

Psychology Major

New Requirements: Fall 2009

Frequently Asked Questions

If your question is not answered here, please contact advisor@psych.rutgers.edu

Why were the requirements for the major changed?

The changes in the major were introduced to:

- Reflect national trends in the discipline,
- Dovetail with the new requirements of the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, and
- Ensure a more logical progression from lower- through upper-level coursework.

When do the new requirements go into effect?

Students in SAS or SEBS who declare the major during or after the Fall 2009 semester will automatically fall under the new requirements. Students who are following college distribution requirements rather than SAS or SEBS will continue to be placed in the old (Fall 2005) major.

What are the prerequisites for declaring the major?

In order to declare the major, students must meet the following prerequisites with grades of C or better in each:

- *General Psychology* (01:830:101 or equivalent)
- *Quantitative Methods* (01:830:200 or equivalent)
- One 4-credit combination of lecture and associated lab course

If I am already a declared major, may I convert to the new major?

Yes, but only if you are completing your overall degree requirements under the new SAS or SEBS rules. In order to fulfill the requirements for the major, you must complete *all* of the requirements for either the current major or the new major (i.e., no 'mix and match' is permitted).

Is there any benefit to converting to the new major?

Unless you have just begun working toward completion of the major it is probably more straightforward to continue under your current requirements. In particular, you may have difficulty gaining admission to the required 400-level course during the next two or three semesters. You may wish to compare your progress on the two different checklists:

- **Fall 2009:** <http://www.psychology.rutgers.edu/undergrad/Checklist-Fall2009-New.pdf>
- **Fall 2005:** <http://www.psychology.rutgers.edu/undergrad/Checklist-Fall2005-Old.pdf>

If I am already a declared major, am I still required to complete precalculus even though it is no longer a prerequisite for the lab courses?

Yes. Precalculus is an overall requirement for the Fall 2005 major, but may now be completed after the lab has been completed. Precalculus is not a specific requirement under the Fall 2009 major, but we require meeting the SAS Degree Requirements of two college-level quantitative reasoning courses.

Why do psychology majors need mathematics courses?

Psychology is a data-oriented, empirical science that relies heavily on mathematical concepts. Clinical and counseling areas of psychology are now emphasizing evidence-based therapies and the

foundations of diagnosis and etiology involve some of the most complex statistical analyses. Most of the students accepted into our graduate program have completed precalculus and many have completed calculus. Good math skills are essential--and even if you do not plan a career in psychology, they will help you get a job!

Does a core course count if I get a D in it?

Yes, as long as your overall GPA in the major is 2.0 or higher. The only courses that have specific grade requirements are General Psychology, Quantitative Methods, and the Lecture/Lab combination, which must have grades of C or better to declare the major in psychology. (Note: All courses taken elsewhere must have grades of C or better to be transferred in to Rutgers.)

If I enroll in Study Abroad program, will I be able to take courses there that will count toward my psychology major or minor?

In most cases, yes. Credits toward the required four electives are typically easily approved. It is sometimes more difficult to find courses that match the content of our core courses or lab courses, but even these may be found at major universities. In general, we believe that studying abroad is a valuable experience and we work with our students to assist them in completing the major as effectively as possible. You should stop in to see the psychology advisor before you leave to get courses pre-approved. Once on location, if the pre-approved courses are not available, the psychology advisor can often make substitutions via e-mail correspondence.

If I completed psychology courses at a county or community college, will they transfer toward the major at Rutgers?

Some will, but there are limits. General Psychology typically transfers, and equivalent courses are often available for Precalculus and for Quantitative Methods in Psychology. Beyond that, only two electives may be transferred, and these courses are never considered as equivalent to core courses, even when the titles of the courses are identical.

Can a course in statistics be substituted for Quantitative Methods in Psychology?

Yes, but we tend to be fussy about which ones are allowed because psychological data often require specialized methods of analyses. We routinely accept Rutgers courses 01:960:211-212, 01:960:401, 01:220:322, and 01:377:275. For students who have completed a 3-credit basic statistics course, we occasionally offer a 1-credit supplemental course (830:210 *Behavioral Data Analysis*) that fulfills the quantitative methods requirement. Alternatively, you may take 830:200 in addition to your 3-credit statistics course.

May I apply credits from on-line courses to the psychology major or minor?

No. These courses may not be applied to either the major or the minor. To be considered for transfer, a course must meet on-campus, in classroom, and for a minimum of four calendar weeks.

May I apply winter-session or other short-session courses to the psychology major?

Usually not. The longstanding policy of the psychology department is that we do not accept courses that meet for less than four calendar weeks. Some winter sessions meet this requirement, and those courses are eligible for transfer consideration.

How many credits may I transfer toward the major in psychology?

A bit less than half. Under the Fall 2005 major, seven of your 3- or 4-credit courses must be taken within the Rutgers New Brunswick Psychology Department. Under the Fall 2009

major, the 4 core courses, at least one elective, and the 400-level course must be taken within the Rutgers New Brunswick Psychology Department. No more than two psychology electives may be applied from a two-year institution.

If I do volunteer work or have a job in some area that is directly relevant to psychology, can I obtain credit toward the major as an internship?

No. All of our fieldwork and internship opportunities occur through our formal course offerings. We encourage our students to participate in these worthwhile outside activities, but do not give academic credit for them.

If I get a D or an F in a course and re-take it, does the new grade replace the old one, or do I receive the average?

That depends. For calculation of your GPA in the major, we use only the higher grade and ignore the other one. However, the individual colleges, SAS, or SEBS may have different rules depending on your academic status. You should consult with your dean's office to learn how retaking a course will appear on your transcript.

Which grades are used to calculate the gpa in the major?

Only psychology courses (830 subject number) taken at Rutgers are used in this calculation. No more than 3 credits of non-classroom courses (research, fieldwork, etc.) may be applied to this calculation with the exception of 830:497-498 *Honors Research* where up to six credits total may be applied. When courses are repeated, only the higher grade is used. If you have completed courses beyond the requirements of the major, Degree Navigator will not include them in calculating your GPA—graduate schools and employees probably will.

Am I required to take a non-classroom course such as fieldwork?

No. You may use one these courses to count toward the major or minor as an elective, but there is no requirement to do so.

Do 'psychology' courses from other departments (e.g., *Psychology of Sports*) apply toward the major or minor?

No. All courses toward the major or minor must be from the 01:830 subject index, an approved transfer course, or an official cross-listed course.

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