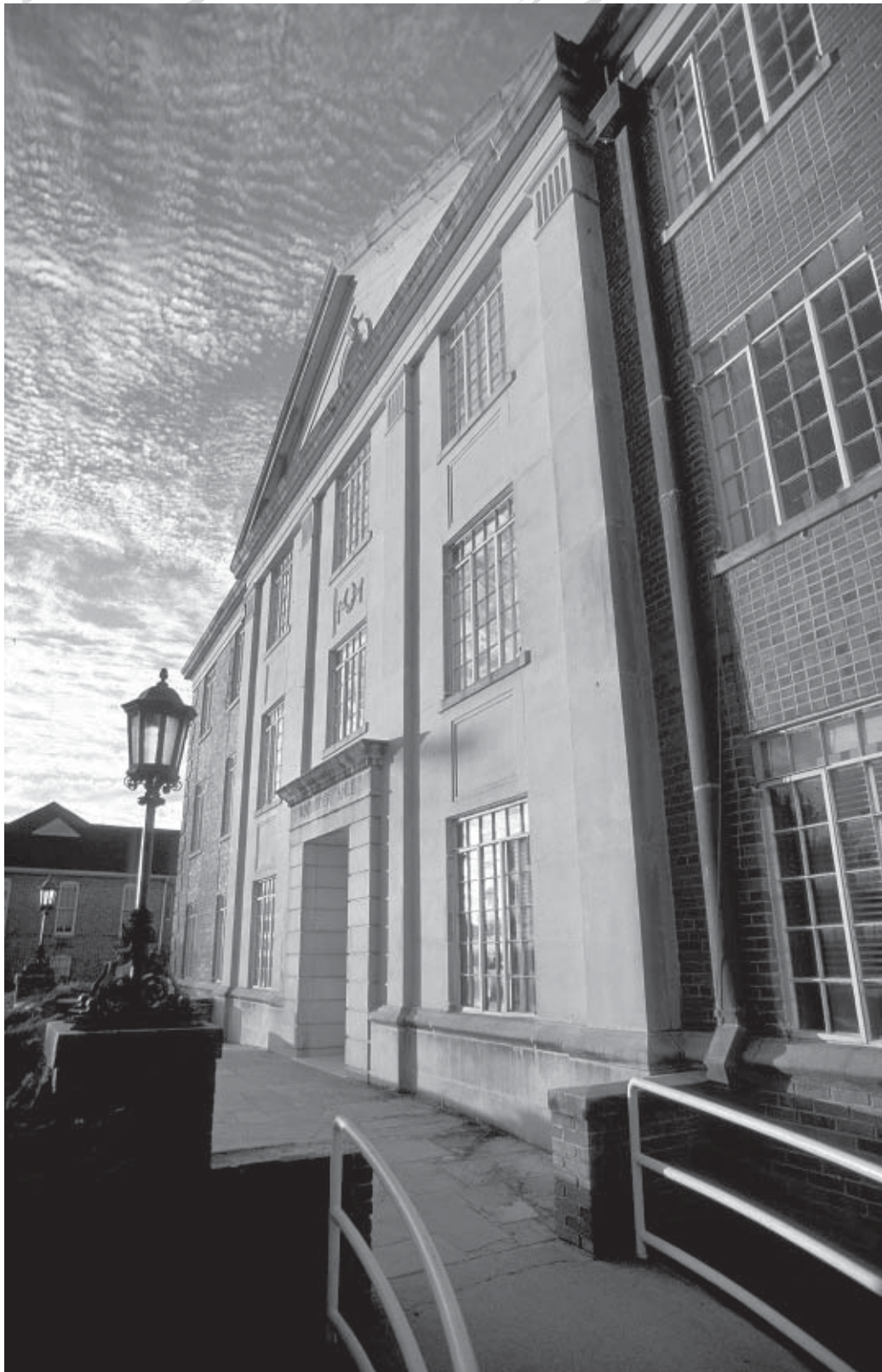


Department
DEPARTMENT
OF
Psychology



**MAGRUDER HALL
HOME OF THE
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
BUILT IN 1939
NAMED FOR
WILLIAM MAGRUDER
1882-1908
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AND
VICE PRESIDENT OF MSU**

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INTRODUCTION

We would like to welcome you to the Department of Psychology at Mississippi State. A variety of students are attracted to the field of psychology. Some major in psychology because they want to be clinical therapists—helping people with problems to find solutions. Others want to do research—observing people or animals in order to gain more information about behavior.

Many students may have chosen psychology without knowing very much about the nature of the field. This is not unusual since most high schools do not offer a psychology course. Therefore, the first opportunity for many students to learn about psychology occurs in an introductory course taken during their freshman or sophomore year in college. One purpose of this catalog is to let you find out as much about psychology as possible before you fully commit yourself to this major. Also, this catalog has been designed to be a guide to general and specific information about the MSU program and to acquaint you with the department and its staff. The catalog is not meant to replace the current university catalog, the ultimate authority on graduation requirements. Please familiarize yourself with the material contained in the catalog.

WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

Psychology has been defined as the science of behavior and mental events. All psychologists study behavior; however, the type of behavior and the purpose for studying that behavior varies from psychologist to psychologist, depending on the area of interest. The following is only a partial list of areas in the field of psychology:

1. CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Clinical psychologists are skilled in the evaluation and treatment of people experiencing emotional or lifestyle-related problems. Clinical psychologists also may perform experiments to test the effectiveness of different treatments. Of course, the clinical psychologists you will meet in the Mississippi State Psychology Department are academicians as well.

2. SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social psychologists are primarily researchers who study the influence that groups or other individuals have on the individual or group being studied.

3. INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Psychologists in this field use scientific techniques to study how work is performed and then use the knowledge gained to make suggestions designed to improve job satisfaction, productivity, and employee morale.

4. EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Experimental psychologists apply the scientific method to the study of mental and behavioral processes in human and other animals and are interested in advancing the knowledge base of psychology.

5. DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Developmental psychologists are interested in behavior changes as a result of aging. Development is a continuous process from birth to death, and its study results in psychologists who specialize in child psychology, adolescent psychology, gerontology (study of aging), and life-span developmental psychology.

6. COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Cognitive psychologists are involved with such things as language, memory, and reasoning. Increasingly, cognitive psychologists also are interested in modeling mental activities with computers.

7. EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Educational psychologists study techniques of instruction and the process of learning.

FACULTY

On the faculty, there are behaviorists, mentalists, physiologists, humanists, and eclectics combining any and all approaches to the study of behavior. This means that most students can find someone with whom they will feel comfortable. There is an informal atmosphere in the department that helps students realize that faculty members always are available to talk about areas of mutual interest and concern.

Within the department, the faculty believes that its primary responsibility to you is to provide exposure to:

- The basic theories and empirical findings in various content areas of psychology (e.g., physiological psychology, social psychology, learning, sensation and perception, abnormal, behavior modification, industrial, etc.).
- Various research methods and statistics as they apply to psychology.
- If you have not fully committed yourself to a major in psychology, you might wish to speak with several different faculty members in order to obtain a variety of views about working in the field.

Stephen Klein—(Ph.D., Rutgers-The State University of New Jersey, 1971). Department head. Interests in biological psychology, learning and memory, and motivation.

Carolyn Adams-Price—(Ph.D., West Virginia University, 1988). Developmental psychology, aging, and gender issues.

Kevin Armstrong—(Ph.D., Illinois Institute of Technology, 1992; licensed clinical psychologist). Clinical and child clinical psychology with an emphasis on the validity of diagnostic constructs, assessment tools, and treatment approaches.

Gary Bradshaw—(Ph.D., Carnegie-Mellon University, 1984). Interests include creativity in science, complex problem-solving, models of intelligence, and decision-making.

Tom Carskadon—(Ph.D., University of Colorado, 1973). Editor/publisher of the *Journal of Psychological Type*. His many interests include the teaching of psychology, claims of “parapsychology,” and personality types and systems, especially the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

Stephanie Doane—(Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1986). Interests in skill acquisition, expertise, computational models of human cognition.

Virginia Fee—(Ph.D., Louisiana State University, 1992; licensed clinical psychologist). Child clinical psychology with interests in developmental disabilities and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder.

Marty Giesen—(Ph.D., Kent State University, 1973). Interests in organizational analysis, social psychology, research methods, multivariate statistics, computer applications, psychophysiology, and biofeedback.

Tracy Henley—(Ph.D., University of Tennessee, 1989). Interests in cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics, and artificial intelligence, and the history of psychology.

Kristine Jacquin—(Ph.D., University of Texas, Austin, 1997; licensed clinical psychologist). Interests in the causes and prevention of violence, neuropsychology, personality disorders, application of psychology to the legal arena, and relationship-enhancement behaviors.

Jason McCarley—(Ph.D., University of Louisville, 1997). Interests in basic and applied aspects of attention, eye movements, and visual cognition.

Nancy McCarley—(Ph.D., Mississippi State University, 1993). Interests in the repressive coping style, teaching of psychology, human sexual behavior, and developmental psychology.

Dave McMillen—(Ph.D., University of Texas, 1968; additional study at University of Michigan, 1978-1980). Social psychology and faculty staff employee development with interest in alcohol and behavior and interpersonal relations.

Duane Miller—(Ph.D., Texas Tech University, 1971). Industrial/organizational psychology with special interests in motivation, work environments, training, consumer behavior, and personnel management.

Al Peyman—(Ph.D., University of Washington, 1951; Professor and Department Head Emeritus). A psychologist with extensive experience in personnel selection, management consulting, administration of mental health programs, treatment of alcoholism, and psychometrics.

Charles Spurrison—(Ph.D., University of Southern Mississippi, 1987; licensed clinical psychologist). Interests in clinical psychology and assessment.

Tracie Stewart—(Ph.D., Purdue University, 1995). Interests include the causes and consequences of stereotyping and prejudice, strategies for improving intergroup relations, social judgment processes, and social cognition.

Mike Thorne—(Ph.D., Louisiana State University, 1969; Professor Emeritus). Executive Editor of the *Journal of Psychological Type*. Teaches, among other things, physiological psychology, undergraduate statistics, and the history of psychology.

Beth Wells-Parker—(Ph.D., Duke University, 1981). Interests in industrial/organizational psychology (personnel and human factors). Extensive experience in alcohol, drugs, and traffic safety issues and research related to alcoholism.

DEGREE PROGRAMS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Mississippi State University offers two undergraduate degree programs in psychology, a bachelor of arts degree and a bachelor of science degree. It is generally agreed that a person with a bachelor's degree in psychology is not a psychologist. He or she is, rather, the possessor of a liberal arts education with a concentration in psychology. Anyone planning a career as a professional psychologist must complete a graduate program. If you intend to go to graduate school immediately after completing your undergraduate degree, you will probably find either the B.S or B.A. program suitable. The B.A. degree provides students with a comprehensive exposure to the major core areas in psychology within a liberal arts education. The B.S. program replaces 12 hours of humanities and 12 hours of social sciences with a six-course theme requirement. The theme can either be a minor or an established concentration like gerontology, artificial intelligence, or women's studies and is intended to show linkages between courses. Whether you choose the B.A. or the B.S. degree, we believe that an arts and sciences education is the best formal education to prepare you for employment versatility and for life.

A bachelor's degree in psychology prepares graduates to pursue:

1. Master's or doctoral study in psychology.
2. Graduate school in related areas such as Guidance, Counseling, Educational Psychology, Rehabilitation, Social Work, Physical Therapy, Criminology, Law School, Medical School, Management, Marketing, etc.
3. Employment in private business or government (e.g., working with persons with mental illnesses or with developmental disabilities, social work, personnel work, quality control jobs, management training, marketing research, sales, etc.).

REQUIREMENTS FOR A B.A. DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY

The Bachelor of Arts degree program in psychology is designed to provide training for advanced study in psychology or related fields. Advanced study is recommended for students who want a career in psychology, and most psychology majors are enrolled in the B.A. program, which requires a total of 128 semester hours.

In addition to the core curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences, candidates for the B.A. degree in psychology must take the following:

PSY 1013 - General Psychology
 PSY 2991 - Career Seminar
 PSY 3103 - Psychological Statistics
 PSY 3213 - Abnormal Psychology
 PSY 3343 - Psychology of Learning
 PSY 3713 - Cognitive Psychology

PSY 4203 - Theories of Personality
 PSY 4313 - Experimental Psychology
 PSY 4323 - History of Psychology
 PSY 4403 - Physiological Psychology
 PSY 4623 - Social Psychology

PSYCHOLOGY MAJORS MUST EARN A "C" OR BETTER IN THE 11 CORE COURSES. A "D" GRADE DOES NOT REPRESENT SUFFICIENT MASTERY OF CORE MATERIAL. IN ADDITION, 15 HOURS OF PSYCHOLOGY ELECTIVES ARE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING:

PSY 3003 - Environmental Psychology
 PSY 3023 - Applied Psychology
 PSY 3073 - Interpersonal Relations
 PSY 3203 - Gender Differences
 PSY 3353 - Motivation
 PSY 3363 - Behavior Modification
 PSY 3413 - Human Sexual Behavior
 PSY 3503 - Health Psychology
 PSY 3803 - Developmental Psychology
 PSY 4000 - Directed Individual Study
 PSY 4103 - Psychometrics
 PSY 4113 - Human Psychophysiology
 PSY 4123 - Computers in Psychology
 PSY 4223 - Drug Use and Abuse

The following is a recommended program for the B.A. degree in psychology. Any changes in the program require the approval of the student's advisor.

FRESHMAN YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
English Comp 3	English Comp II 3
MA 1313 College Algebra 3	3000 level PSY Elective 3
Elem. Foreign Language 4	Elem. Foreign Language 4
Social Science Elective 3	Life Science w/ Lab 3
PSY 1013 General Psychology 3	PSY 2991 Career Seminar 1
Total Credit Hours 16	Total Credit Hours 14

SOPHOMORE YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
Inter. Foreign Language 3	Inter. Foreign Language 3
Physical Science w/Lab 3	Natural Science 3
Fine Arts Elective 3	CS Elective 3
PSY 3713 Cognitive 3	EN Elective 3
PSY 3103 Statistics 3	PSY 3213 or PSY 3623 3
PSY 3343 Learning 3	PSY 3313 Experimental 3
Total Credit Hours 18	Total Credit Hours 18

JUNIOR YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
HI Elective 3	CO 1003 Public Speaking 3
MA or ST Elective 3	Social Science Elective 3
PHI Elective 3	PSY 4203 Personality 3
PSY 3213 or PSY 3623 3	PSY Elective 3
PSY 4403 Physiological 3	General Elective 3
Humanities Elective 3	Total Credit Hours 15
Total Credit Hours 18	

SENIOR YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
Humanities Elective 3	Humanities Elective 3
Social Science Elective 3	Social Science Elective 3
PSY 4323 History of Psy 3	PSY Electives 6
PSY Elective 3	General Electives 3
General Elective 3	Total Credit Hours 15
Total Credit Hours 15	

REQUIREMENTS FOR A B.S. DEGREE IN PSYCHOLOGY

The faculty in psychology feels that a B.S. program should reflect the liberal arts mission of the department. To accomplish this goal, students in the B.S. program complete a six-course theme. The theme approach allows students to create a plan of study to complement their interests, and to encourage them to see the connections between courses.

Students may elect to use a pre-existing minor or concentration as a theme, as long as they adequately describe how the courses in the minor or concentration fit together into a theme that relates to psychology. Students may elect to deviate from existing minors or concentrations and create their own themes with the consent of their advisors. "Creating one's own theme" will not be easy and will require planning in advance.

In either case, a student's theme must be approved by his or her advisor prior to admission into the B.S. program. A student interested in pursuing the B.S. degree also must fulfill the same departmental course requirements as for the B.A. degree. In addition to the theme requirement, the differences between the B.S and the B.A. degree programs in psychology are: the humanities requirement is 6 rather than 18 credit hours, the social science requirement is 6 instead of 18 credit hours, and 136 rather than 128 credit hours are required for a degree.

The following is a recommended program for the B.S. degree in psychology. Any changes in the program require the approval of the student's advisor.

FRESHMAN YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
English Comp 3	English Comp II 3
MA 1313 College Algebra 3	3000 level Psy Elective 3
Elem. Foreign Language 4	Elem. Foreign Language 4
Social Science Elective 3	Life Science w/ Lab 3
PSY 1013 General Psychology 3	PSY 2991 Career Seminar 1
Total Credit Hours 16	Total Credit Hours 14

SOPHOMORE YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
Inter. Foreign Language 3	Inter. Foreign Language 3
Physical Science w/Lab 3	Natural Science 3
Fine Arts Elective 3	CS Elective 3
PSY 3103 Statistics 3	Theme Elective 3
PSY 3343 Learning 3	PSY 3213 or PSY 3623 3
Total Credit Hours 18	PSY 3313 Experimental 3
	Total Credit Hours 18

JUNIOR YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
PSY 3213 or PSY 3623 3	CO 1003 Public Speaking 3
PSY 4403 Physiological 3	PSY 4203 Personality 3
MA or ST Elective 3	PSY Elective 3
General Electives 6	Theme Electives 6
HI Elective 3	General Elective 3
Total Credit Hours 18	Total Credit Hours 18

SENIOR YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
PSY 4323 History of Psy 3	PSY Electives 6
PSY Elective 3	Theme Elective 3
Theme Electives 6	General Electives 6
General Electives 6	EN Elective 3
Total Credit Hours 18	Total Credit Hours 18

EXAMPLES OF THEMES FOR B.S. DEGREES IN PSYCHOLOGY

A. A theme that also is a minor: Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Fits requirements for Computer Science minor.)

Part of current major:

PSY 3343 - Learning

PSY 4403 - Physiological Psychology

PSY 4713 - Language and Thought

Theme-related electives:

CS 1314 - Computer Science I
 CS 2813 - Discrete Structures
 CS 2314 - Computer Science II
 CS 3813 - Introduction to Formal Languages
 CS 4633 - Artificial Intelligence
 CS 4653 - Cognitive Science

Brief explanation of the AI theme: This theme extends the examination of human and machine intelligence that was begun in psychology classes such as Learning, Physiological Psychology, and, especially, Language and Thought. The lower-division courses will introduce the student to the logic of the computer, including categorization and memory. Classes in LISP and Artificial Intelligence will specifically compare the capabilities of smart machines and humans.

B. A theme that is a concentration: Gerontology

Part of current major:

PSY 3803 - Developmental Psychology
 PSY 4993 - Psychology of Aging

Theme-related electives:

HS 4403 - Introduction to Gerontology
 HS 3673 - Environments for Special Needs
 ABE 4513 - Dynamics of Aging
 SW 4623 - Social Work with the Aged
 COE 4713 - Issues in Aging
 SO 4413 - Aging and Retirement in American Society

Brief explanation of Gerontology theme: These courses examine biological, sociological, and psychological aspects of older persons, greatly expanding what is learned in the Psychology of Aging. The courses also introduce students to the multidisciplinary nature of gerontology, stressing the unique problems and attributes of the elderly.

C. A theme that is a certificate: Criminal Justice/Corrections

Part of current major:

PSY 3213 - Psychology of Abnormal Behavior
 PSY 4223 - Drug Use and Abuse

Theme-related electives:

COR 3103 - The Criminal Justice System
 SO 2203 - Racial and Cultural Minorities
 SO 3603 - Criminology
 SO 4233 - Juvenile Delinquency
 SO 4513 - Correctional Systems
 COR 3310 - Field Work
 COR 3320 - Field Work

Brief explanation of the Criminal Justice/Corrections theme: The courses involve the study of crime, crime control, and the administration of justice, including the study of the structure, functions, and decision processes of all administrating components within the system. Criminal Justice and Corrections also are inherently linked to the broader study of crime, delinquency, deviant behavior, and social pathology.

D. A self-defined theme: Child Studies

Part of current major:

PSY 3803 - Developmental Psychology

PSY 4343 - Child Clinical Psychology

Theme-related electives:

HS 2803 - Prenatal and Infant Development

EPY 3543 - Psychology of Adolescence

HS 3203 - Child Health and Nutrition

SW 4613 - Child Welfare Services

SO 1203 - Marriage and Family

Brief explanation of Child Studies theme: These courses are connected in that they all have relevance for child psychology and greatly expand what is learned in developmental psychology. They include separate courses on infancy and adolescence, which are not offered in psychology. The roles and rights of children are emphasized in the sociology and social work courses, and the health of children is emphasized in HS 2803 and 3203. This program will provide the electing student with a much fuller understanding of the nature of childhood from the child's perspective.

INCREASING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF YOUR DEGREE

There are several options available for a student with a liberal arts education with an emphasis on psychology. Once you have chosen an area of interest, you can begin to prepare a career through the planned use of electives. If graduate work in psychology is the option chosen, a broad base of psychology courses is recommended, and you should include as many different areas as possible, e.g., Social, Personality, History, Psychometrics, Physiological, Developmental, Experimental, Learning, etc. If you choose to pursue graduate work in a psychology-related field, it is a good idea for you to take as many courses as possible in that related field.

For some of you, a double major approach may be helpful; that is, you will meet the degree requirements for both psychology and a related area. Some fields that the psychology major readily can enter include: philosophy, social work, sociology, management, criminology, communication, and computer science. The double major has the advantage of leaving the graduate options open at the same time that it increases the attractiveness of your degree to a potential employer. For instance, if you have a double major in psychology and management (depending on your GPA and test scores) you should be equally qualified for work in either area. In short, you may be better able to find a job with both degrees than with one in psychology alone.

Several departments offer courses complementary to the psychology degree. Recommended options to consider include: Communication, Computer Science, Counselor Education, Educational Psychology, Management, Marketing, Philosophy, Social Work, Sociology, Special Education, Statistics, and Zoology.

When choosing electives, you should consult your advisor and the department offering the course in which you are interested to determine prerequisites. This allows you to get a better understanding of the specific nature of the course before registering.

When choosing a future option, it is important to remember that although some jobs are available to persons with a bachelor's degree in psychology, pay often is very low. If you are planning to find employment immediately after graduation, you should be aware that persons with an undergraduate major in psychology often are able to find employment in occupations in which psychology is relevant (sales, personnel, etc.). In fact, in this area of the country, people with a liberal arts education have been quite successful in obtaining good jobs both in private business and in governmental agencies. As mentioned earlier, the judicious choice of electives can help to make your degree more attractive to potential employers.

Anyone intending to have a professional career in psychology should plan to do graduate work. However, it is becoming more difficult to gain admission to psychology graduate programs because of the number of qualified applicants.

OPPORTUNITIES TO BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS

PSI CHI

Psi Chi is the national honor society in psychology. A chapter of Psi Chi was established at Mississippi State in 1991. Admission to Psi Chi is based on high academic achievement, and you will be invited to join if you're qualified. Students in Psi Chi are involved in professional activities related to psychology and are committed to contributing to their discipline in a significant way.

GETTING INTO GRADUATE SCHOOL

You should begin applying to graduate programs by the middle of your junior year. The first step is to check for dates when the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) will be offered over the next year. There are two parts to the GRE: the aptitude (general academic skills) test, which almost all graduate programs require, and the advanced test, which is required by many programs. It is generally considered advisable to take the general test first and to take the advanced test on a subsequent testing date.

Your GRE scores are important determinants of whether or not you will be admitted to graduate school, so you should prepare carefully for the test. Workbooks and computer-based tutorials on how to prepare for such examinations are available in university bookstores and elsewhere. Your second step is to become familiar with *Graduate Studies in Psychology*, published by the APA. This book provides a wealth of information about each of the universities in the U.S. This information includes average GRE scores accepted, GRE scores and GPA required, fees, types of programs available, and whether financial aid is available for incoming graduate students. There is a copy of this book in the Psychology Department office. By comparing GRE scores and GPA required with your scores, you can get some idea of your chances for acceptance at a university for a particular program.

In order to make your application for graduate school as attractive as possible to admission screening committees, you should begin planning well in advance. Obviously good grades are important, and generally speaking, the better your grades the better your chances of being admitted to graduate training. Another factor that may be of value is experience in applied settings. Paid employment or volunteer activity in a mental health setting, mental retardation training facility, laboratory, etc., will usually be seen as evidence that you have more than just book knowledge of the field and are genuinely interested in pursuing further training. Thus, if at all possible, you should look for opportunities to obtain firsthand experience in an applied setting. Also, you should try to get to know and to be known by faculty members, not only to take advantage of the opportunity to profit from the experiences of specialists in fields of psychology, but also to establish relationships that will be valuable when letters of recommendation are required. A very important factor these days is having presented or published research. Typically, this is achieved by finding a faculty mentor and working on his or her research program. Research takes time, so you should start work as a sophomore or junior if you want to have presentable results by graduation. Finally, try to get involved in departmental activities and take full advantage of the opportunities you have in college.

After you have decided on a university, the third step is to write for applications. You should apply to a variety of programs (at least 10 or 12). You should then make sure to register for all required admissions tests (GRE, MAT, etc.).

After application forms and other materials relevant to admission are received, be sure to read all of them carefully! Neatness is important (for clarity) and, if at all possible, type the forms. Most schools require at least the following:

1. Application Form
2. Letters of Recommendation (from professors)
3. Official Transcript
4. GRE Scores

It is your responsibility to make certain all materials reach the college or university.

- First, when asking for a letter of recommendation, you should provide a stamped, addressed envelope and request permission to check back with the professor to make sure the letter has been sent.
- Second, when requesting a transcript, you can ask when the transcript will be sent and check back after that date to make sure that it was sent.
- Third, if the school to which you've applied does not respond within a reasonable amount of time, you should send a self-addressed postcard to the school to ask if all parts of your application have been received. This should be done at least three weeks before the school's application deadline.

CURRENT JOB MARKET IN PSYCHOLOGY

JOBS AVAILABLE

Positions available for graduates within the field of psychology depend upon the degree(s) the person holds. For a person with a bachelor's degree in psychology, psychological technician-type jobs in state hospitals or institutions for persons with developmental disabilities often are available. Starting salaries in this area are typically \$15,000-\$20,000.

A master's degree in psychology increases the number and types of job opportunities. Other than state hospitals or homes for persons with developmental disabilities, a person with a master's degree also may find employment with community mental health facilities, campus counseling centers, governmental agencies (court system, rehabilitation services, etc.), and research institutes. Also, it is possible for a person with an M.S. in psychology to find a teaching position at a community college, although these positions are scarce in the academic community. People filling master's-level positions usually have more responsibility and are more directly involved with therapy or the research area of their choice than those filling bachelor's-level positions. Salaries for these positions range \$20,000-\$30,000 in this area at the time of publication.

A person with a Ph.D. in psychology, generally speaking, has the best opportunities for employment. The doctoral-level psychologist can enter private practice (after meeting licensing requirements), qualify to receive grants for research, teach, seek an administrative position, or function in any position also open to a person with a master's degree. Salaries begin around \$30,000 and increase to more than \$100,000 or more for people in some administrative positions, as well as for industrial psychologists, clinicians, and outstanding researchers.

It should be noted that current employment opportunities are better for people seeking positions in applied areas of psychological (clinical, counseling, industrial, etc.) than for people seeking academic or research positions. More information about the types of jobs available for psychology majors at all levels is presented in *Careers in Psychology* published by the American Psychological Association. Also, at MSU, the Career Services Center (CSC) in Room 316 of the Colvard Union keeps a list of current job opportunities in this part of the country, along with the salaries offered for each. The CSC also maintains a current list of potential employers for psychology graduates at all levels.

Many psychology majors plan to enter the job market immediately following the acquisition of their B.A. or B.S. degree, while others will do graduate work first. Eventually, however, everyone will be looking for a job, and there are some important things you need to know about the process. Of primary importance in any job search is knowing where to look. Some people consult the classified ads of local newspapers and of professional journals and find what they are looking for that way. Most however, are not that fortunate and require professional help to match themselves with a potential employer. For the student at Mississippi State, there are three major sources of available help. First, there is the Career Services Center. The CSC can help with all phases of the job search and provides all of its services free of charge to all students. A second source of help is the state employment agency in the state in which the student wishes to locate a job. Both the CSC and state agencies frequently know of unpublicized job opportunities. The services of state employment agencies also are free. Finally, there are commercial agencies that, for a fee, match people to jobs for which they are qualified. These fees are usually paid by the potential employer, but not always. As the amount of these fees can be quite large, it is in the job seeker's best interest to try other resources first.

Once a potential employer has been located, it is necessary to prepare for contact with the person or organization. **This involves a four-step process:**

1. Filling out application forms and/or writing letters of introduction,
2. The resume,
3. The interview, and
4. Having references sent.

All of these forms of contact have the same purpose—procurement of a job—and all should be taken quite seriously. Failure to meet standards in any one of these areas can cause an otherwise qualified candidate to fail to get the job.

Most jobs applications begin with a cover letter sent with completed application forms. **The CSC recommends that this letter include the following:**

1. State the position you are seeking and how the opening came to your attention,
2. State your qualifications for the position and express interest in the organization to which the application is being made,
3. Refer the reader's attention to the application form(s) and resume enclosed, and
4. Make a definite request for an interview and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for reply.

All of these materials should be neatly typed because it is from this paperwork that the potential employer's first impression of you will be formed.

It also is important that the resume enclosed be completed and accurate. **Every resume should include as many of the following components as are applicable:**

1. Statement of personal objectives,
2. Education (usually college information is sufficient),
3. Professional affiliations,
4. Experience,
5. Honors and activities, and
6. References.

1.

The interview stage is one of the most crucial stages in the job-seeking process, and one at which many people are not successful because they are unaware of good interview strategy. Employers are seeking enthusiastic, courteous, talented, and confident people. Your goal should be to convince the potential employer that you are this kind of person. A good personal appearance does count, as do promptness and maturity. It also helps to make a good impression if you display a sense of humor and if you seek a realistic position and salary level. This does not mean that you should sell yourself short—only that you should be willing to accept the same salary and title that other persons with your level of education and amount of experience are given. One thing that never fails to make a bad impression is evasiveness—the maintenance of good eye contact can prevent the potential employer from thinking that you are trying to evade questions. Also, the job interview is not a good place to express radical views or differences of opinion with previous employers or other authority figures.

2.

References also are an important form of contact with the potential employer. These should be from people who have firsthand knowledge of your qualifications for the position, as well as a high opinion of you as a person. Previous supervisors and/or professors for whom you've worked make good employment references. Relatives do not. It's often worthwhile when requesting a letter of reference to ask if the person can write you a strong letter of support. If he or she has any reservations about you, it is better to seek another person to write you a letter. You should give the person who will write you a letter of recommendation a stamped, addressed envelope. In addition, waiving your right to review the recommendation letter may give the resulting letter more credibility; i.e., the recommender is not just saying nice things because he or she is afraid that you may read the letter.

3.

Finally, it never hurts to follow up. A letter written the day after the interview thanking the potential employer for his or her time and restating your interest in the position and in the company can only help.

Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY

125 YEARS

1878—2003

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS
OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, AGE, DISABILITY, OR
VETERAN STATUS.