

# Combined BA/MA Degree Program in Psychology

## Wesleyan University

### General Guidelines and Application Materials

These materials are also at: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/programs.htm#bama>. Please direct questions regarding this program to the Psychology Graduate Program Secretary, Tina Velasquez, 860-685-2342, Judd Hall Room 104A, [tvelasquez@wesleyan.edu](mailto:tvelasquez@wesleyan.edu).

|   |
|---|
| Application Deadline (open to Junior Psychology Majors only): March 1, 2010 |
|---|

### **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.

## Program Faculty and Staff

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

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

**Graduate Program Committee:** P. Rodriguez Mosquera, A. Shusterman,  
R. Steele & S. Stemler

**Graduate Program Secretary:** Tina Velasquez

## Major Areas of Research

**Hilary Barth:** (fall leave) 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:** (spring sabbatical) Social, Gender Studies History of psychology, social psychology, psychology of gender, science studies, feminist studies **Andrea Patalano:** Cognition Categorization; planning; decision making; neuroscience of reasoning. **Scott Plous:** Social Prejudice and discrimination; ethical issues relating to animals and the environment. **Patricia Rodriguez Mosquera:** Cultural Culture and ethnicity; emotions; insult and devaluation. **Charles Sanislow:** Psychopathology, Personality, Clinical Neuroscience Conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment of affective pathologies including depression, posttraumatic stress, and borderline personality disorder. **John Seamon:** 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-Moore:** (year leave) Personality-Psychopathology Etiology and treatment of eating disorders; gender & psychopathology.

## 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.

## **Specific Features and Requirements of the Program**

### **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 below.*

### **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 Coordinator. The student may only change advisors in consultation with the old advisor, the new advisor, and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

### **Credits and Course Requirements for a BA/MA in Psychology**

In the BA/MA program, the MA degree requires a minimum of 8 credits in addition to the 32 (for students entering the undergraduate program in 2001 or later; 34 for students entering before that time) needed for the BA degree. These 8 credits should be distributed as follows:

- PSYC 520: Advanced Research Seminar (2 credits; one credit per year)
- PSYC 591 & 592: Thesis Research (2 credits; one credit per term of second year)
- 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 (4 credits; no more than *two* of these 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 Senior Concentration Form submitted to the Registrar at the beginning of a student's senior undergraduate year) 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.

Other than PSYC 520 and PSYC 591/592, the credits may be distributed in any way over the two years of the program as long as at least four graduate credits are earned during the graduate year. 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). Two sample plans of study are shown at the end of this document.

The required Advanced Research Seminar (PSYC 520) has some additional qualities that bear mentioning. While the course is typically open for enrollment during only one semester each year (usually Spring Term), it actually meets every other week for the entire year (usually on alternating Tuesdays 12-1 pm) in exchange for one credit. Students are required to attend this seminar throughout their time in the BA/MA program. As a component of the seminar, they are also required to attend the department's Colloquium Series (currently held on occasional Thursday afternoons from 4:15-5:30 pm) and to participate in other departmental graduate-student events.

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 for .5 credits. Psychology students may choose to attend a one-time three-hour pedagogy session at the start of their graduate year (see Office of Graduate Student Services 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 Graduate Program secretary) must be submitted to the Psychology Graduate Program Office, 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 signatures on the Senior Concentration Form (obtained from and required by the Registrar), and before it is sent to the Registrar at the beginning of the student's senior undergraduate year, the student is responsible for photocopying the completed form and providing a copy to the Psychology Graduate Program secretary.

### **Research and Thesis 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 describing 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 relieve the student in any way of submitting an MA thesis in their graduate year.

Work on the MA thesis should progress as follows under the guidance of the faculty advisor. 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 program secretary 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 program secretary). 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 program secretary by the end of June).

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 Office of Graduate Student Services. By the University-wide deadline in early April (consult the Office of Graduate Student Services for the exact date), a Response Form is due in the Office of Graduate Student Services listing the date scheduled for an oral defense of the thesis. This form is obtained from the Office of Graduate Student Services website. A copy of the Response Form should be turned in to the Psychology Graduate Program Office. A variety of other forms must also be obtained from and returned directly to the University's Office of Graduate Student Services (see this office for forms).

The oral defense must be held during the oral exam period designated by the Office of Graduate Student Services (this period is approximately the full month of April). The

final copy of the thesis should be given to committee members by the student at least two weeks before the oral exam date. The student should bring to the oral examination two forms required by the Office of Graduate Student Services: the Oral Examination Form and an Approval of Thesis Form to be filled out by committee members. These forms and two copies of the final version of the thesis are due in the Office of Graduate Student Services within 48 hours after the defense (an “Exit Appointment” should be scheduled with the office in advance of the oral defense). The Office of Graduate Student Services has a number of formatting guidelines for preparation of the thesis; these guidelines should be obtained in preparation for the appointment.

## **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 in “good standing” in the program is contingent on obtaining 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 Office of Graduate Student Services 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.

## **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.

## 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**

*Advanced Research Seminar (PSYC 520)* – 1 credit

### **Second Year, Fall Term**

*Thesis Research (PSYC 591)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial (PSYC 501) – 1 credit

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

### **Second Year, Spring Term**

*Thesis Research (PSYC 592)* – 1 credit

*Advanced Research Seminar (PSYC 520)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial (PSYC 502) – 1 credit

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

### **First Year, Fall Term**

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

### **First Year, Spring Term**

*Advanced Research Seminar (PSYC 520)* – 1 credit

### **Second Year, Fall Term**

*Thesis Research (PSYC 591)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial (PSYC 501) – 1 credit

Other Elective Course – 1 credit

### **Second Year, Spring Term**

*Thesis Research (PSYC 592)* – 1 credit

*Advanced Research Seminar (PSYC 520)* – 1 credit

Individual Tutorial (PSYC 502) – 1 credit