

Combined BA/MA Degree Program in Psychology

Wesleyan University

General Guidelines and Application Materials

These materials are also at: http://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/grad/grad_BA_MA.html . Please direct questions regarding this program to the Psychology Department's administrative assistant, Cathy Race, 860-685-2343, Judd Hall Room 108, crace@wesleyan.edu.

Application Deadline (open to Junior Psychology Majors only): March 1 st

BA/MA Program in the Sciences: A Five-Year Plan

The science programs at Wesleyan offer a variety of excellent research opportunities. In fact, the opportunity to carry out significant research is one of the strongest features of the sciences here. Many undergraduates carry out research in close collaboration with a faculty member, and those who do often report that it has been the most valuable part of their education. However, in recent years, as the opportunities to do high quality research have multiplied, some students have felt the need for a more intensive involvement in research than is possible in the traditional four-year undergraduate setting. In consultation with their major department, a number of such students have constructed programs through which they have been able to obtain the MA (Master of Arts) degree after a fifth year of study following the BA (Bachelor of Arts). This additional year has provided them with the opportunity to devote a greater deal of time to completing the research projects they began as undergraduates.

Wesleyan has this five-year BA/MA as a formal curricular option for those undergraduate students who feel the need for the intensive research experience that a fifth year of study can afford. The program has a strong research orientation. However, it also includes coursework, seminars, and, in some cases, teaching. Although it is anticipated that most individuals who enroll in the program will go on for further graduate study, the program also provides strong professional background for either further advanced study or employment in industry. Completion of both BA and MA requirements in five years requires careful planning of one's schedule of courses and research for the last two years of the program. A student hoping to enter this program is expected to declare the intention to do so early enough in his or her academic career to permit the design of an acceptable program for the last two years with both the major department and a research advisor within that department.

Updated: 2/2/12

Program Faculty and Staff

Graduate Program Committee: Patricia Rodriguez Mosquera, Robert Steele

Graduate Program Support: Cathy Race, Administrative Assistant

Professors: Jill G. Morawski, Scott L. Plous, John G. Seamon, Robert S. Steele, Ruth H. Striegel; Lisa Dierker (Chair), Andrea L. Patalano;

Associate Professor: Matthew Kurtz

Assistant Professors: Hilary Barth, Barbara J. Juhasz, Patricia Rodriguez-Mosquera, Charles Sanislow, Anna Shusterman, Steven Stemler, Clara Wilkins

Major Areas of Research

Faculty 11-12	Area of Expertise	Interests/Research
Hilary Barth	Developmental	Numerical cognition, cognitive development, cognitive neuroscience.
Lisa Dierker (Chair of Department)	Developmental, Personality-Psychopathology	Development of nicotine dependence; Group-based statistical methods; Psychiatric and substance use comorbidity.
Barbara Juhasz	Cognition	Word recognition; eye movements during reading; sentence processing.
Matthew Kurtz	Cognition	Measurement and treatment of neurocognitive deficits in patients with severe psychopathology. Rehabilitation in severe psychopathology
Jill Morawski	Social, Gender Studies	History of psychology, social psychology, psychology of gender, science studies, feminist studies
Andrea Patalano	Cognition	Categorization; planning; decision making; reasoning.
Scott Plous	Social	Prejudice and discrimination; ethical issues relating to animals and the environment.
Patricia Rodriguez Mosquera (fall sabbatical)	Cultural	Culture and ethnicity; emotions; insult and devaluation.'
Charles Sanislow	Psychopathology, Personality, Clinical Neuroscience	Conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment of affective pathologies including depression, post-traumatic stress, and borderline personality disorder.

Faculty 11-12	Area of Expertise	Interests/Research
John Seamon (spring leave)	Cognitive, Neuroscience	Memory; cognitive processes; cognitive neuroscience.
Anna Shusterman	Developmental	Language and conceptual development; language and thought; spatial and numerical reasoning.
Robert Steele	Social, Personality- Psychopathology	Cultural psychology (race, class and gender); modern myth.
Steven Stemler	Educational, Quantitative	Intelligence, psychometrics, educational psychology, conflict resolution.
Ruth Striegel	Personality- Psychopathology	Etiology and treatment of eating disorders; gender & psychopathology.
Clara Wilkins	Social	Prejudice, stereotyping and the self; perceptions of anti-White bias; variation in minorities' physical appearance.

Facilities and Resources

Research facilities in the department include active, well-equipped laboratories for the study of behavioral neuroscience, child development, human cognition, cultural psychology, psycholinguistics, and social psychology. There are substantial library resources on campus totaling over a million volumes. Campus and departmental computing facilities are readily available. A colloquium series also affords students an opportunity to hear and meet informally with speakers from around the country.

Combined Degree

Students enrolled in this program, upon successful completion of the degree requirements, receive a BA after four years and an MA at the end of the fifth year. From the perspective of the University, students are considered undergraduates during their fourth year at Wesleyan (their first year of the program) and become graduate students in their fifth year at Wesleyan (their second year in the program). However, because this is a combined degree program, in order to complete the two degrees in five years, the student must submit a carefully devised and integrated study plan for the two years of the program at the time of application to the program. *Note that certain requirements of the Psychology BA/MA program differ from requirements of BA/MA programs in other departments at Wesleyan University. A detailed description of the BA/MA program in Psychology follows.*

Mentor Relationship

The BA/MA program involves a close working relationship between a student and a faculty mentor. *Before applying to the program, a student must have identified a faculty mentor in the Psychology Department who has agreed to direct the candidate's two-year BA/MA research.* Once a student has been admitted to the program, this mentor will officially become the student's graduate advisor. The student should seek advice from the advisor regarding course selection and program of research. Any questions or problems that cannot be resolved by the faculty advisor should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Program Committee. The student may only change advisors in consultation with the old advisor, the new advisor, and the Graduate Program Committee.

Credits and Course Requirements for a BA/MA in Psychology

In the BA/MA program, the MA degree requires a minimum of 6 credits in addition to the 32 needed for the BA degree. These 6 credits should be distributed as follows:

- **PSYC 591 & 592:** Thesis Research (2 credits; one credit per term of second year)
- **Four credits for advanced coursework:** Any other graduate tutorials (PSYC 501/502, 503/504, 511/512; these can be taken during the undergraduate or graduate year), undergraduate tutorials taken for graduate credit (specifically, 401/402, 411/412, or 421/422; these can be taken only during the undergraduate year), undergraduate non-tutorial courses in any department (usually 200- or 300-level courses) taken for graduate credit, or graduate seminars. **No more than two of these four credits may come from tutorials; teaching assistantships of any kind may not be used for graduate credit.**

In order for any course to be counted towards the graduate degree, the following conditions must be met. First, **it must not have been counted towards the undergraduate Psychology major as declared on the Major Certification Form or towards any Wesleyan undergraduate graduation requirements.** Second, it must be taken for graduate credit (see later discussion). And third, a grade of a B- or better must be earned in the course. Courses taken Pass/Fail cannot be counted towards the degree.

Because students are ordinarily still earning BA credits in their first year of the program (the undergraduate year), typical schedules have most credits being earned during the second year (the graduate year). No more than *two* courses may be taken for graduate credit during the 4th year. Two sample plans of study are shown at the end of this document.

Students may elect, but are *not* required, to take the Graduate Pedagogy course (PSYC 500) coordinated through the University's Office of Graduate Student Services (OGSS) for .5 credits. Psychology students may choose to attend a one-time three-hour pedagogy session at the start of their graduate year (see OGSS for date and time).

At the beginning of *each* of the four semesters of the program (by the end of the third week of classes), a Graduate Course Verification Form (available from the Psychology Department's administrative assistant or from the advisor) must be submitted to the advisor, listing the courses being taken for graduate credit that semester (only if they are undergraduate courses being taken for graduate credit). Each course must be approved by the course instructor and by the student's advisor. The signature of the course instructor indicates that he or she is informed that the course is being taken for graduate credit and is aware that he or she may wish to impose more rigorous coursework or more stringent grading standards on the student in exchange for the graduate credit. Any graduate requirements must be negotiated by the instructor and the student at the beginning of the course. The signature of the advisor indicates that these courses have been approved towards the MA requirements.

Additionally, after receiving all appropriate approvals on the Major Certification Form, the student is responsible for reviewing and discussing this with his or her advisor.

Research, Thesis, and Other Requirements

A major expectation of this program is that students will spend at least 20 hours per week engaged in research. The research experience will culminate with an MA thesis demonstrating a student's original contribution to knowledge, which the student will carry out in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements. Many students will choose not to write an undergraduate honor's thesis during their last undergraduate year because they will be writing this more substantial MA thesis during their graduate year. While there is no prohibition against writing an undergraduate thesis should the student wish to do so, it cannot substitute in any way for the student submitting an MA thesis in their graduate year.

Thesis

Work on the MA thesis should progress as follows under the guidance of the faculty advisor.

First Year

By the first week in April of the first year of the program (the senior undergraduate year), an MA thesis committee must be established and must include the advisor and two or more additional faculty (the student must submit the Establishment of Thesis Committee Form to the faculty advisor by this date). Both the advisor and at least one of the additional faculty members must be in Psychology. By the first week of May, the student must set the date for the committee meeting to discuss and approve the proposal (Scheduling Thesis Proposal Meeting Form submitted to the advisor). The thesis proposal should be given to the committee at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting. While the date must be agreed upon by the first week of May, the actual meeting may be held anytime before the end of June as long as the thesis proposal is approved by the committee by the end of June (student should take the Thesis Proposal

Approval Form to the thesis proposal meeting, and must return it and a copy of the proposal to the faculty advisor by the end of June).

Second Year

During the second year of the program, the student must complete the thesis. Unlike most other rules and requirements of the program, the rules governing the completion of an MA thesis are largely determined by the University's OGSS. By the University-wide deadline in early April (consult the OGSS for the exact date), a Response Form is due in the OGSS listing the date scheduled for an oral defense of the thesis. This form is obtained from the OGSS website. A copy of the Response Form should be turned in to the faculty advisor. A variety of other forms must also be obtained from and returned directly to the University's OGSS.

The **final copy** of the written thesis should be given to committee members by the student at least two weeks before the oral exam date; specific timing is up to the student's committee.

Oral Defense

The oral defense must be held during the oral exam period designated by the OGSS (this period is approximately the full month of April). The student should bring to the oral examination two forms required by the OGSS: the Oral Examination Form and an Approval of Thesis Forms to be filled out by committee members. The exact format of the defense has varied in the psychology department. The student and his/her advisor should decide a format that works for the student's research.

The exact format of the defense has varied in the psychology department. You and your advisor should decide a format that works for you and your research. The basic flow is:

You give a talk presenting your research.

- The length (somewhere between 15 and 45 minutes) is negotiable.
- Open (to your friends, faculty, public) or closed (just your committee) is also negotiable.
- Open question period after the talk.
 - You leave the room while the committee discusses.
 - You return to the room to receive your grade, feedback, and (assuming things have gone as planned) congratulations.
 - Your committee will let you know what revisions or corrections **MUST BE MADE** in order for the thesis to be complete and ready for submission.

You will receive separate grades for your written thesis and oral defense. These do not go on your transcript. They do stay in your file. You may decide, at some point in the future, to authorize someone (e.g., another graduate program) to find out your grade.

Exit Interview

An exit interview will be scheduled with the OGSS following receipt of forms and the scheduling of the oral exam. It takes place 48 weekday hours after the oral defense (so if the defense is on a Friday, the exit interview is not until Tuesday, allowing extra time for revisions). The forms completed at the defense **and at least two copies** of the final version of the thesis are due at this appointment. The OGSS has a number of formatting guidelines for preparation of the thesis; these guidelines and exit paperwork should be obtained in preparation for the appointment. Copies of the thesis should be corrected and perfect at this time, and must be formatted and printed according to the guidelines. The student should ask their mentor if s/he would like a copy of their thesis to keep in the lab, for other students to use as reference. This copy does not need to be printed on very fancy paper, but acid-free is probably a good idea. Bring all of the copies of the thesis that need to be bound to the interview.

Evaluation and Review

An evaluation of BA/MA students is conducted by the Psychology Graduate Faculty Committee in the Spring Term of each year of the program. Maintaining “good standing” in the program is contingent on obtaining at least a B- in each course being applied towards the MA, the meeting of all above requirements (except in extenuating circumstances as determined by the Committee), as well as majority approval of the department faculty. A student who is not in good standing can be asked to leave the program at the discretion of the Psychology Graduate Faculty Committee.

Graduate Council

The BA/MA program is under the administrative supervision of a three-person committee of the University-wide Graduate Council, which monitors the progress of all graduate students towards completion of degree requirements. The University’s OGSS maintains a list of those enrolled in the program and administers the academic record of BA/MA students during their graduate year of the program.

Tuition

Wesleyan does not charge tuition for the fifth year of the program. Tuition will, however, be charged for credits being used to make up “upon completion” undergraduate requirements. Students will also be charged tuition for time required to complete the program beyond the fifth year at Wesleyan.

Financial Support

BA/MA students receive no financial compensation for teaching apprenticeships, and credits for serving as a teaching apprentice are not counted towards the MA degree. The only financial support provided by the university is tuition remission in the fifth year. However, some students in their fifth year may be able to find support from other sources, such as a faculty member’s research grant funds. Because students are not supported during the summer between the two years of the program, they are not required

to be on campus at this time. However, every effort should be made by both the faculty member and the student to facilitate progress during the summer.

Limited funds are also available to help with graduate student research needs (e.g., equipment, travel, participant payments). Students needing funds may make requests to the department through their faculty advisors.

Student Loans

Technically speaking, students graduate with their class and then become a student again in September of their 5th year. Students with loans should place a call to Barbara Schukoske in the OGSS and arrange to have the student loan companies notified that they are continuing as students if they wish to defer repayment until after the MA is completed.

Health Insurance

Student status can also affect your health insurance. Please be proactive about finding out about this as individual circumstances and general policies change from year to year.

Application

Potential applicants are encouraged to declare their interest in the program to potential advisors as early as the sophomore year, but application to and acceptance into the program occurs at the end of the junior year. The admission process is administered by a committee of the Graduate Council. Admission to this program is based on recommendations made to the Graduate Council by the Psychology Department, the academic records of each applicant, and the availability of limited BA/MA slots. Throughout the program, please submit a copy of all paperwork records to the faculty advisor, to assist in communication between the department and OGSS.

BA/MA Timeline

Note: For more specific dates of deadlines, please see the Graduate Program calendar.

3rd Year

March 1st – Application Due

Mid March – Department submits application to OGSS

Early April – Notification of Acceptance

4th Year

Before drop/add *each semester* – fill out Course Verification Form & grade worksheet (?)

September – Complete Senior Concentration Form

October – Meet with someone in the CRC

First week in April – Committee of three faculty members established

First week in May – Deadline for setting a date for thesis proposal meeting

Mid-May – Undergraduate commencement

June 30th – Deadline for Thesis Proposal Approval Form (meeting occurs before this)

5th Year

Before drop/add *each semester* – fill out Course Verification Form & grade worksheet (?)

Early April – Submit to Barbara Schukoske in the OGSS the following forms that you received from her:

Approved Final Title

Participation in Commencement

Degree Verification

Full legal name for diploma

Response Form for Oral Exam

Month of April – Oral exams occur (committee should receive thesis in advance)

48 Hours after Exam – Exit Interview. Bring the following:

1. All copies of thesis for binding (at least two)

(Following two forms from OGSS and should be filled out at the exam)

2. Examination Form

3. Approval of Thesis Form

Mid-May – Commencement for MA Degree

Sample Plans of Study

Note: The italicized items are fixed and may not be moved or replaced.

First Year, Fall Term

No graduate credits earned

First Year, Spring Term

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

Second Year, Fall Term

Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 591) – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Student (PSYC 501) – 1 credit

Second Year, Spring Term

Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 592) – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Students (PSYC 502) – 1 credit

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

First Year, Fall Term

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

First Year, Spring Term

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

Second Year, Fall Term

Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 591) – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Students (PSYC 501) – 1 credit

Second Year, Spring Term

Advanced Research, Graduate (PSYC 592) – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial for Graduate Students (PSYC 502) – 1 credit

Online Information and Resources

Office of Graduate Student Services – BA/MA Program and all necessary information

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/grad/AcademicResource/bama.html>

Psychology Department BA/MA information

http://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/grad/grad_BA_MA.html