wiu.edu.



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Updated June 2018



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