
Psychology (MA)

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THE PROGRAM

The Master's Degree in Psychology (MA) is the first and only degree of its kind offered at the City University of New York. This innovative degree will prepare students specializing in industrial/organizational psychology or developmental psychology to advance to new levels in their careers and learn from skilled faculty in a fully online environment.

The program is available in a fully online format and is ideal for students who have recently completed an undergraduate degree in Psychology, or closely related field, who are pursuing advanced credentials or application to a doctoral program, or those in the workforce who want to advance their careers and seek higher-level positions.

Students will:

- Acquire knowledge of core concepts, theories and applications in three of the following five areas: learning and cognition, biological bases of behavior, social behavior, theories of personality, and psychopathology.
- Gain in-depth knowledge of at least one of the following specializations in psychology: Industrial/Organizational Psychology or Developmental Psychology.
- Show mastery of all phases of the research process in psychology, including: locating, synthesizing and critically evaluating information related to a specific research question, generating testable research hypotheses and related research designs, engaging in data collection activities that reflect professional practices, standards and requirements, and analyzing data and displaying results using appropriate statistical procedures and software.
- Identify and apply ethical standards in the conduct of human subject and animal research.
- Articulate values and act in ways that are respectful of cultural differences and diversity at local, national and global levels.

Career Prospects

Graduates of the Master's Degree in Psychology are prepared for a range of careers and job opportunities in human and social services, personnel and training, human resources, marketing and market research, as well as research and data analysis, among others. The program also prepares students for further graduate study should they choose to apply to doctoral programs after completing the Master's degree.

Note: This program has two concentrations, Developmental Psychology and Industrial / Organizational Psychology, neither of which qualifies graduates to practice as a Clinical Psychologist, Counseling/Marriage, Family, and Child Therapist, or as a School Psychologist nor does it qualify students for licensure by the State of New York, which requires a doctoral degree (in most cases) among other requirements. However, students may use this program as a bridge to a doctoral program if they so choose or as a terminal degree.

Admission Criteria

In addition to the admission criteria for graduate degree programs, students must have completed courses in Introductory Psychology, Statistics, and Research Methods with grades of B or better. Applicants without this coursework may be admitted to the program conditionally and required to take courses before matriculating.

Program Requirements

36 credits are required for the Master's Degree in Psychology as follows:

Core Courses - Student must complete 9 credits from the following:

- PSY 600 - Learning & Cognition
- PSY 605 - Biological Foundations of Behavior
- PSY 610 - Social Behavior
- PSY 615 - Theories of Personality

- PSY 620 - Psychopathology

Research Methods - Student must complete 6 credits:

- PSY 625 - Advanced Statistics
- PSY 630 - Advanced Research Methods

Specialization - Student must complete 9 credits from one of the following specializations:

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

- PSY 635 - Introduction to Industrial/Organizational Psychology
- PSY 640 - Organizational Development and Effectiveness
- PSY 645 - Performance Management & Motivation

Developmental Psychology

- PSY 650 - Perspectives on Developmental Psychology
- PSY 655 - Child & Adolescent Development
- PSY 660 - Adult Development

Electives - Students must complete 6 credits from the following:

- PSY 665 - Practicum in Advanced Research Methods
- PSY 670 - Cognitive Development
- PSY 675 - Atypical Development
- PSY 680 - Personnel Selection
- PSY 685 - Group Dynamics
- PSY 690 – Special Topics in Psychology

Capstone - Students must complete the following 6 credits:

- PSY 698 - Psychology Capstone Project Planning
- PSY 699 - Psychology Capstone

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

PSY 600 Cognitive Psychology and Learning 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): None

This course deals with how we process information, think and learn. Topics include memory, problem solving, perception and attention. Students will be expected to engage with the material at an advanced level and we will therefore be evaluating, comparing and contrasting various assumptions (behaviorist, information-processing, cultural-historical) that inform theories of learning and cognition.

PSY 605 Biological Foundations of Behavior 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): None

The course will familiarize students with the biological principles and theories related to human behavior and introduce various approaches within the field of biopsychology. Topics including genetic influences on behavior, the relationship between brain function and behavior, anatomy and the nervous system, motor systems, neurons and brain plasticity. Reflecting recent advances in the field regarding the age-old nature-nurture question, the course takes a dynamic-systems approach to understanding how biology and environment contribute to human behavior and development.

PSY 610 Social Behavior 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): None

Social psychology is the scientific attempt to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings. A primary goal of this course is to introduce the theories, research methods, and empirical findings of social psychology. Throughout the course, we will be placing emphasis on developing critical and integrative ways of thinking about theory and research in social psychology.

PSY 615 Theories of Personality 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): None

This course aims to provide students with an in-depth introduction to the field of personality psychology. Students will learn about the various theories related to conceptualizing personality (traits, context-specific, narrative) as well as the influences that shape personality. The course also will address assessments and research methods used within this field and students

will be engaged in applying the theories to real-life contexts. Knowledge of personality psychology can aid one in thinking usefully and critically about human behavior patterns, relevant not only in psychology and human services professions, but in other areas of life.

PSY 620 Psychopathology 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): None

This course will provide students with an in-depth review of the various psychopathological conditions, their etiology, symptoms and criteria for differential diagnosis. Students will become familiar with the DSM-V and will apply it as they work through case studies. Some of the questions that we will be engaging in this course are: 1) What makes behavior abnormal? 2) What are the major psychological disorders? 3) How do we arrive at the diagnoses? 4) What causes the disorders? At the end of the course, students are expected to be familiar with the various theoretical perspectives in the general field of psychopathology as well as the empirical support for these theories.

PSY 625 Advanced Statistics 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): None

This course is designed to prepare students to conduct advanced statistical analyses in the social sciences. Students will become familiar with the major ideas of probability and statistics, including procedures related to hypothesis testing. Topics include, among others, descriptive statistics, normal distribution, *t*-tests, correlation and regression, probability distribution and linear regression. At the end of the course students are expected to master both the conceptual as well as practical approaches to statistics. Students will apply and practice their knowledge of statistics through assignments that require use of statistical software.

PSY 630 Advanced Research Methods in Psychology 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): PSY 625

The course will introduce the major concepts, issues and techniques of social science research, including the epistemological and ontological principles behind the different methods employed in the field of psychology. We will be reviewing quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approaches. Students will be engaged in evaluating the pros and cons of the different approaches and in exploring various data-collection methods available in the field. Students will become skilled consumers and critics of empirical social science research across a wide range of methodologies and substantive fields; develop research questions and relevant research designs; and gain experience in the collection and analysis of data.

PSY 635 Introduction to Industrial/Organizational Psychology 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): None

This course will introduce students to the key concepts, theories and research methods in industrial and organizational psychology (I/O). The course will take an applied approach to explore how the field of psychology influences and informs the workplace, including how to facilitate both individual and organizational development. Industrial/Organizational Psychology deals with the psychological dynamics of people in the workplace and focuses on topics such as motivation, stress and worker well-being.

PSY 640 Organizational Development and Effectiveness 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses

Organizational Development is the planned process of developing an organization to insure the optimum level of performance as measured by effectiveness, productivity and health. Organizational Development (OD) is achieved by facilitating change for individual employees, groups and teams, and the organization at large. Starting with an initial historical perspective of the field, we will explore the core organizational model of entry/contracting, diagnosis, feedback, implementation and evaluation. Working from this core model, we will examine the range of OD interventions used in the past and present. At the end of the course students are expected to be knowledgeable about the various paradigms within the field of OD as well as well prepared to apply the various approaches to assess organizations.

PSY 645 Performance Management and Motivation 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses

This course is designed to introduce students to the various approaches in the field of performance management and motivation. Specifically, the course allows students to become familiar with how to assess an organization's performance relative to its goals and, based on thorough analysis, how to develop strategies for organizations to improve both performance and motivation. Students are expected to use their analytical skills to critically evaluate the research that informs practice in the field of performance management and to apply the knowledge acquired in the course to evaluate specific case studies.

- PSY 650** **Perspectives on Developmental Psychology** **3 Credits**
Prerequisite(s): None
 The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the major theoretical perspectives and empirical studies in the field of developmental psychology. By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to both analyze (compare, contrast and synthesize) developmental theories as well as clearly distinguish the different paradigms within the field. The exploration of canonical works will include reading both works of and about theorists such as Erikson, Freud, Piaget and Vygotsky. Students will learn the defining features of the different approaches and there will be an emphasis on evaluating how these theories influence practice in various settings.
- PSY 655** **Child and Adolescent Development** **3 Credits**
Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses
 This course will familiarize students with the field of child and adolescent development. Students will be engaged in reviewing, summarizing, discussing and interpreting research from the developmental field. During the second part of the course, students will be encouraged to draw parallels and identify the similar and different principles of development that apply to childhood and adolescence. Drawing on Arnett's notion of a dynamic approach, we will be approaching the field from a cultural-historical perspective. Students will be engaged in various activities to apply the knowledge of the developmental field to real-life settings, such as family contexts, educational and other institutional settings, including the use of psychometric tools in assessing children and adolescents.
- PSY 660** **Adult Development** **3 Credits**
Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses
 In this course we will be investigating the theories and related practices in the field of adult development and aging. While the scope of developmental psychology for many years was narrowly restricted to investigating development in children and youth, the developmental field now encompasses the later stages of development, which will be the focus of this course. We will explore how biological, physical, cultural and social influences structure learning, memory, emotions, personality and intelligence in adult life. In addition to reading the canonical works of adult development, we will also be applying the theories to real life contexts and case studies.
- PSY 665** **Practicum in Advanced Research Methods** **3 Credits**
Prerequisite(s): PSY 625, PSY 630 & 6 additional credits
 This mentored research practicum is intended to develop students' knowledge of and competency in using specialized research techniques related to their focal area and professional objectives. Students will work with a mentor in specific areas in industrial/organizational or developmental psychology and will identify advanced research techniques, read reports based on their implementation, and gain skill in their use.
- PSY 670** **Cognitive Development** **3 Credits**
Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses
 This course will examine two related issues: theories of cognitive development and development in core domains (e.g., language, space, time, and social cognition). Our focus will be primarily on the development of children's thinking, although we will also discuss cognitive development in other periods of the lifespan. Students will be evaluating, comparing and contrasting the various assumptions (behaviorist, information-processing, cultural-historical) that lie behind the various theories of cognitive development.
- PSY 675** **Atypical Development** **3 Credits**
Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses
 This course will introduce the study of atypical development in childhood and adolescence. There will be a brief historical review of society's progress in the understanding and treatment of children with atypical behavior. We will explore the interaction of emotional, cognitive, biological, behavioral, and environmental components that factor into the development of chronic dysfunctional behavior and mental illness in children and adolescents. We will also examine the various theories of the development of childhood and adolescent disorders, as well as the efficacy of the many current treatment interventions. We will maintain a developmental focus and continue to refer back to typical developmental processes throughout the course.
- PSY 680** **Personnel Selection** **3 Credits**
Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses
 This course addresses the skills and knowledge that underlie effective personnel selection processes: (1) the professional and legal requirements for personnel selection systems, including equal opportunity employment laws; (2) strategies for

conducting job analyses that provide a strong foundation for recruitment and hiring; (3) options for evaluating candidate skills and credentials, and (4) approaches to assessing on the job performance.

PSY 685 Group Dynamics 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses

In this course, you will analyze human behavior in the context of the groups that are the most significant influences on people's actions and emotions: families, friends, and work groups. The processes that characterize the formation of groups and differentiate effective groups from others also will be studied. Leadership strategies, a key element in group functioning, will be identified and leadership training options discussed. Finally, the role of groups in therapeutic and behavioral support programs will be examined, with an emphasis on successful models.

PSY 690 Special Topics in Psychology 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): 9 credits of core courses

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an opportunity to explore a variety of contemporary topics in psychology. These will be in-depth investigations on subjects of special interest to the instructor.

PSY 698 Psychology Capstone Project Planning 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): 12 credits and approval of the academic director

In this course, students will work with a mentor in defining a research question of interest within the area of specialization and consistent with the student's future professional plans. Students will conduct a thorough literature review related to the focal question, then critically analyze and synthesize the results of past work. Based on this analysis, the research question will be revised and refined and a capstone project designed. If required, an application will be submitted to the Institutional Review Board in time for review and revision before the end of the semester.

PSY 699 Psychology Capstone 3 Credits

Prerequisite(s): PSY 698 and 24 additional credits in the program

Under the supervision of a research mentor, the student will conduct the research project planned in PSY 698, Psychology Capstone Project Planning. There should be no more than one-semester between completion of PSY 698 and enrollment in this course. After the collection and analysis of data, students will prepare a detailed written report and a narrated presentation, suitable for in-person delivery or web viewing. A capstone defense session will be scheduled, with the research mentor and 1-2 other faculty as reviewers.