Why Psychology at Brandeis?

The Department of Psychology offers students the opportunity to establish a strong scientific and research foundation in psychology, which prepares them to be thoughtful and discerning problem solvers. The program examines the most up-to-date and comprehensive psychological research and theory and provides opportunities for direct involvement in its application. Our faculty conducts research in diverse areas including cognitive science, normal and abnormal development, social interaction, spatial orientation, linguistics, perception, memory, emotion, life-span development, and effects of brain damage.

Curriculum Overview

Psychology majors earn a bachelor of arts degree. Course requirements include a total of eleven courses, with a minimum of seven in psychology:

- Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 1a)
- Two quantitative courses (Calculus and Statistics)
- Two laboratory science courses in psychology, biology, chemistry, or physics
- One accompanying lab course
- One basic processes course (e.g., Behavioral Neuroscience, Sensory Processes)
- One higher-order processes course (e.g., cognitive science, linguistics)
- One social-developmental course (e.g., developmental, social, personality, or abnormal psychology)
- Two in-depth specialized seminars such as Emotion and Well-Being; Health Psychology; Aging in a Changing World; Man in Space; Memory; and Visual Cognition

Electives for the psychology program are divided into two major areas:

- Social-developmental psychology
- Cognitive neuroscience

Each psychology major is assigned a faculty adviser from which general advice about courses or career plans is best attained. In addition, the psychology undergraduate advising head is available for consultation even before you declare psychology as a major.

What else does the psychology major offer?

Psychology majors study varied aspects of both basic and applied areas of the field. The focus of the department is on basic scientific research, in which there is a high level of undergraduate involvement. Typically, more than a dozen students write honors theses each year, while twice that number conduct independent studies, research, or reading projects, some of which are funded by undergraduate research program grants. The popular clinical psychology practicum enables
students to spend at least one day per week working in a mental health facility. Many graduate schools in psychology give preference to applicants who have had research experience. The psychology department at Brandeis offers a wide range of opportunities to participate in research. Students can obtain research experience in three ways: (1) volunteer to work informally in a laboratory or professional setting; (2) register for research with a specific professor as a formal course; or (3) complete an independent research project or honors thesis.

**Career and Education Opportunities**

Majors develop a solid background in the scientific method and a strong foundation in the fundamentals of psychology, making them highly competitive candidates for postgraduate study. These features of the undergraduate program also make Brandeis psychology graduates especially attractive to employers in the mental health and business professions. Recent psychology majors have gone on to graduate work in clinical, applied, and scientific research areas of the field. Given the broad training in quantitative and research skills, psychology students are sought after in a wide range of professional areas including marketing and consulting, government and public policy, and social and mental health services. Many of our graduates go on to graduate school in law, business, medicine, and social work, as well as psychology.

**Faculty**

Following is a list of department faculty members and their areas of specialization:

- **Margie Lachman, chair**  
  Life span development, adult personality and cognition
- **Joseph Cunningham**  
  Emotional development and nonverbal communication, clinical psychology
- **Paul DiZio, graduate advising head**  
  Human spatial orientation and motor control
- **József Fiser**  
  Visual information processing
- **Maurice Hershenson**  
  Visual space perception, visual information processing
- **Derek Isaacowitz**  
  Emotion and aging
- **Donald Katz**  
  Neural dynamics of gustatory perception and learning
- **Raymond Knight**  
  Clinical psychology, experimental psychopathology
- **James Lackner**  
  Spatial orientation, human movement control, adaptation to unusual force environments
- **Xiaodong Liu**  
  Multivariate statistics, educational evaluation and measurement
- **Andrew Molinsky**  
  Organizational behavior
- **Robert Sekuler**  
  Visual perception, cognitive processes
- **Aurora Sherman**  
  Social relations and health, aging
- **Patricia Tun**  
  Aging and speech comprehension and memory
- **Malcolm Watson, undergraduate advising head**  
  Developmental psychology
- **Arthur Wingfield**  
  Human memory
- **Jerome Wodinsky**  
  Comparative psychology, learning theory, sensory physiology
- **Leslie Zebrowitz**  
  Social psychology, person perception