

Recommendations for Course Planning for Students Interested in Psychology Graduate School

If you are considering graduate school in psychology, it is very important that you take History and Systems prior to taking the Psychology GRE test. Thus, you should consider taking History and Systems in the spring of your junior year, or no later than the fall of your senior year. Your required Research Methods courses will also be highly valued by graduate schools.

For graduate study in any area of psychology, it is generally important to take a variety of courses. According to APA's *Getting In: A Step-By-Step Plan for Gaining Admission to Graduate School in Psychology*, "many graduate psychology programs are more interested in generalists than specialists...a broad undergraduate education is often considered the best possible preparation for pursuing a specialty in graduate school" (p. 69). Thus, your undergraduate coursework should not be too specialized.

However, if you apply to a graduate program in a certain area, the admissions committee will want to know that you have some knowledge of the area to which you are applying. Thus, you should definitely take the core course in any area that you might consider for graduate school (e.g., take Personality if you think you might want to go to graduate school in Personality Psychology) to make sure that you like the topic and know what you are getting into. It is also probably advisable to take the "Research in ..." course for a specialty area in which you are interested (e.g., Research in Social Psychology for graduate school in Social Psychology).

For several specialties (Personality, Social) there are no other specific content classes that you must take. It is simply important to take a variety of courses.

If you are interested in going on in *developmental psychology*, it would be good to have some idea of the area of developmental psychology in which you are interested (e.g., cognitive, social, biological) so that you can take related classes in those areas.

If you are interested in going on in *clinical or counseling psychology*, you should take abnormal psychology. Other courses that might be especially helpful include psychological disorders of childhood, psychological tests and measurements, and clinical psychology.

If you are interested in going on in *cognitive psychology or cognitive neuroscience*, you should take, in order of priority: (a) cognition; (b) physiological psychology; (c) consider doing the neuroscience minor; (d) learning; (e) perception.

If you are interested in graduate work in *judgment and decision-making*, you should take: (a) judgment & decision-making; (b) some courses from other departments such as economics (talk to Dr. Stone).

If you are interested in graduate work in *industrial-organizational psychology*, recommended classes include industrial-organizational psychology, judgment and decision-making, social psychology, and psychological tests and measurements.

If you are interested in graduate work in *perception*, you should take, in order of priority: (a) perception; (b) physiological psychology; (c) cognition; (d) courses in the neuroscience minor or the minor itself.

If you are interested in going on in *school psychology*, you should take developmental psychology and psychological tests and measurements.

If you are considering applied work not necessarily directly in psychology (e.g., business, marketing, medicine, public policy, teaching) some recommended courses are: developmental psychology; judgment and decision-making; social psychology.

See APA's (2007) *Getting In: A Step-By-Step Plan for Gaining Admission to Graduate School in Psychology*, pp 69-72 for more information on course work helpful to graduate school.